

# A Brief Summary of Seattle United

## What is Seattle United?

Seattle United is the working name for a new, integrated youth soccer club serving the Seattle Youth Soccer Association (a territory that encompasses the cities of Seattle and Shoreline) that will officially launch in 2010. Our goal is to unify the highest level competitive soccer (premier) with the mid-level (select) under a single organization. This organization will focus on developing great players through exceptional coaches, collaborative, coordinated programs, and an organizational emphasis on professionalism and inclusiveness.

## Why create Seattle United?

There is a trend at the state and national level toward consolidation in youth soccer clubs. Such clubs offer multiple options to their players, both in terms of geography and levels of competition. Despite the popularity of youth soccer in Seattle and Shoreline, we do not have such a unified club. Instead, we have a confusing mix of options including SYSA's designated premier club, Emerald City FC, several regional select programs, and numerous independent select teams. We believe that this fragmentation, and the resulting "free-for-all" competition for players, does not serve either the individual players or the soccer 'ecosystem' as a whole. Seattle United will seek to address these key issues:

1. **Travel.** For the players at the highest level, we will continue to offer premier teams along the Emerald City model that draw players from all over the city; but practice locations will be more predictable and sensible. We will also allow players the option of playing on select teams that will be better aligned with demand throughout the association, so that teams can train closer to home.
2. **Changing teams.** With a single club, Seattle United will eliminate the organizational division between premier and select clubs and teams, which will permit a freer flow of players who are more easily able to find their appropriate competitive level.
3. **Consistent coaching.** Coaching will be more consistent.
4. **Tryouts.** A uniform and collaborative tryout process will match players based upon their ability and level of interest.
5. **Economies of Scale.** By combining more teams into a common club, we expect to provide for more efficient sharing of resources such as professional coaches/trainers, academy programs (group skill clinics), fields and coaching oversight.
6. **Coordination with 'Recreational Soccer.'** Seattle United will create an integrated club that cooperates and coordinates much more closely with neighborhood recreational soccer programs. This will help the rec programs to develop players/skills for a more 'seamless' transition to more competitive levels.
7. **Governance.** Seattle United will establish a governing board that specifically addresses the needs and demands of select and premier soccer players and

programs. The governing board will supervise, but operate separately from, the soccer operation in keeping with sound governance principles.

## **When will Seattle United ‘happen’ and what will it mean?**

The SYSA member clubs will soon be asked to vote to form Seattle United preparatory to tryouts during spring 2010. Seattle United committees have been working on a draft operating plan and budget. In the spirit of Seattle United, some regional U11, U12 and U14 teams have already formed, will play in fall 2009 and expect to transition to Seattle United in 2010.

Once formed, Seattle United will have the following basic structure:

1. Coordinated tryouts for all teams in the club at each age and gender
2. Two premier (citywide) teams per age and gender
3. Regionally based select teams for the majority of players in four regions – Shoreline, Northeast, Westside, and South
4. One single club managed by a professional board that represents the regions, and the interests of all SYSA select and premier soccer players and families
5. Professional coaching directors and regional coaching directors that will select and develop quality coaches through training, peer review/evaluation and support staffing

The transition will be managed to minimize impact on players. The current plan is to transition U11-U14 teams (i.e., this year’s U11-U13 plus the new U11s) to Seattle United in spring 2010. Teams U15 and up may choose to continue playing under their host clubs or “opt in” to Seattle United.

## **How will the Seattle United organization be structured?**

Seattle United will be governed by an elected board of directors (likely 9 or 11 members). The board will reflect regional representation and a balance of skill sets. Governance functions will be performed by governance committees. Soccer functions will be supervised by one or more coaching directors and a volunteer soccer operations committee. Each of the regions will be supported by a volunteer regional committee which, among other functions, will recruit coaches to staff the regional teams.

Seattle United represents a great opportunity to develop players with a variety of abilities throughout all of Seattle’s neighborhoods. It will yield competitive teams, at multiple levels of competition, trained by exceptional coaches focused on continuous improvement. For additional details, view the draft [Operating Plan](#).

And stay tuned for additional updates...