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## working or not?

Posted by rziegler - 2008/03/26 22:31

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Depending on who you ask this academy concept is flourishing or failing.

I think it's mostly the former. Certainly it needs some tweaking. Clubs in Southern California for instance should probably be left to play among themselves and then go to the 2-4 showcases for recruiting purposes. But for the most the country it represents a very real upgrade from what we had before. I think we need to improve this idea, not scrap it.

What are some of the practical issues that need to be dealt with?

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by sburleigh - 2008/03/27 00:14

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I think one of the practical issues that many clubs are facing is the financial burden placed on them due to the extensive traveling they are required to do. As mentioned in the previous post, there are enough teams in Southern California such that they don't have to travel up to Washington to play. Are there not any good teams close to Washington that are closer than Southern California? I would imagine this extensive traveling is worse in other parts of the country where teams are more spaced out, no?

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by spencer@usfcsoccer.com - 2008/03/27 03:10

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The Academy League is in process. The concept behind the league is excellent. Giving the best players opportunity to play regularly in elite competition. This is the first season for this league to exist. The costs are high but the potential returns will be higher. As American soccer continues to develop it will be crucial that we have the Academy League in place or something similar that is represented by the Nations top teams. We need to put elite players in an environment where they can develop and train to reach the next level. If people give the Academy League a few years to develop I am sure that we will begin to recognize positive results in our National Teams as well as in the level of play throughout the US.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by melissa - 2008/03/31 19:48

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The most obvious issue that needs to be dealt with is the cost. Overall, our cost this year probably isn't going to be much more (if at all) than previous years when all is considered (RIIPL, Super Y, ODP camp, tournaments, and state league games). We are lucky though in that our conference games are all drive-able. The cross conference games, on the other hand...\$700 to play one game X 2 (player only - parents aren't traveling) is a bit much.

The good stuff: training (yes, it is different, even if same coach and many of the same kids), exposure (this has been HUGE, between the showcases and scouts coming to watch regular conference games), and the competition. The competition to a lesser extent, but that will improve each year the program grows.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by Odyssey4 - 2008/04/02 00:36

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What I have seen so far is that clubs are sticking to the minimum of training 3 times a week to meet the minimum requirements set for academy teams. I believe that our club culture and mind set still is totally focused on advancing to National Championship and never understanding or caring about the importance of quality training. Players at these age groups (91 and 89) in Europe are training 5 to 8 times per week. How could we ever hope to catch up when we are so arrogant to believe that we can develop players with 3 training sessions per week. I believe the Academy League is a great start but must require at least a MINIMUM of 4 trainings per week and more coaching clinics.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by melissa - 2008/04/28 21:31

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Odyssey4 wrote:

I believe the Academy League is a great start but must require at least a MINIMUM of 4 trainings per week and more coaching clinics.

4 trainings per week as a general rule seems to be the norm that I've seen/heard about. However, with travel weekends resulting in 2 games, one on Sat and one on Sun, there have been weeks with only 3 training sessions. This is to give the players Monday off after playing the two games. Number of contacts per week (# games + # training sessions) almost always comes to at least 4, sometimes 5.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by melissa - 2008/05/26 21:00

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The spring showcase in Rockford proved to be a bit of a disappointment. The team came home with a goal differential of 11-1, and a 3-0 record. That might be good in the quest to go to Home Depot in July, but not so much for developing the team through stiff competition.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by dpackard - 2008/05/29 15:10

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I also think that players need to be training as much as possible. Its tough though when they are not in a "real" academy setting, such as those offered in Europe. Kids in those programs live and train in the same place, with the same people, day in and day out. While the academy system here is still in its infancy, it would be interesting to see such a system put in place (other than the U17 Residency program) - or at least more environments like it, perhaps not an entire system.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by haphazard - 2008/05/30 20:18

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J. Hackworth's comment on some clubs not being allowed because of geography, well guess what J. Hackworth, I don't see a minnesota teams in there...why not ? same goes for New Mexico !

and yes, the pro clubs, Colorado, Fire, Crew, ect..do have an edge in the financial area, they supplement a lot of the costs...regular clubs are gouging the parents.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by diego - 2008/06/02 12:35

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Do clubs do any type of fundraising or Sponsorship to help offset costs?

