

ECFC Member comments for SYSA Board of Commissioners

145 comments

From members who indicated a preference for a “NO” vote in opposition to the Seattle United Proposal Package

As a participating parent, it remains unclear how the consolidation of select/premier soccer will realistically provide player options that do not currently exist through established clubs. From my perspective the reorganization appears unnecessary and has the potential to make select soccer in Seattle weaker overall. Specifically, I feel my child will develop best within a nonparent coached framework which allows for a variety and progression of coaching experiences. ECFC provides that option within an established club framework. Sure I would like that to exist at a field and club in my neighborhood (who wouldn't?). But I don't feel that is realistic or would suddenly become possible under a consolidated structure. In fact many arguments to the contrary could easily be made. I believe that people have and will continue to vote with their feet. If passed, I would expect a flight of talent from Seattle to boarding premier clubs overall impacting select and premier soccer in Seattle for years to come. Another option would be to improve and strengthen our region's existing premier club outside of a complete reorganization. To me Seattle United appears to be more about politics than soccer which is disappointing.

Don,t try and fix what is not broken. There is plenty of other issues to devote your time and energy. Let the premeir program be run with professionals and not lawyers pretending to be experts.

Don't agree with the three specific proposals to be voted on 9 July; but strongly agree with continually improving ECFC through collaboration, and think that the Seattle United proposal might include some good ideas.

don't want to lose the long-standing name recognition and reputation of Emerald Clty Football Club in this process.

ECFC has created a legacy and invaluable brand that should be carried forward. There is no upside to eliminating the name and is hurtful to both current and past players. The waste of this brand and the pain to the players has no measurable upside. From a simply business perspective this approach is indenfensible. This is unfortunate as the root benefits of Seattle United are quite meaningful and valuable. The appropriate path forward is simple: create the efficiencies and benefits of the Seattle United's streamlined approach but do so in a manner that allows for the continued existence of the EC moniker, culture, enthusiasm, history and success.

Eliminating ECFC is a bad idea. There are other ways to address shortfalls in SYSA's program.

Emerald City is great! We have two kids who have played soccer for several other clubs, and Emerald City, while of course not perfect, is far better than any other soccer experience we have had. The kids love playing for the club, the coaches care, and the parents generally are enthusiastic about the club. Why would anyone think to shut down Emerald City? Quite frankly, if someone had told me this was an April Fool's joke, I would have believed them. I have never heard such a silly idea. You don't take something that is working, that people like and close it. Can Emerald City be made better? I'm sure it can. But it is already very good and listens to parents and kids about how to improve the program. Let's all work together to make Seattle soccer as good as it can be, not by closing successful programs, but by building upon them! I have heard lots of reasons why this vote is taking place but the one that sounds most realistic is it's about politics. And that reason -- and not focusing on the kids -- is a bad way to go about running any organization. Let's stay focused on the kids.

Having been a parent of two players who played recreational soccer and select soccer for other clubs, I would say that overall Emerald City does a great job for the players. This statistic is backed up by the very high satisfaction among its member families. They generally have good coaches that care about the kids and they try to develop the kids to become good soccer players. The kids enjoy it a lot. This is much better than what we have experienced and observed with most other select and recreational soccer clubs. Is it perfect? No. But I don't know any organization - including the best companies in the world - that are. Are there things that can be improved about Seattle soccer, I'm sure there are. But to "blow up" something that is good, working, and making many hundreds of families and kids happy is, literally, insane. Moreover throwing away a strong brand name also shows no understanding of how the world works. Kids, competitors, and colleges know the Emerald City brand. To throw it away is something you would probably be fired for if you worked for a business. It is not easy to create new organizations that make their customers happy. Indeed it is extremely hard. In that light, my strong suggestion is that the Board of SYSA work with ECFC to help it become stronger - perhaps by adding more teams - and better vs eliminating it.

I agree that changes need to be made within ECFC, and within Seattle Youth select soccer as a whole. But to completely eliminate the organization is not the way to do it. Elimination of ECFC is a mistake that I strongly believe will lead to the loss of good coaches as well as players from Seattle. While I recognize and appreciate the work that went into this proposal, I think it creates more problems than it fixes.

I agree that the process seems like it is being rushed through. As a new member of ECFC, I do not feel as though I have sufficient information to cast a vote one way or another. It would be helpful to hear from ECFC parents who are supporting SU, and know what their individual complaints with the current structure are.

I agree that unifying Seattle soccer is a good idea, but this plan goes too far too fast. ECFC has raised legitimate concerns, and I think that more time should be taken to listen to these concerns, get more input from families, and come up with a plan that everyone can support before trying to reorganize the soccer program at the premier level. If there are people who want this to happen immediately and are not willing to wait another year to come up with a stronger plan that has greater buy-in, then I am suspicious of their motives. If SYSA wants to start doing something immediately, then they could start in 2010 reorganizing soccer at mid-tier select level, since I think most people have agreed that this is where the bulk of the problems lie.

I am a parent of xx players with ECFC - one in her/his xxth year with the club and the other starting her/his xxrd year with the club. There has been a lot of "talk" and "print" about how Seattle United (SU) will fix the problem of Seattle Youth Soccer. My question is, what is the problem? Where is the data that shows how many players are being denied playing opportunities based on the current system with local area rec clubs (LVR, Magnolia, Hillwood, etc), a variety of non-PDL select level clubs (FC Shoreline, Westside Utd, Redhawks, etc) and Emerald City as the premier soccer club with competition in the highest state leagues (P1, P2, P3 for the older age groups and PDL for the younger age groups). These various choices allow players and parents to choose the level of play, the financial commitment and the time commitment. Coming from the parent perspective of ECFC players, I feel the Seattle United movement is being forced on every soccer player (and their families) without any concrete evidence that the soccer playing experience for any individual player or team will be improved. You're talking about one huge club of youth soccer with all the various playing levels covered - all very 'pc' no doubt and sounds good on paper. What will you do about the players/teams/parents who don't want to move to your system? My older [player] will be a xx in high school, looking toward college and after xx years with ECFC may now be facing her/his U-xx year without a club? I see the proposal that the older age groups will remain 'ECFC' and be 'phased out' but how can that happen if you destroy ECFC? Talk about denying players their opportunity! I would strongly urge you to oppose the Seattle United proposal that would remove the premier designation from ECFC - 30 years of building a strong club and reputation should not so easily be cast aside.

I am a parent of a ECFC player and a Rec team player. Both are fitting the needs of both of our children just fine. While I understand, in part, the motives behind these proposed changes, the fact that they want to destroy a well-functioning organization (ECFC) does not make sense to me. If the decision is that select soccer in Seattle needs to be all under one umbrella (someone that knows soccer better than I, needs to be making that decision) like they do on the Eastside that is fine but they need to leave ECFC intact as it is and allow the organization run as it is. I have heard a rumor that with these proposed changes that Bobby Howe would not longer have a job and that coaching decisions would be made by parents. I think this a terrible idea. I want these decisions made by someone who knows soccer intimately, has played soccer, that has no children of their own involved in the club. The change to Seattle United seems like a rushed decision. I can't help but feeling that it is being fueled by jilted parents who have a bone to pick. I have yet to truly understand what is the problem is that they are trying to fix. It seems like things are working for most people the way it is. I am happy, my children are happy.

I am extremely saddened, confused, and now angry at the lack of direction, input and factual information regarding this plan as it is now being presented and rushed forward. If this was a comprehensive and positively viable alternative to the existing program then why the rush, closed meetings, limited access for input, anonymous emails with deceptive messaging, finger pointing and accusations without factual basis. I have not seen the unbiased gathering of information where the input is from a broad range of professional soccer personnel who have the experience, knowledge and desire for inclusiveness in the process that would make any change a positive one. When I mention professional soccer personnel I am not referring to the over eager parent who has coached some soccer and now feels entitled to change and run Seattle soccer as they see fit, and to fix a system that they do not fully understand. I am also not referring to the coach with a personal axe to grind or the administrator who takes a job in support of one organization while quietly working against the very same entity. These people are biased and shouldn't be included in any serious discussion regarding the future of soccer in Seattle. Real, affective and positive change is never rushed. Inclusiveness and transparency are always tantamount to all good decisions. Most importantly the integrity of the persons making these decisions should not be called into question. I strongly urge all SYSA commissioners to take a step back, regather, and truly commit to a thoughtful comprehensive unbiased process toward the continued evolution of soccer in Seattle.

