



TO: Academy Directors & Directors of Coaching
FROM: Fred Lipka – VP & Technical Director, Player Development
CC: Don Garber – Commissioner
Mark Abbott – President & Deputy Commissioner
J. Todd Durbin – Executive VP
Gordon Bengtson – Sr. Director
Matt Ratajczak – Sr. Manager
DATE: April 24, 2020
RE: Academy Competition

Dear Academy Directors and Directors of Coaching,

Following US Soccer's announcement to end the operation of the Development Academy, MLS announced it is launching an elite youth competition platform to ensure the players and clubs impacted by US Soccer's decision will continue to have the opportunity to participate in top level youth competition. This new platform will provide year-round, high-level matches for MLS club academy teams and non-MLS academy teams that previously participated in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy in the U13, U14, U15, U17 and U19 age categories.

Over the last twenty-five years, MLS has created strong relationships with international clubs, leagues and federations across the globe. We have also developed key strategic partnerships with the top sports media, sponsorship and merchandising companies. Our goal is to utilize this unique position to create the elite youth competition platform, and to provide enormous value and opportunity to all of you.

We understand that with this initiative comes immense responsibility and it can only be successful with your efforts and experience. To that end, we are inviting you to participate in a collaborative process that will seek your input to ensure this new competition platform meets our collective goals. We are planning to begin that engagement process with all of you next week.

MLS remains deeply committed to youth development and we are incredibly excited to work with all of you on this new venture.

For this and for what is ahead, we thank you in advance for your passion and commitment to the sport we love.

Sincerely,

Fred Lipka