



Dear Utah Youth Soccer Families, Friends, Coaches and Players -

Utah Youth Soccer Association aspires to be the premier youth sports organization in Utah as we serve our 57 Organizational Members (soccer clubs) and 56,000 players to promote, develop and govern youth soccer in Utah. We have spent 40+ years together as an association, working towards growing the game of soccer in Utah and helping to facilitate an opportunity for every child to play.

During the recent weeks of uncertainty, we've refrained from making any decisions without first considering all information available. As the governing body of youth soccer, we do not take lightly how the decisions we make affect our membership including every club, player, coach, referee, volunteer or family member. It is of utmost importance that we make each decision with the safety and well-being of our membership in mind.

Taking into consideration the interests of our clubs and players as well as listening to the guidance of our medical partners, US Youth Soccer, healthcare professionals and government officials, we've made some decisions that hopefully will provide clarity to the coming months.

### **Spring League Seasons**

We remain hopeful that a spring season will be played in some capacity. You may wonder why we don't cancel the season now. We can appreciate these sentiments, but the answer is not so simple. We know that returning to play is important to our clubs and families but only if it is safe to do so. If we can return to soccer activities in early May, new schedules will be created to accommodate a shortened season. UYSA will continue to work with club leadership to make these changes. More information and details of modified schedules will follow as we get closer to a reality of a spring season. However, we will continue to monitor the situation daily and will communicate to you if a spring season is not possible and must be officially canceled.

### **State Cup/Regionals/Nationals**

As many of you are already aware, US Youth Soccer has cancelled all Regional and National tournaments for the National Championship and Presidents Cup Series. Each year the champions from our State Cup and Presidents Cup tournaments compete at these Regional events with a chance to advance to Nationals. We are disappointed for our teams who now do not get this opportunity but understand and support US Youth Soccer's decision. Considering this information, we've decided to postpone our local Spring State Cup tournament indefinitely, which was set to begin May 11<sup>th</sup>. If we are able to return to play in early May, there is simply not enough time for our athletes to get ready to participate in a competitive tournament the next week. We are considering the possibility of hosting a modified Utah State Cup at a later date but will seek feedback from our clubs on if this is feasible and would still be important to them.



In addition, if we are in a situation where soccer activity can resume on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, our priority is to facilitate league play; to this point, game times might be adjusted, and field space and referees will be limited. We will need to dedicate all available resources to league games.

### **Potential Financial Impact to the Soccer Community**

While UYSA continues to work with club leadership to facilitate a modified spring season in some capacity, we feel it is critical to be fully transparent about the importance of this season to the infrastructure of soccer in Utah. We have 57 Organizational Members (clubs) who all operate as non-profit organizations. Without spring soccer, we are concerned that many of our clubs may not survive. The livelihood of coaches, employees and administrators who have spent hours working with and for you and your children will be at risk. The possibility of layoffs, downsizing facilities and even bankruptcy could be a reality that each organization faces. The structure of soccer in Utah has been laid over 40+ years thanks to the dedication and countless volunteer hours in our communities and it is all of our responsibility to protect the game we love and lift each other up.

**When we consider how important each of our soccer clubs is to the framework of our sport in this state, Utah Youth Soccer and our Board of Directors, is encouraging our soccer clubs to continue to try to fulfill their obligations to you by engaging with their players through online and digital services in creative ways, in lieu of issuing spring refunds.** We've been inspired by the engagement we've seen so far on social media and know there are hundreds of more activities happening behind the scenes- through webinars, phone calls, texts and email. Please be sensitive to the fact that the influence your child's coach has on their life extends far beyond the sidelines of matches during one season. They are working to help better your child both on and off the field in many capacities. During this trying time when things seem so uncertain, a coach's involvement in your child's life allows for added stability and aids in helping to keep their motivation, inspiration and drive.

### **Free Online Soccer Training Platform Membership for All Players and Coaches**

UYSA is also committed to the development of each player and coach during this break from organized group soccer activities. **To this point, we are excited to announce that we have reached an agreement with SoccerTech, an online soccer platform, to purchase a two-month (April and May) subscription for every player and coach to stay sharp and engaged in their development of the game during this time.** We are encouraging every club to utilize this platform to complement their daily and weekly engagements with their teams. In addition, we are committed to continue sharing the videos of those at home getting their workouts in using this platform and other club issued challenges and activities. **An additional email will be coming out shortly on how to activate your free online account. No credit card information will be required when activating your account.**

### **Player Scholarship Fund**

Lastly, UYSA will be setting up a player scholarship fund for the next seasonal year. This fund will help families who have been affected by this crisis and keep the game accessible to their players. Information on application and eligibility will be released over the next two months. We will also continue to look for other ways to be creative and strategic to assist as many players as we can over the next year.

We realize the future is uncertain, but we hope the decisions we've made will allow our clubs to have soccer accessible to your child the moment we are able to return to play. We will continue to encourage our clubs to be creative in how they are engaging with and providing resources to your children during



this time and to look for additional opportunities to offset lost services that may have been postponed due to this pandemic. We also encourage our clubs to help support the local soccer economy by staying in the state this summer to participate in UYSA sanctioned tournaments, which will help families save financially and provide more competitive opportunities for our players. In this way we can support one another and unite as Utah Youth Soccer.

Please continue to support the passion your child has for this game and remember your club and coach are an important part in growing and encouraging that passion in your child. This is an unprecedented time and while the badge on your jersey and club pride is important, let's unite as Utah's Soccer Community. We are here for you and know we'll get through this together.

Yours in Soccer,

Bryan Attridge, *CEO, Utah Youth Soccer*

Brian Smith, *President, Utah Youth Soccer*