I am the father of a [player] who will be playing her/his second year for Emerald City FC on Uxx. I cannot overstate our family's positive experience with ECFC, and our dismay at the Seattle United process that seeks to disband the club. ECFC has taken our [player]'s skills and passion for the game to an entirely new level. ECFC has provided excellent coaches, excellent oversight, openness to change and improvement, transparency of operation, a democratically-elected parent board, fantastic name-recognition, and a strong sense of community. Why fix what is not broken? There is no question that the soccer experience in greater-seattle has room for improvement, and I fully support SYSA's addressing those aspects of the various community programs that need work. I fully support SYSA's working to improve the area's Select options. And I am all for any changes to the Premier program that make it better for the players. But it makes no sense to disband Emerald City. Instead I would love to see Seattle United fully develop its mission to provide more information to parents and coaches at all levels, and streamline communication and paths for players to move between the various soccer entities in our area, including recreational teams, the many quality teams/clubs now playing at the district select level, and Emerald City FC. I believe that parents and players will be best served through the widest possible range of choices, along with the information and playing experiences needed to fully understand these options.

I believe that this proposal does nothing to improve the playing opportunities for my children. I have an older child who plays U-xx District Select as well as my U-xx ECFC player. The current system has provided the right opportunities for both of them. By removing ECFC as a Premier option you (SYSA commissioners) will further strengthen the other existing Premier clubs such as Crossfire and NW Nationals. Many if not all ECFC players will look there for opportunities versus the new unproven and what appears to be ill-thought-out Seattle United.

I do not support the SYSA Seattle United Plan. I do not believe SYSA has provided a fact-based, transparent situation analysis, case for change or evidence that Seattle United is the right way to go. Our family has had a great experience with youth soccer at the Rec and PDL levels (primarily ECFC but also Crossfire). I believe the current system provides a lot of choice for parents and players and enables them to "vote with their feet" if they do not like the club they play for. I have not seen any evidence that kids are being poorly served by the current system and certainly have not in our personal experience. I urge SYSA to withdraw the Seattle United proposal and do the following: 1. Create a clear situation analysis based on quantitative parent feedback and fact-based benchmarking with other soccer organizations' nationally. 2. Propose several options to address any problems identified and allow parents to vote on them. 3. Make change, as appropriate, based on the outcome of above. I would be willing to participate in such a process.

I dont think that it should be done because not only would we all have to order new uniforms, but we would also have to decide on the colors,design, ect. and i think that it would just be to much of a hassle

I have already emailed all of the commissioners in my area with my thoughts. I would, however, like to reiterate that I would like all of them to oppose the Seattle United proposals as they now stand. I believe that many changes need to be enacted before further consideration to the proposal be given.

I have been trying to stay neutral during all of this and after reading the materials on both ECFC and SYSA, I couldn't take a pro or con position...it's way too confusing and there are obviously other agendas at work here. Adults, likely on both sides, have made a huge mess of the effort and process. Now, in an atmosphere of significant distrust, a cram down is offered as resolution. In trying to explain this to our [player], the ledger offers no gain and only loss. Our decision to go with Emerald City was informed and conscious, our experience has been very positive, and we would plan on continuing for as long as our [player] has the ability and the desire. From what I can understand, in spite of our desires and considerable satisfaction and investment, the club will disappear, and my [player] will be better off how? And what if most ECFC families are like us? Cram-downs are a sign of failure, not success. I'd slow everything down and try to find some rational people on both sides who can work on building trust and driving for a mutually agreed solution. It appears, based on the very little I know, that one may be out there.

I have read through all the literature and attended several SYSA and Emerald City meetings and I still don't have the answer to how this is going to improve the situation. Lets face facts all this really is, is the resentment of a few SYSA board members of the ECFC board and Bobby Howe and there desire to see that ECFC is destroyed. This has nothing to do with "What's best for the player's" I implore the remaining board members to do the right thing and vote down the proposed changes as proposed at this time. This is not to say Seattle United pyramid ideal is not a good one as long as ECFC is part of the solution I feel comfortable with moving forward.

I have reviewed the Seattle United materials on the SYSA website and reviewed several statements for and against. I believe very strongly that (a) the Seattle United program does not and will not address the problems it is purportedly designed to address, (b) is suspiciously lacking in transparency and process, and (c) is fundamentally flawed in its overriding objective of eliminating Emerald City. If Emerald City has problems, fix them. If the relationship between Emerald City and the other SYSA select clubs is fractured, fix that too. This is not the answer. No one could have summed the situation up better than Bobby Howe did in his statement. Save Emerald City, and use this process to improve it.

I implore you to postpone this vote until agreement can be reached around the proposed changes, and to enlist a mediator to help you reach agreement. An attempt to force a merger will only create further division and thus undermine the very goals you're trying to achieve, many of which I'd like to support. But my [player] loves Emerald City - she's had a wonderful experience, with great coaches, and I've been very happy with the club as well - and I can't support any change that's imposed on us without our consent. SYSA's website argues that the plan isn't being rushed because it's been in development for a long time - as though drawing up a plan is enough in itself, and there's no need for discussion and agreement in the community. Please reconsider this. I understand that from your perspective, after the time you've spent working on the plan, it doesn't seem rushed. But from the outside, the drive to move ahead to a final vote at your next meeting without effective consultation to ensure "buy-in" and without consensus does seem rushed, and in a way will only have negative consequences for both the proposed club and the kids.

I joined Emerald City at U12 to play at the highest level possible for me (PDL), and your proposal will prevent me and all my teammates from playing PDL. This is unacceptable to me, and if it does happen, I will be sure to leave the Seattle soccer area, and go to NW Nationals, to play for them.

I joined this club because I believe in the philosophy and the leadership. The whole Seattle United thing makes me uncomfortable and if it passes would probably cause a decision to go elsewhere....

I play on an ECFC U-13 blue team, which is the C team, so if there were only two teams, I wouldn't get to play.

I think it's important for these commissioners to know that parents often seek comfort in the fact that ecfc is a well established club with deep roots. Today parents have several options with their children as to which club, the level of commitment, the price of each club, and foremost the experience their child can have. There are so many options just within a 20 mile radius. Yet each club seems to bring something different to the table. But as a parent of a ecfc player, we found Ecfc to bring the most to the table from coaches, to players, to budgets, to respect for the game. I have read the Seattle United timeline and found it to be responsible during the beginning stages but then went practical and overpowering in all but a 6 month period. This is a sign of unorganization which leads to failure. With today's economy starting something new isn't always what is best for the current future Thank you

I think more work needs to be done to ensure all players and parents that the Seattle United proposal will not impact ECFC players negatively. At this point I am not convinced that the transition will be seamless for the kids nor am I convinced that the new model will be any better. The system at the moment is not perfect but there is nothing to say that a new Seattle United will be any better. We have choice right now and we can do our voting with our feet. If we don't like ECFC there are plenty of other options out there and we can simply seek out other options. We have had children play for both Crossfire and ECFC -- while Crossfire churns out winning teams they do not live by the mission of developing the player, like ECFC. Crossfire was a horrible experience for our youngest child (s/he played well on their A team but the pressure was immense...the coach screamed and berated the children) so we brought [our player] back to ECFC where we knew the focus would be on [our player] as a person and player. Our oldest child has played on both A and B teams at ECFC and while her/his experience has had its ups and downs I am not convinced it would have been any better or different at other so-called "stronger" clubs across the bridge. With ECFC s/he has not burned out, has had a ton of playing time and has blossomed so much that s/he is now playing up a year on an A team. SYSA -- please do not do something that will negatively impact the children. There is no need to rush this process. We have survived in Seattle without a feeder club for the Sounders this long...why don't you take a few years and really hammer this out so we are all reassured that the transition will be seamless and you have buy-in from the majority of ECFC parents?

I think that the Seattle United proposal is still just that, a proposal and has not been fully developed or considered enough to be implemented. I am particularly concerned that the governance structure is ill-conceived, and no board should be appointed not elected. To me, Seattle United does not offer any advantages over Emerald City and looks to be an organization developed by committee, a huge problem that plagues many organizations in Seattle (and bear in mind a camel is a horse designed by committee). I suspect, from anecdotal evidence, that if Seattle United were to come to pass, that many "experienced" premier families will simply move their children to established suburban clubs, further weakening Seattle's chance to field any competitive clubs whatsoever. True strong clubs have a range of teams at the premier level, a depth of talent, not just two teams. The letter sent out to SYSA membership last month from anonymous Seattle United proponents reflects an immaturity on that organization's part that suggests to me that Seattle United is not ready for prime time. For Seattle United to work, it needs the support and structure of ECFC behind it, and this "hostile takeover" will ensure that it will most likely fail.

I think this is all grounded in nasty, nasty politics... Why would we ever change the name of such a well known team. It seems to me we need to go back to the basics of Marketing 101. For the amount of money we are paying, I at least want the name recognition that Emerald City FC has, when my [player] applies to high school and later to college.

I want to see ECFC stay as Seattle's Premier soccer club.

If non-ECFC players/parents wanted to be part of a premiere club they could have tried out. Most did not because they did not want to make that type of commitment. By splitting the U11-U14 players for next year out of ECFC, you remove all chances for them to play PDL - i.e. the highest level of competition. By definition of the above, the steering committee obviously has an agenda and a vendetta against ECFC. I am sure I am not alone to tell that if this proposal goes thru and my [player] who will be U14 for the 2010-11 season is not allowed to play PDL, we will 100% leave the geographical sphere of SYSA and join NW Nationals. My [player] deserves the best coaches (not a soccer dad who thinks he can coach), a team with the best players and a club that supports her goals. I do not care if Sally or Bobby just want to play rec or dsitric. My [player] has earned the rite to play PDL and at the highest level possible. I will not compromise this essential point.

