



Quote Sheet: U.S. Soccer Development Academy

Sunil Gulati – U.S. Soccer President

“After completing an extensive review and discussion across the country, we feel that it is the right time for U.S. Soccer to lead a change in the sport at the youth level. We need to shift the focus of our young elite players from an ‘overburdened, game emphasis’ model to a ‘meaningful training and competition’ model. This will ultimately lead to more success and will allow players to develop to their full potential.”

John Hackworth – Development Academy Director, Men's National Team Assistant Coach

“It's a concept that youth soccer in this country desperately needs and our goal is to truly shift the focus towards increasing player development. I think it will create a day-to-day training environment that will allow players the opportunity to develop to the best of their ability. Right now we have only 40 players in that type of environment (at the U-17 Residency Program in Bradenton, Fla.), but this Academy will allow us to put thousands of elite players in a similar environment, which will help us raise the entire level across the nation.”

Jim Barlow – U.S. Under-15 Boys' National Team Head Coach

“It was never more clear to me that things in our youth soccer structure needed to change than at our first U-15 camp last summer when about half of the players, on the very first day of National Team camp, told their coaches that they were tired of soccer. Too many games, too many leagues, too many tournaments and camps, too much structured soccer had already taken its toll on this group of talented young players. I applaud U.S. Soccer for taking some bold steps to change directions and to make its top priority the players.”

Manny Schellscheidt – U.S. Under-14 Boys' Development Program

“At this level, we shouldn't be so concerned about the results, but rather the players' performance. We want kids to love the game, enjoy getting better and get more comfortable with the game. We should be putting our emphasis on players' development not on trying to create the most winning team. It's all about the basics that we so often skip in favor of the quick result. Playing well is the key, and, eventually, if you know how to play the results will come.”

Sasho Cirovski – Head Men's Soccer Coach, University of Maryland; Chair, NSCAA Division I Coaches

“For the good of the game, this is a welcome and long overdue concept. Youth soccer has become obsessed with winning and learning through games at the expense of development of fundamental techniques. The emphasis on training, combined with a periodization schedule that will allow players to train and play games mentally and physically at 100 percent, is exciting. It has become increasingly frustrating for all of my colleagues to watch ‘tired’ players, knowing that they are being paced in practices so that they can survive in the games. College coaches will be able to evaluate players in a consistent high quality competitive environment. In the long run, I believe that this will make our recruiting less costly and more efficient. This is something that all of us in college soccer welcome with open arms.”