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by lazer3 - 2008/06/02 14:07

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I think that the fund raising from clubs is very minimal, but it seems that parents are able to pick up the costs. In a true

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academy setting though, i would think that it would cost nothing to the players and families, but instead be paid for by the club.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by AZeda2 - 2008/06/02 14:37

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I think that the coaches are knowledgeable enough to know how many training sessions to have. Ideally, they would obviously train as many days a week as possible, and be given days off when necessary (players who played in games over the weekend, injured players etc). In Europe, i know that this is how they do it anyways, training as many days as possible... Training 3 days a week!!! THATS AMETUER!!! To keep up with the other countries in the world, it think our players need to be training AT LEAST as much as they are!!!!!!

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by mbman - 2008/06/02 15:09

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Ya i agree with Lazer3... the club should be obligated to cover expenses of the travel, uniforms etc. If the players are good enough to play at supposedly "the highest level of youth soccer in the country" they shouldnt be paying to show thier talent.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by BFUDGE - 2008/06/02 15:43

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I definitely agree with all of you guys, but is it really realistic thinking that this is going to happen?? i mean some teams like the galaxy and chivas have u20 teams but nothing else. I think that they should start working their way down to younger teams as soon as the academy is properly in place.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by ThEeKiNg7 - 2008/06/02 16:30

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BFUDGE wrote:

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FA SHOOOOOOO...

ya hit it right on the money man. Developing kids from a younga age would obviously make sense and ultimately make the system better. Starting with the younga kids is money...

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by heyitsdrew - 2008/06/02 16:39

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I think that the competition is much better in the Academy league. Playing CSL premier last year and the academy this year are like night and day. Both had good teams, but the competition and atmosphere of the academy is much better. There were always scouts at games, and many players from my team are now going to play in college. HOWEVER i think that there are definate areas for improvement... here are my suggestions (coming from a player)

1. Cut out the small clubs and have the MLS teams each have a team
2. Clubs pay for expenses etc
3. Player and Parent education about what is being done

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by SMclaughlin33 - 2008/06/04 11:59

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I think those are are valid points, but are they really realistic for US soccer? I mean not many people in the US really care about soccer, and im sure YOUTH soccer takes a back seat to most peoples priorities. I think theyre all good ideas, but a very far stretch for american soccer.

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by Soccerstar54 - 2008/06/04 12:28

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these are all good points. i think that the academy is working well, anything is an imprvment from what was in place int he past... wich wasnt much. Rather than scrutinizing it, US Soccer should be working on improvements to the system. I think the idea posed earlier about all MLS teams having an academy is a GREAT idea. anyone else agree?

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by lazer3 - 2008/06/25 11:36

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the cost of the academy to travel etc. might be driving away some top talent. The CLUB should be required to A) find the best players and B) cover their expenses

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by CC7@aol.com - 2008/07/02 14:55

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I think that after the academy finals are over with in a couple of weeks, we will get a better view of how the first year has gone. One concern that i would like to bring up though, is the lack of commitment from players who have already signed with their respective schools. I mean i dont blame them, there really isnt any point to paying ALL that money to go to a showcase that really doesnt benifit them at all. What does everyone think ?????

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by Soccerstar54 - 2008/07/14 15:32

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I definately agree! Why would a player who has already decided to play in college spend thousands of dollars to play in these last few showcases of the year? I mean, yeah it would be good competition and prepare them for the next college season, but that is a lot of time and money. I do hear that a lot of players are continuing to play in these showcases due to the ever increasing number of European scouts at the events. It seems that the glamour of Europe is really attracting many players to possibly open up new doors for their career, even if they might have once thought that college was the only way to go. Do you think that with more of these scouts at the showcases, the Academy itself is WAY more appealing to players, coaches, and parents alike????

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## Re:working or not?

Posted by CC7@aol.com - 2008/07/14 16:10

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These perks only make the academy more appealing and open so many doors for players. Do you think that the USSF should allow more teams to participate next year?