If SU were to be approved, where would players U14 and above, that are eligible to play at a high level, be able to play at the PDL level, as ECFC is no longer considered the Premier club of SYSA?

It all seems so secretive.

It has absolutely not been made clear to me how this plan will specifically help my player who is competing on an ECFC team that is in the PDL Division 1 group at her/his age and is a highly competitive team within this grouping. All the changes that I see being proposed will result in Seattle United based teams being less competitive at the highest levels and will simply drive families like us to seek out opportunities in other neighbouring organizations further diluting the talent pool within the Seattle based teams. We and our [player] have had a fantastic experience within the ECFC community and have worked hard, including [volunteering for the team], to help organize and support this organization. You can quite simply count us out for any support whatsoever should the Seattle United plan go through as it is currently written and proposed.

It is unclear to me why it is necessary to disband Emerald City FC in order to proceed with Seattle United.

It seems that there should be a way to keep ECFC intact AND improve the club select/mid-tier select program. It is very unclear why ECFC must be disbanded to make this all work, and it feels like SYSA is reinventing the wheel through a hostile takeover. We have yet to see the data that indicates that this new structure will be an improvement over the current one and agree fully with the letter from Curtis Kopf that there needs to be more solid data gathered before making such big decisions. Both of us serve as Directors for organizations in Seattle (including boards of non-profit organizations) and the timeline that SYSA has drafted for implementation seems unachievable for an organization with paid staff to implement the plan, let alone a non-profit organization that relies on the work of volunteers. Haste makes waste and it would be a shame to have premier soccer fall apart in Seattle with many of the best players leaving to go to other nearby clubs due to the chaos that is inevitable in the next year with this rushed plan.

I've now read all of the SYSA materials. There's no proof that SYSA can field a better club system than ECFC.

more time is needed to properly evaluate the proposals as they address concerns between select and premier soccer. Too few people in SYSA leadership are making huge decisions that effect hundreds of kids without proper or adequate communication.

most of the time the "bigger" does not mean the "better"

No to Seattle united Ecfc to remain intact

Not enough due diligence, inclusion and collaboration appears to be done on the plan. It appears rushed through the system and not comprehensive in nature taking into account the many facets necessary to build/rebuild the program for success in Seattle. The largest gap is a section on "who is our customer" and what are their needs. This is very focused on outlining a plan against broad, generalized, goals as opposed to specific needs of the players, the existing clubs and the SYSA association. I am concerned that a "vocal minority" who were interviewed during the process or provided feedback to the consultant is being contrued as representative of the general population.

Please do not allow a hand full of people the ability to take away my child's team and our soccer club so they can experiment with their theories about what is best for our children's soccer career.

Please do not dismantle the ECFC program, but rather work cooperatively with ECFC to build on a more coordinated program throughout Seattle. Please answer many of the questions asked with data and support from other programs that work in the way proposed.

Seattle United proposes to have only 2 PDL girls and 2 PDL boys teams per age group. Crossfire has 4 PDL teams per age group for each sex - at least in the younger age groups that I'm familiar with. Most other clubs have at least 3 PDL teams per age group for each sex. ECFC currently has 3 girls PDL teams in my [player]'s age group. The Seattle United plan actually significantly reduces opportunities for playing at a higher level in what will be the largest FC in the state. Why would we want to reduce opportunities for the sake of standardization?

Seems to me the reason for the restructuring cited by Seattle United can be accomplished within the existing framework. There is no need to a wholesale change. I do think the the Westside Uniteds and other regional select teams should feed in to and there should be better coordination. ECFC should continue but with some compromise to address the legitimate concerns raised by the supporters of Seattle United.

Sounds like this could be a good thing eventually. It is all happening too quickly and the details do not seem to be agreed upon. This should take a couple of years of ECFC and SYSA people working together to make it something that is bought into by all and that everyone is proud of. What's the big rush? It seems really shortsighted to force this thing through when we could all take time to work together.

Taken at face value, the Seattle United initiative makes sense. However, there are many valid concern related to logistics, ability to manage, and branding. Whether these concerns are valid are debatable, but there is no doubt that there will be painful start-up issues typical of any new organization. Our family is not involved in any way regarding the management of soccer in Seattle. However, it is clear to us that the Seattle United initiative will have profound political consequences, and that most of these affect the board and coaches. Our concern is that the kids will be caught up in the fight; for instance, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the kids currently on Emerald City will be discriminated against by Seattle United. Why not just adopt all ECFC teams into the SU premier team (with annual try-outs, of course). What happens if ECFC just breaks away and forms it's own league outside of SYSA? As an outsider, this looks more like a divorce with custody issues. Let's not sacrifice the well-being of our children for an adult fight.

The Clubs like ECFC are valueable to our children who want to get more out of soccer. I feel that clubs like ECFC offer that to our children. Forming Seattle United limits those opportunities by limiting clubs like ECFC.

The information provided by Seattle United does not provide compelling data-driven support for the need to disband ECFC. As we do not believe that bigger is necessarily better (and in some cases it is worse), we would like to see Seattle United incorporate ECFC under its auspices as its independent premier club. On the other hand, we very much like the concept of working to form a soccer academy that through the Sounders organization would help to groom players at the pre-select levels, would offer specialty training (goal keeping, speed, agility, tactics, shooting, referee training, safety and injury prevention training), provide advanced coaching clinics, and perhaps provide instruction on club management skills. This academy should be available to all players, coaches, and staff of all clubs throughout the region.

The Seattle United FC plan, in general, seems to be well thought out and I believe will lead to better opportunities for all players and less confusion. That said, it appears that it is being implemented in an adversarial way, at least to this outsider. From my perspective, a brief pause and come compromise is in order, to avoid bad feelings which will detract from the value represented by all the good work and direction devoted to the Seattle United project

The Seattle/Shoreline area is large enough to be able to support two large soccer organizations.

There are some benefits of the Seattle United plan. But unfortunately we fear that at least in part the proposals are not in the best interest of the players. Additionally Seattle Uniteds budget proposals appear to be totally unrealistic and reflect their inexperience. Ultimately if pursued in its present form the short and medium term loss of players and coaches would be inevitable. The potential to "win the battle" but lose the war, with a totally new governing body is a outcome that Seattle United could be facing. On the other side of the argument, the Emerald City Club has done a poor job of recruitment from the largest pool in the state. It continues to lose the most talented players to the clubs with a higher athletic performance and focus. If it were not for the obvious questionable motivation and lack of foresightful negotiation upon Seattle Uniteds part, this survey would have been moot. Not a glowing beginning to their tenure. Sincerely xx

There are too many questions that have not been answered and I have received mixed responses from those who are pushing for Seattle United. If they say this is in the best interest of the kids then the two sides need to agree that postponing the vote is in the best interest of the kids and not certain board member personal agendas. I would strongly suggest you reconsider the vote at this time and take a step back and spend a few more months gathering the very strong feedback from parents/players/coaches/ECFC and SYSA members and then tackle the to 5-8 open questions that are still very unclear. This will only give board members more credibility by taking this extra time to address the increasing number of questions. If not, then most will clearly assume this is more politically motivated than actually trying to improve the overall soccer experience for our kids. Personally, I will take my kids elsewhere to play than be associated with this type of mentality, I hope you make the right decision for the sake of our youth!!!

There are too many unanswered questions in the current Seattle United proposal. The possibility of creating an organization that is run by people with self interest looms large. I have several concerns: 1. The fact that from the beginning ones appointment to the steering committee was predicated on ones stated belief that they agreed with the concept of Seattle United stinks. The concept of what Seattle United should look like should have been approached with an open mind NOT on a preconcieved idea and the fact that people with different views were not welcome is unfortunate. 2. ECFC works. We have the structure in place with a coaching director who is looking out for the kids and what is best for them. We have procedures, policies, accounting systems, ... We have a board that is voted on by the membership. We have a known name and existing uniforms. Why throw all of that away and start over? 3. Parents should NOT be involved in coaching decisions. The system vaguely proposed by Seattle United seems to allow for that possibility. There should be NO possibility. That door needs to be FIRMLY shut before sysa would agree to seattle united operating plan. 4. As the xx of a coach and the xx of soccer players, I see the joy of coaching your own child and the pitfalls. Perceived fairness by the other families is a big pitfall. Seattle United seems to allow for legacy teams where one coach/parent can stay with a team for as long as the club coaching committee says ok. There is a big worry that a politcally well connected coach can stay on to the detriment of players at that age group. Legacy teams might be loyal to kids who have been on the team for a long time and not give a chance to better skilled players trying out. That should not be allowed at the premier level. The current limit of 2 years seems fair and then only when in the best interest of all the kids. 5. I trust ECFC. I trust the system of electing or board. I trust Bobby Howe/ECFC Coaching Director to make decisions that are motivated by the best intentions for youth soccer. I may not always agree with his or the clubs decisions made but i trust that the system is fair. Seattle United's documents say wonderful things about their intentions but the system that is being proposed seems to allow for too many appointed positions or at least for that possibility. Their stated goals do not match up with the desire to do away with ECFC. ECFC should be able to exist along with a strong middle teir select organization. Why eliminate ECFC?

Their reasons are outside the wonderful idealism of their operating agreement. I do not want the future of Seattle Youth soccer in the hands of a few self appointed people who seem to have a personal agenda. At the very least, sysa should not vote yes until the operating agreement has a better defined structure in place. The possibility for control by a few well connected insiders seems to scream for caution by sysa. Please vote no to the current Seattle United operating proposal.

There is a fundamental flaw in the rationale for unifying the SYSA clubs into a single organization: a monopoly always offers less choice to consumers (in this case, players and their families). This is Economics 101. Competition among clubs offers players choices. If they disagree with a club's coaching philosophy or player development strategy, they can find a club that is more in tune with their thinking. If they are not happy with the number of tournaments played, defensive formations, substitution policies, or any of a number of other policies, they have alternatives. This goes deeper than the choice among premier, select, and rec teams, which Seattle United offers. This is about choosing a club that you like. Different families have different preferences. The Seattle United proposal means that only one choice is offered, and that's just not a good idea.

There is a wide gulf between what is proposed by the SYSA/SU plan and the reality of a working organization. For those of us who've been volunteer parents for the past several years, understanding the amount of coordination and cooperation required between the organization, its coaches, parents and kids, the plan I've read doesn't come close to capturing the organizational requirements of a first class club. I don't want my kids to fall victim to these shortcomings while SU figures it out. I'm pleased with ECFC as it stands.

There is not enough information on the Seattle United plan for approval. There is no seemingly good reason to disband ECFC.

This huge change has not been communicated to the general public of Seattle Soccer families well enough. There definitely needs to be more time spent looking at the pros and cons of a change like this. This could be a great thing if it was done correctly. Let's not ruin it and make things worse in Seattle. Take your time and do it right!

This is absurd!! I am appalled by how they are forcing this down our throats. I would definitely consider leaving SYSA altogether for an east side club. Perhaps they should consider the new name instead of Seattle UNITED to Seattle DIVIDED!! What is wrong with implementing this program within the existing ECFC governance and leave their personal egos behind for the good of the players and their parents!

This is not well planned or executed and needs more time, more transparency. It seems crazy to eliminate ECFC and its role in the PDL to start something from scratch, especially when none of the Seattle United leaders have any experience whatsoever.

This is our first year playing for Emerald City and we love everything the club has to offer. We played for xx last year and our [player] just loves all the new friends s/he has made so far with Emerald City! Our youngest xx also plays for EC U-xx and it would be a shame if this club didn't exist anymore. We love all of the board members at the club and also the coaches are amazing with our two [players]! We couldn't have moved to a better organized and down to earth soccer experience for our two [players]. This club has been around for a very long time and would hate for it to not exist anymore. Please choose for ECFC to stick around for another 100 years to come!!

Unifying select soccer in Seattle is a good idea, but more time should be taken to work out the details of the transition, and to develop a plan that is agreeable to all the participants. The plan will be more successful if it has broad support, so it seems unwise (and unfair) to adopt a plan that is not acceptable to the club that fields nearly half of all the select soccer players in Seattle.

We are new to select soccer although my family has been very involved with soccer in the Seattle area since my childhood (early 70's). I have to admit the selection process was confusing and it was difficult to make a decision without much hands on experience. My [player] is currently playing U-xx select soccer and we have had an excellent experience with [our coach]. S/he has taught my [palyer] many new skills and has become a friend at the same time. We have truly enjoyed the comraderie on the field and off. I am skeptical of Seattle United because of the way it has been handled. I feel Seattle United has been very sneaky (ex: Email sent to us from them anonymously and without response to questions replied). Seems a bit underhanded. If you want to change something for the better you need to create allies not enemies. I am not seeing alot of that. With our limited experience in select soccer I wholly support Emerald City and being born and raised in Seattle, I can say that Emerald City is a household name. It seems a shame to throw that all away.

We are shocked at the conduct of the sysa board and its lack of responsiveness to both the ECFC board and the individual parents who attended the sysa meeting. We are shocked that as a club we have to answer to a group of appointed people who are not voting based on the wishes of the players most effected. We have studied the plan in depth and feel that there are so many holes and barriers to success that we dont know how they can responsibly vote yes as if it is in the best interest of the players as presently mapped out.

We are strongly oppose the Seattle United proposal and feel that details are lacking and our kids will suffer. We feel strongly that ECFC should be maintained as the premier team for SYSA and that the coaching staff and development programs should continue. We question the motivations behind those people pushing the Seattle United proposal and are frustrated by their 'trust us, we know what is best for you, paternalistic approach'. We would argue that the 'devil is in the details' and that these have not been provided. As parents with ECFC involvement over xx years, we have witnessed both positive and negative aspects of ECFC and have watched the organization embrace change and strive to improve. Our xx year old [player] has had an incredibly positive experience this past year and we have witnessed constructive improvements and openness first hand. We appreciate elected, rather than selected / appointed board members, ECFC's community outreach, ECFC's focus on player development, ECFC's tolerance for kids participating in other sports, the wonderful ECFC coaches, and ECFC's established organizational structure that allows for consideration of parent/ player concerns and greviances. The push to create Seattle United with sketchy specifics has great potential to hurt Seattle soccer. Please support the continuation of ECFC as SYSA's premier soccer club and encourage Seattle United supporters to focus on mid tier soccer.

We experienced our first tryouts this past May. My [player] had a great time and it was well organized. I was very disasppointed in the aggressiveness of the "Select" coaches. We were told by a couple of coaches that our [player] didn't even need to try out s/he could just register for their team, [deleted] and we received numerous phone calls and were approached by numerous parents all of which were very nice, and it was very flattering, but their whole premise of their team was to win. We want our [player] to enjoy the game, learn the game and be a long time player. WE CHOSE EMERALD CITY, OR RATHER THEY CHOSE US, and we are thrilled with the organization, the coaches, the players, parents and geniune loyalty to ECFC. Their dedication to the game is inspiring. I ask you to vote no on Seattle United at this time. Perhaps down in the future, with a careful and thoughtful course of planning, involvement from parents as well as coaches and board members, a prosperous Seattle United could be formed. I don't believe that is the case right now. PLEASE VOTE NO ON SEATTLE UNITED!!!

We have the best coaches at ECFC that our [player] has ever had. They are a huge step up from our neighborhood clubs and are developing our [player] to a much fuller potential. We appreciate the spirit and "mission" of the ECFC club to put player development and mixed experiences ahead of simply winning.

While I agree, that there should be some changes to the way the youth select soccer, is run, in SYSA, I do not support "throwing out the baby with the bath water" to make these changes. I have had 2 of my children play select soccer (after playing rec) and it is a huge difference from a club program. I really don't think the various SYSA club officers are prepared to run a select club(s). ECFC is a known entity with consistent quality and a lot of the district select and club based select teams, are not consistent. The coaches come and go. The interest wanes and teams are here today and gone tomorrow. If anything, I think that SYSA/ECFC/etc? could field more select teams, as I see many players wanting to play at a higher level, with fewer oppourtunities available. I support keeping ECFC as the premier soccer provider and would like to see ECFC offer "academy teams" as our competitors do.

While there are clearly good ideas for improving soccer, and a lot of hard work, reflected in the Seattle United initiative, it does not seem to me that the current process will reach those goals, especially for the premiere part of the program. I've been told the vision of Seattle United is that the ECFC coaches and teams will remain intact through this transition. What is the basis (agreements, staffing plans, good communication with ECFC parents) for believing that this will happen? Rather, I fear that moving forward at this time will fracture and weaken the premiere program, and I encourage the SYSA commissioners to vote "No" and use their oversight to ensure a fair and transparent process moving forward, one that brings the parent group and board of ECFC on board before dissolving the organization.

Why is it necessary to dismantle an already functioning program that serves the kids well? If you really want Seattle United why not form it and have both ECFC and Seattle United exist? If anything ECFC should be the principle club because of the club's long history and experience.

A united, integrated association sounds good, in theory, but why not use the proven structure EMFC has already developed and keep them as the premier league, and build the other "feeder levels" around what is already in place. The fact that (it sounds to me like) the folks promoting the united concept are so adamantly opposed to this and start over from scratch makes me quite leery of the whole proposal and suspect that it is more of a play for power, than a true concern for the welfare of the kids.

As a parent of a child who has been in ECFC for 4 years, I have followed the club through the recent changes, coaching director, etc. Having kids in other select soccer teams it is clear to me that ECFC is an excellent organization. I would have preferred my other kids to play in ECFC, however chose a different team for two reasons. The first is there is no single home field and this is a major disadvantage to have to travel all over Seattle for practices. I don't think Seattle United would change that problem. The second is the uncertainty of ECFC. I would have hated joining ECFC only to find that they're changing into a different club. Why can't there be a premier level club - ECFC and a Select level club - SYSA Select? I think ECFC would be a more competitive club if it were truly an elite premier club featuring the best of Seattle. I only see Seattle United taking away from that. Seattle United would only fragment the neighborhood teams even more. I would rather things went back the way they were 4 years ago.

Based on the small amount of information and responses I have reviewed it appears that the package should not go into effect as it stands at this point. It sounds rather extreme in its response to ECFC. As an active parent of three soccer playing children at various competitive levels of play, (including only one in ecfc), while also being involved with many families that could not afford to consider ECFC I still see the value in player development with the more loosely connected individualized clubs we have in Seattle. I realize at times that leaves the older aged premiere teams without access to some of the best players and thus maybe impeding some teams from going on to nationals, but the individuals on those teams have access to the ODP system as well. I agree with the parent response in the ECFC Web site that would ask Seattle United to publicly evaluate the potential downsides of such a large superseding organization presiding over all of Seattle Youth Soccer. A network is important, and yes communication is important to develop in the city, but I am not convinced that all the benefits listed will occur and it appears that ECFC is being forced out, which does not make apparent sense if they have been involved as heavily as is stated during all the negotiations up to this point. Some information appears to be missing, causing me to question the readiness of such a move by Seattle Youth Soccer. By voting against the proposal, the information I hear from individuals is that ECFC would be forced to play in a young league that does not have the level of competitive teams that we all know in Washington or disband over the course of a few years. This also seems to be a huge problem with little benefit. I did not see any information on the site about this. The information I have is from parent dialogue. For an organization like ECFC to have worked for 30 years in Seattle it seems to be a mutual benefit to maintain their existence, including the tension of public/private ventures.

Been a member of emerald city for over 8 years and am deeply concerned that the club could be fractured or fully dissolved with this proposed plan. I don't see why replacing an existing, successful, functional club with a whole new start up organization would benefit anyone-in particular the players. If there are problems with ECFC, then they can be fixed. Starting a whole new entity doesn't make any sense and seems like misdirected energy and a strong likelihood that it won't work out.

Bigger is not necessarily better. We need to keep multiple clubs in all geographical areas. It is already getting absurd and unmanageable to drive players to practices that are 45-60 minutes away. I know of some players that ride ferries across the sound. Just getting to and from a practice is a family event that takes the entire day. Let's get real. Teams need to be created from a limited geographic area. These are kids, not professional athletes. Be bold, stay local, show that you care about the health of our world, and stop worrying about what club your child plays with.

Dear Sirs- My [player] is a member of ECFC. My wife and I are quite capable of choosing the program that is best for him. We are very pleased with the coaching, and her/his development as a player, and as a person. We are against the Seattle United idea, as it is formulated right now. It seems you would be throwing the baby out with the bathwater by eliminating ECFC as an entity. We have the best coaches, and have been a viable soccer club in this city for thirty years. One of the biggest selling points of ECFC was the fact that our child has the opportunity to play with kids from all over Seattle, and not just limited to our neighborhood. We get to the practices and matches on public transportation or carpools, so I know that it can be done. We are against, and will not participate in, any league format that eliminates ECFC. Respectfully- xx

Emerald City has been a huge part of my life. Since I joined the club, it has been a great experience and I know that my teammates feel the same way. We've really enjoyed being able to play at the most competitive levels of youth soccer available in the state, and frankly it's hard to picture a world without ECFC. It seems ridiculous to eliminate the club, seeing as there doesn't seem to be any good reason to do so. ECFC is made up of kids in Seattle who want to be able to play soccer competitively at the best level available, and getting rid of the club would cause these kids to seek out opportunities elsewhere with NW Nationals, Crossfire, Eastside, etc. As a player, I certainly would not want to drop down to play with Seattle United. This plan is totally cool if you're OK with the utter deterioration of competitive youth soccer in Seattle. Its a shame for everybody involved that a bunch of power-hungry bureaucrats would like to selfishly eliminate ECFC and ruin it for all of the youth and parents involved.

Emerald City has been a select/premier club for over 30 years. If we want to be like the Crossfire clubs, we need to keep the name and start Academy teams early U-9/10/11 and increase our numbers. It doesn't make sense to change the name either. I have an older [player] looking to play in college, ECFC has a name for itself and a good reputation. Nobody knows anything about Seattle United! Plus, if we combine with SYSA, we won't get too many quality players, just lots of rec players. The best players seek out good teams.

Emerald City has been a wonderful experience for my [player]. S/he has been improving her skills with top coaches, has met and become very close with a great group of kids as I have with their parents. The Club feels like a family, a family that knows my [player] well, and will help her move through to college with precision. I fear that with as large a group as Seattle United would create, s/he would be lost in the shuffle. The community of ECFC would be lost, along with the personal attention, and support of my [player] 's soccer career, whatever that might be. What I can't understand is why smaller clubs can't each operate individually under the Seattle United umbrella. Seems like we should all be able to coexist.

First of all, it is not clear at all what benefits this proposal are meant to provide for players and families. How can we move to something with no clear benefits? Seattle United, as currently proposed, appears to be a monopoly. It does not appear to be in the best interest of players but rather an attempt to garner top players into one club for the "benefit" of a very small number of SYSA officials/parents who are so emotionally invested in having a continuously winning club at the Premier level that they have ignored what is best for players and the diverse Seattle population. It is best for players and families to have a variety of club options in order to find that which best meets their needs. This will best allow the player to develop. The plan harkens of the USSR -- "We are your only choice. Do as we say, and we will dominate the world." A monopoly is illegal. Furthermore, it simply will not survive, even if not challenged legally. The people WILL NOT come. They will rebel and form their own clubs, as they have all along. This will end up destroying not only ECFC but also the SYSA. ECFC has some very strong teams relative to the rest of the state and some less-so. These reflect the natural ups and downs of any team. ECFC currently has many superb coaches who could be lost to other area clubs under this dubious plan. It will fall apart and will we be set back decades, just like the USSR.

From what i have heard, it seems that the issues that this Seattle United plan is trying to fix are in the recreational and select levels, NOT in the premier and PDL levels. Yet, they are trying to change the premier levels by making ECFC nonexistant. I, personally think that since ECFC is not one of their problems, they should focus their efforts in trying to fix the lower levels instead of trying to create a whole new way of doing everything, especially when it is not needed. There are also many flaws in the Seattle United project and not many details which should arouse questions as to whether they have any real game plan for this project. A big thing the proposition mentioned was winning. I find this, actually very insulting. You shouldnt play in a level or on a team just to win. You should never always win because life isnt about winning. Its about being challanged and becoming the best that you can be. If you always win and you are never given any challenge to overcome, you are just learning to be lazy. The Seattle United plan is proposing that we should do this and I find it quite offensive that they care more about winning than me succeeding and becomming the best that i can become. They also seem to be telling what will happen if everything goes right. What if not all of the players return if we change to Seattle United? Wont there be a major loss of money AND they will be causing many good players that deserve to play in PDL and premier levels to play in recreational levels which is literally a whole different world of soccer. I also think that it should be checked into the anonymous letters from ECFC parents saying there were many issues with the Emerald City finances. I would like to state that if the parent(s) do not think strong enough on this issue to leave their name and make their statement, that you should wonder what reasons they have for demoting ECFC. It may, in fact, be personal issues as in their child did not make their age groups A team or merely that they have some problem with their coach. I think that parents should not be given much right to talk, but the right should be given to the players and coaches. My coach, told my team that he, not trying to make us for of against the idea, would leave the club and go find another coaching position somewhere else if the Seattle United proposition was passed. My coach is an amazing person and extremely good at her/his job. So are many other coaches in the club who also may think exactly how s/he does. I think that if they do pass the Seattle United idea they will lose many coaches and hundreds of great soccer players with a future. I still have x years left before I would be done with youth soccer and I know that if they pass this, I will not come back. And I know for a fact that many other people will not either. You shouldnt pass the Seattle United proposition because all it will create is failure. Sincerely, xx

I am concerned that the single organization proposal has only been under development for about eight (8) months. If Seattle United teams would be formed in spring 2010, that means that the entire creation of a new club and its teams would be done in about 18 months. That is a VERY ambitious timeline, especially since there is no transition plan at the moment. More importantly, it takes money to create a club and to operate a club. If Seattle United is formed as proposed, I fear that the numbers of players in both Seattle United and Emerald City would not be enough to support both organizations. That could result in decreasing the support for both select and premier soccer in Seattle and the loss of players to other clubs in King, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties. Wouldn't that be contrary to the stated purpose of increasing the support for players in Seattle? I suggest creating a work plan that would identify the key issues to be addressed, as well as a reasonable timeline - Longer than 18 months! - to look at options, solutions, and a realistic timeline for improving select soccer and better integrating it with premier soccer. Ultimately, a single organization might make sense - but not one that is rushed and not fully developed. If the most logical thing to do is to merge select and premier soccer in the longer term, then bring ECFC members along in the process. If you don't, then all we will get is a big fight between egotistical adults in both SYSA and ECFC which HURTS OUR PLAYERS. Right now, we are headed for fights, divisions, and hard feelings that will harm the players and programs that we value for our kids. SLOW DOWN THE RAILROAD AND OPEN YOUR EARS, HEARTS, AND MINDS. We've lost sight of the prize, and the prize is our players.

I am not sure what the issue is? Why reinvent the wheel? We have been involved in 4 other Premier Programs with our kids. ECFC is by far the most organized group, the group where we have had the best support, the best coaching. We have never had a better experience. I have often said that the worst thing about youth sports is parents and administrators who at times seem to have ulterior motives other than what is the best for our kids. I am sure there are things that can be done to improve ECFC but starting over seems to be a great waste of time and resources which most people currently don't have.

I do not agree with the tactics SYSA used to take over our team. They have performed in the most unprofessional manner I've ever witnessed and I have been in the banking and take over business for xx years. This has turned into some type of personal vendetta and it is such a shame for the entire SYSA system and I can not help but wonder if this type of unprofessional behavior is how SYSA is run. I hope instead that this is just a few rogue board members who should resign because of their tactics. Emerald City is a great club and should not be disbanded. We elect our own board and it is run democratically. Whatever "governance" issues should be able to be corrected without getting rid of the entire club. Seems that SYSA wants to throw the baby out with the bath water. Please stop this train and let us get back to playing youth soccer.

I do not want anything to change with Emerald City. I think it is appropriate to have choices in Seattle, and separate clubs. I also believe ECFC is better organized than other clubs, and that is because of the parent participation and the time and involvement of our entire board. I am convinced that would be lost if we are co-opted into an organization with all the city select teams, and our input is diluted.

I do not want to see Emerald City FC dissolved. This organization has been run by volunteers for 30+ years - so if there needs to be more oversight, so be it. ECFC has been great for my child, and it seems that much of this current battle centers around EGOS of the parties involved, instead of the players. I fully support the coaching director and the ECFC coaches. My child played for a large club on the east side, and I could not say the same about their club. That being said, I do not understand if any of the financial mismanagement allegations are true. There are so many emails going around - from unnamed "parents" and others - that I don't know what to believe. I do think that an independent assessment would be a good thing. I do feel that the board elections were fair - and they should be upheld.

I fall into the category of people who believe there is a good idea in the Seattle United concept, but that it is being pursued in too aggressive a manner and that a significant strategy like this requires time to unfold, and far, far greater by in. If it goes through I fear a good concept will be rushed to a disastrous implementation.

I feel that SYSA has moved way to fast in trying to pass this plan and has not really been honest in some of what they have put forth

I feel there hasn't been enough opportunity for each side to share the pros and cons and it needs to be discussed further. There are some very positive sides to having one system that all kids are a part of and help identify the skill levels and where that player fits best. The cons are a having a monopoly and all the negative aspects of that.

I have not been impressed with how this is proceeding. It is giving advantages to neighborhood associations who can't do what ECFC does and has created with their structure. It will push higher level players to NWN, Eastside or Crossfire and I am guessing many of our coaches will move on, too. It doesn't seem as if the timing is quite right because the proposed structure is flawed.

I have reviewed the information provided by SYSA and attended informational presentations and I have yet to hear any definitive benefits to the Seattle United concept that warrant quickly dissolving a 30 year Emerald City FC that has served the Premier Soccer needs of Seattle youth. What is the rush to eliminate a long standing successful Emerald City organization--- that has emphasized the development of the whole player not just winning at all costs like the Crossfire program---without really considering how to avoid the disruption to our kids and premier soccer in Seattle. All the details of the SYSA Seattle United hostile takeover are unanswered-- for example,who is the coaching director,why are the self appointed(not elected) new Seattle United management consisting of several lawyers with no experience running a soccer club even qualified to run the city's premier club. The supposed benefit is better coordinating select soccer with premier soccer but how exactly is this going to happen? I thought this was about the kids and allowing them to play at the highest level their skills and desire allows while developing a team concept of play-- all I know is that my [player] has played her/his heart out making the ECFC green team and has developed a true kinship with her/his teammates and s/he and her/his teammates don't understand why the ECFC uniform and all that stands for is going to be ripped off of their backs and now they have to play for some new team with all new coaches ---and for what,so some adults(largely some select teams with coaches who try to keep their best players so they can "win"" their leagues) can better coordinate. We run a bigger risk that the best premier level players leave for clubs that are focused only on the premier level development rather than play for a Seattle United "mish-mash" of levels andcompeting goals run by some non-soccer dads, who are best case , just plain un-qualified to run this organization--- and worst case, have a personal bad history with ECFC and are tryin to get even. I think it is a bad symbol when several of the leaders of Seattle United kids play for Crossfire and other non-Seattle teams

I like having the choice of which team our children play for- I don't like the idea of having a monopoly decide what they should do. I think this new system will stop a lot of kids from playing soccer at an age they need to be encouraged to get outside and exercise. I think they will become discouraged with this system. If the kids want to play premier ball, it is not difficult to figure out where to go. I think that you have forgotten the children in this rush to put this in place. This is a game based on skill, not intended to be involved in political maneuvering that seems to be going on. I also like the brand name of ECFC and think it would be wrong to disband a club that has been around to serve Seattle youth for so long.

I think I am a reasonably intelligent person and I have tried very hard to read most of what has been sent out about the Seattle United issue. Although the material says the plan is player focused, it has not yet said what exactly about the plan is player focused. I have often thought that Seattle's talent is very diluted and that our Seattle players are playing for teams all over the place. If they all stayed home and played for ECFC, we'd be #1 in all age brackets. It seems like Seattle United wants to eliminate "rogue" teams in the city from competing against ECFC so that we can be stronger. But, I don't think imposing the Seattle United structure will be successful. Players who don't make the top two teams will still travel to Crossfire or Mukilteo or Snohomish or wherever they think they can get on a P1 team. The Seattle United structure ignores the fact that many working parents can't leave work early and don't have the means to transport their kids out of the neighborhood to get to a 5:00 p.m. practice, much less across the city, to get them to a Seattle United practice. If their kids can't play in their neighborhood, they won't be able to play at all. Prior to playing for ECFC, my [player] played for one of those rogue teams. S/he got great training (free) and formed life long friends. Although we ultimately sought out ECFC, many of the other kids remained and competed at the district level and in state tournaments - Fred Meyer and Championship Cup. My other [player] played on a rec team until s/he graduated from high school but they also played at the district level a couple years and also in the Fred Meyer, and actually won the President's cup for rec teams in their xx year. They did this because many of the [players player other sports] and couldn't commit to a select team. But, the Seattle United system would deny them the opportunity to compete as high as their skills would take them, given the time they had available for soccer. It may be that I am just not understanding what Seattle United is actually trying to do, but I really don't get how it is a better system. I also really don't think the name Emerald City should be eliminated.

I think it's a shame to lose the history/reputation of the ECFC club and brand. My kids have played for ECFC xx and xx yrs respectively and are very proud of being part of this club. Their experience has been nothing but positive and their development as players has been great in the ECFC program. I asked them if they'd want to switch to another club or SU and they said no. Personally, I'm not necessarily opposed to the concept of SU, however, it seems to me there are more politics driving this than anything else and the letter that was sent out essentially "bashing" ECFC was really lousy in my opinion. It turned me off from the move completely and I sincerely hope ECFC remains as the premier soccer club in Seattle.

I think that we need to continue on with the club as it was set up. This is the best way for our players to be developed and see their true potential. I VOTE NO!!!

I think the case needs to be made to the parents how the change to Seattle United would be good for the kids participating in ECFC. So far I have just seen general statements that aren't very helpful. It also seems important that the process be a collaborative and open one which it does not appear to have happened. We are not opposed to a change that would improve the soccer experience for kids in Seattle and provide an effective transparent governance framework for the program. We are as yet unconvinced that these goals will be achieved under the change proposed.

I think the most important component for youth soccer in Seattle is to have excellent coaches that maximize the potential participation, enjoyment and development of our youth soccer players. I think there is a high potential for decreasing the number of excellent coaches available to the program if ECFC is excluded from Seattle United. A better approach would be for Seattle United to use ECFC to continue to attract and develop excellent coaches because they have that experience and, in my opinion, have done a good job at it.

I think this seems like the train has left the station before the tracks have even been built. The concepts and ideas for the SU program are good, but certainly not inconsistent with what ECFC has accomplished and the path it has been heading with the direction of SYSA. I am concerned about the impact on the U16 teams that appear to be left hanging unless they follow the path chosen for the SU concept. How are these teams supposed to operate? Under what auspices. What I really don't understand at all is the criticism of the ECFC operations. I understand that there are certain parents who don't like the coaches or have criticism and want ECFC to follow their approach, but the ideals and guiding principles seem to be entirely consistent with SU concepts. So ECFC was limited to 2 teams by the bylaws in which it was set up. All these other select teams then pop up to address the desire for more competitive soccer so SYSA says expand, so ECFC expands the teams. So SYSA creates the problem and then says ECFC should have operated differently when it appears to me to respond appropriately to all direction from SYSA. Now I hear that SYSA wants ECFC to be more competitive than Crossfire. If that is the role model for operating a youth soccer league then it's time to replace the entire SYSA Board. That club recruits players not just from their geographic area, but from places like Yakima. Then they subsidize A team activities through multi-level lesser teams, when clearly the only goal is to generate status for the A team. They have the same problems keeping coaches and having parents dissatisfied with coaches. Not only that, but our U16 team finished 2nd in State, and has not lost to Crossfire for I believe the last 3 games. The moving targets created by SYSA seem to be a bit of a shell game with no real convincing argument that the changes will even begin to address what seem to be to be contrived disputes with ECFC.

I urge you to please vote no on July 9th. I feel that since SU is not willing to listen to anyone who does not agree with them or shown their final draft, we must look very closely at how this is being handled. I believe this is not a good situation and I am very opposed to the Seattle United concept.

If SYSA wants a stronger voice in how ECFC operates I think that would be fine but to make such drastic changes is not necessary. If anything the SYSA could be more encouraging kids to play for Emerald City it would accomplish the same thing. Nothing new needs to be created. What is the big problem with ECFC?

If you do not offer a "competitive" program as an alternative to rec even at younger ages, you will eventually have no competitive program at higher levels because parents of talented kids will enroll their kids in programs that do such as Crossfire and every other youth soccer program around. The two programs can co-exist. Crossfire offers rec, select and premier. Talented kids seek talented teams. You will not be able to field the best teams in your competitive program. To not allow ages 11-14 to compete at the highest level possible will just send your better kids to other programs.

If you loose the vote, no need to litigate. I don't think "all measueres " should include litigation. Work for the best outcome and then live with the decision, whatever it may be. Find a way to make it work, it is about the kids, not the continued existance of ECFC or the BOD.

In the SYSA view the plan has been in process for a long time, with many meetings and opportunity for involvement; however, ECFC community reaction to the "completed" plan that has been presented is largely what is this? WHY am I hearing about it only now? WHY don't I get a say in this process? The "fault" for that lack of knowledge should be shared among SYSA, ECFC and the parents themselves, HOWEVER just saying that it's too late now, you should have been more involved before, and going on with the vote as planned does not address much less solve the problem. SYSA has now achieved what it has said all along that it wanted: Parental/member knowledge and involvement. Now you certainly have our attention! And NOW: Parents and ECFC members want 1) a forum to discuss this final plan; 2) the right to present opposing views; 3) the certainty that those views will be heard and addressed fairly and impartially; 4) the right to decide our own fate -- we are the members, we pay the money, we donate the time, we should be allowed to vote, not some commissioner from some rec/select program that we have never been involved in and don't know. There is one ECFC commissioner on that panel; one only, yet ECFC stands to lose the most -- our entire existence and history. I would request that SYSA postpone the vote for at least one month, and schedule a weekly town meeting in the various locations of Seattle throughout that month, and address the concerns of its constituency. There is always time to labor on something worthwhile; in the interest of fairness, please give us that time!

It has never been explained to me (or I did not understand the explanation...) the need to remove ECFC from the SYSA select/premier souldion. Some of the development ideas of Seattle United proposal seem worthy, but could just as easily be incorporated under the ECFC name. Do not toss out the many years of history and name recognition of the Emerald City FC.

It is not clear to me that my child who plays on an Emerald City U16 team will have the same high quality of coaches, high quality support staff and playing opportunities as is currently available if this vote goes through. I feel that this will negatively impact my child's soccer playing and learning experience.

It sounds to me like they need to do more extensive research and not rush into this. I think there are too many outstanding concerns that I have read about and it feels like this is being railroaded through. Please slow down and make sure you have the majority of SYSA club members onboard. You will need our support to make change successful. Right now many, many people are very upset about this.

It's difficult to fault a program that on the surface seeks to establish a single entity to provide select soccer in Seattle. There is no question that the people who put the time, money and effort into creating S.U. were a well intentioned group. What I question is why Emerald City is the only select club that is being forced to disband. I see that Westside United and Shoreline will both continue intact along with the creation of 2 new clubs. I believe that Emerald City is the largest select club in the city and certainly has the most experience at managing, promoting and supporting teams that play select soccer. It boggles my mind that they would be the club left out of the mix. However well intentioned the Seattle United program was at the start, it deteriorated into a battle of egos with Parker Mason leading the effort to disenfranchise Emerald City. There are lots of other players in that battle but when the president of the association is leading the charge and seems to be willing to constantly circumvent the rules one begins to wonder what the agenda really is. The conflicts between Emerald City, the other select clubs and the recreational programs are those created by the personalities of the people involved. The rules and the structure have not ever been the real problem, the problem lies with those coaches and parents who appear every few years with a "whole new way" to present select soccer to the community. Seattle United is simply the latest iteration of that mind set. In the interest of the kids, I certainly hope that I am wrong but I believe that S.U. will bring with it a whole new set of problems the scope of which those who have created it cannot imagine and will be hard pressed to cope with. I suspect that we are about to see the law of unintended consequences unleashed on Seattle soccer in a manner that will surprise all of us.

My [player] has played soccer in SYSA for 2 years at the rec level, 1 year at the select level and has just started her 3rd year at the premier level. I agree that the existing system for youth soccer in Seattle needs some revisions. Some of that has already been implemented and more is contained in the Seattle United proposal. The greatest need right now is a better integration and organization of select - "regional" clubs, which is addressed in the Seattle United proposal. At the premier - "state" level, there really is no compelling need for major change or to disband ECFC, which can readily transform itself into the "state" part of Seattle United. This part of the proposal is transparently a political maneuver driven by adult, not player needs. Disbanding ECFC will detrimentally affect all of the players in SYSA, particularly those playing at or aspiring to the premier/state level, for a long while. For my daughter and the many other players I know who play for or have played for ECFC, it has worked very well as a premier club. Adult politics should not trump player needs. For my [player] and all existing and potential premier players, I ask that you vote "no" on disbanding ECFC.

My [player] played rec soccer since the 2nd grade both for [neighborhood club] and [neighborhood club]. Her/his father was a volunteer coach for a few years as well. S/he as a player was very discouraged after last year and seriously contemplated not playing for the first time this year. My xx quit coaching because the politics involved were just too much. While the rec league is great for those who just want to have fun, and the select league is fine for those players who want more of a challenge, ECFC is for those players who are serious about the game itself. They offer more speciality training, more of a challenge, and opportunities to understand and improve on the players understanding of the game and specific skills necessary to succeed at the top level. Their coaches are not driven by the politics or parents but rather on a true love of the game and desire to foster that in the kids. As a new family to ECFC we have been nothing but pleased with the coaching staff and players. They are here to play and improve as well as have fun. Soccer practice is no longer the "social hour" it was. My [player] is very pleased to be playing for ECFC and is already showing improvement in areas that were underdeveloped and/or not taught or focused on, at the lower level, as they should have been. I have been reading the emails and postings and while the idea of one club in the area is good, the work that ECFC has done over the past 30 years should not be discounted or discarded. I strongly feel that ECFC should remain the "premier club". They have given my [player] something that the recreational league failed to provide her/him. Development of her/his skill and knowledge of the game itself while fostering confidence and a love of the game. More work needs to be done on the who's and what's of the Seattle United plan. To destroy a club that is 30 years old on a moment's notice is foolhardy. They are successful for a reason. regardless of what SYSA says they do have a majority of the players combined on one league and there is a reason for that. SYSA needs to understand and find out why that is not listen to the back biting coaches who think it is because "they stole my best player" and consider what the kids want since ultimately they are the true stakeholders in this whole scheme. Without them there would be no ECFC or Seattle United or even an SYSA. My [player] wants to continue to play for ECFC as it stands now. We are no stranger to change, having played at almost all levels, and embrace it as a natural

part of life but the changes that are being proposed are hurried, rushed, and do not show as well of a thought out process as it should be. Instead it is coming across as a political move which has no place in this game for the kids sake!

My xx kids all played rec and I have coached in rec for xx years (my youngest is still in rec). When my older two kids wanted to play year round with professional coaching, we went through the ECFC tryouts. Both of them tried out two years ago and [made teams]. I thought the try outs were well done and the evaluation was fair. We are now entering our xx year with ECFC and my kids love the program, the coaches and their teammates. Emerald City is a brand that has been built over the years and should not be simply wiped out. Emerald City should continue to have some level of autonomy from SYSA although better communication and integration would be beneficial to all stake holders.

Neighborhood proximity is very important to parents. The logistics of getting your child to twice-weekly practices on work days is difficult enough for families without adding a long commute during rush-hour traffic in to the mix.

Parents like to and need to have choices. Children like to get a chance to play for the premier club vs their neighborhood club when/if they are ready for that. ECFC is a status symbol in premier soccer for our region. I believe in free enterprise and competition in soccer clubs. I believe keeping them separate encourages clubs to grow and get better. I do not believe the Seattle United idea accomplishes anything! Also, we just would have to spend more money for new uniforms/ect. The current model is not been bad it is more friendly to a community feel and decisions made by each club that fit their area and different needs and issues. I am not at all in favor of the change.

please keep my club together. Emerald City is a great club with great coaches and we get a great chance to play in tournaments and travel to other states. I do not think the select teams would get the most attention at Seattle United as I think they would pay more attention to the regular teams and I have worked hard to qualify to Emerald City and want to stay playing at this level.

Please take the time to consider this move more carefully, you are affecting the future of many of Seattle's youth. I am the parent of two ECFC Uxx players who played in Rec soccer (neighborhood club) in their younger years. I coached in SYSA for x years, and stepped down when my knowledge of the game was not adequate for the older players' development. I completely support the concept of attending to the needs and guiding the development of all of the players in Seattle. But the plan you are currently putting forward is not adequately thought out and vetted. Much more reflection and SYSA member input is needed before acting.

Proposed changes creates a larger organization. Intention is good but action to carry out proposed Seattle United will not because of its size and the territories that will cover. Keeping the soccer club smaller (such as ECFC) will server the Seattle soccer youth community better. In addition, the ECFC club is known to the soccer communities/colleges & universities/clubs throughout US because of it history. Breaking up will not help young players bound for colleges and universities.

SYSA should include all its members, including ECFC in making plans and decisions regarding Seattle United as it originally promised. With proper due process, if Seattle United plan has merit, it will pass and SYSA can be assured that it is the best choice for all its members. If SYSA simply wants to steamroll its Seattle United plan and disregards ECFC's input, then many will doubts and never find out whether if SU plan is really the better route to take. Hopefully SYSA will not go the way of recent Iranian election fiasco and disregard its populace in making the right choice.

That people don't want to have to buy all new jerseys and stuff because some people can't afford it. Emerald City is fine as it is. Some of the teams are very good and just want to stay how they are...Seattle United would be a waste of time and effort because Emerald City is doing the same thing..

thats a wrong thin to to do because there is a lot of talented players in the ECFC.

The biggest issue to be discussed is "What is in the best interest of the kids?" It seems to me that alot of issues involve the adult egos. This is our first year in Emerald City, and had I known issues were going on, I may have asked my child to look in a different direction. I also wonder why SYSA President is pushing this issue when he took his child to another club outside of SYSA. Would having Seattle United in place kept his child here?? I doubt it. In my opinion, this issue is moving too quickly, without valid stats to prove it is in the best interest of the children. I would hope SYSA is willing to listen to those that aren't necessarily opposed to the idea, but feel like it is happening all at once, too quickly, without any regard for the kids best interests.

The only reason we decided to play for ECFC is for the premier level of play. If that designation was taken away, then the time, cost and commitment wouldn't be worth it for our family to play at "just" a select level. If there wasn't a premier level, we would have just continued to play in the CYO and [neighborhood club] Rec league.

The proposal is extreme and untested. There is no convincing rationale presented that the problems that should be solved can only be solved by such a radical remedy. A solution should be negotiated to resolve the most significant problems incrementally and unproven steps taken only after it has been demonstrated that those are the only reasonable options left.

The proposed connection with the Seattle Sounders appears to be a benefit to Seattle youth soccer but in the past we've seen that this is not entirely effective. Our experience with Sounders players as coaches hasn't been entirely positive due to their travel commitments and the fact that they have the same qualifications as any other coach, nothing special. While it's great for young players to be able to observe their coaches in real game situations, very few good players are also good teachers. In our own experience, the worst coach that our [player] has had was a Sounders player. He was emotionally unstable, had no ability to teach basic game skills and caused our [player] to almost want to quit playing soccer. Premier select players are motivated enough to travel to wherever there's a team that meets their needs. This occurs even in rec teams---if players want to join their friends in a non-neighborhood league, they find a way to do it. Instead of destroying a well established club like ECFC, with many years of producing high quality football, we should help to support it and make it better. Better communication and relationships amongst all the of select teams, without imposing destructive rules, will most benefit Seattle youth soccer. Many factors, especially pay and ability to coordinate convenient practice fields as well as support from parents and team volunteers and continuing educational opportunities, influence our ability to retain and recruit the best coaches. These issues need to be confronted realistically.

The recent action by Bobby Howe to fire well-regarded coaches due to their apparent support for Seattle United and the weak preparation of one ECFC girls team for a recent tournament raise serious questions about ECFC's effectiveness as an organization and the priorities of the coaches and paid leadership. Although I have been a supporter of ECFC and would like to see it continue in a leadership role, I am less and less able to argue for its continued existence. Players and parents have been shortchanged by a number of recent decisions by the club.

The SU package is wrong-headed and violates elementary economic principles. It eliminates the choice that any parent deserves for the betterment of their children. SU creates a monopoly; any incentive to provide better/different choices at different price points will be eliminated. SU eliminates ECFC, but it also eliminates FC Shoreline, Westside United, and a number of independent clubs. Parents will INSIST on choice. If choice is denied within SYSA, other choices such as US Club Soccer leagues will spring up and will become more attractive. SYSA thinks it is bringing everyone together, when in reality it is pushing parents away to US Club, NWN, HPFC, etc. Parents know what is best for their children, not SYSA, and they will actively seek what they perceive is best for the child. SU is a paternalistic approach to the marketing of youth soccer products. It is all very sad.

The SYSA Commissioners who vote in favor of this package should be removed en masse for their callous disregard of the Emerald City PDL player's desire and right to play soccer. Commissioner's who vote in favor of this package are voting to kill higher levels of play in Seattle for hundreds of children who relied in good faith on the creation of the PDL. By not providing for a meaningful stable transition, you are killing the dreams and development opportunities of these children. The current players will have no choice but to leave Seattle and seek playing opportunities elsewhere. The reality is that these current players will vote with their feet. Those who do not find a team will quit soccer altogether. I do not think that is your mission and you should not take precipitous steps that will drive children from soccer. I was a [neighborhood club] coach through Uxx. In looking for greater challenge for half my team that wanted to continue to play, I spearheaded the creation of what became the [neighborhood club] select team (we could not get [neighborhood club] to agree to a select team so I remain highly skeptical of SU's ability to create Club level select teams). During our time, we did not draw a single "talented player" from Emerald City. Every player on the team had been rejected at least twice by EMFC under its two team limit. Due to my difficulties in finding a meaningful level of play for my team, you could not find a person more skeptical of the PDL process and ECFC in general. After three years, I believe that ECFC accomplished what they were directed to do. ECFC followed the mandate of SYSA and WSYSA to broaden the depth of its team by creating multiple teams at the various. The ECFC PDL concept is not without its problems. But those issues can be addressed systematically. By the way, five of these talentless [neighborhood club level] players now play for ECFC [deleted]. They had the drive and persistence to learn the game. Even after being rejected multiple times by "experts", they followed their dreams, continued their physical and mental development and have measurable success. Your job is to create pathways to success, not roadblocks. A vote to to disenfranchise ECFC hurts children and is short sighted. A vote for these measures is a roadblock that will drive children from soccer. Do not do this. xx

They need to be against the plan due to the budget proposal which will ask for minimum \$50 K "grant" and some sort of line of credit of similar size. There is no payback plan in the proposed budget and it is essentially recreational soccer player's monies (spring soccer proceeds) that are to be spent. \$35K have already been sent from the Executive Director fund for the facilitator.

This process is moving too quickly. You do not have the answers to critical questions. You do not have a sound operating plan. You have not conducted a thorough financial analysis. You make too many assumptions. You have not thought about possible "less than rosey scenarios". You have not been open to opposing viewpoints. You should vote no.

This proposal feels coercive and agenda-driven. There has never been any opportunity for the average family to dissent. The whole process has been secretive and directed by a select few. I have felt completely un-represented. In fact, when I e-mailed to comment about it, I basically got blown off. I did get a call from someone who tried very hard to persuade me to believe the Seattle United plan is the next best thing. It sounds to me like a bunch of adults with an agenda to take down the evil empire and form their own empire. I don't think many of the people involved are really interested in hearing from the families of premier players--If my [player] was younger, I would definitely be looking east of Lake Washington for another team. Seattle United will be the death of premier soccer in Seattle--the neighborhood select plan that is geographically based is a great idea, but they should stay out of the premier level program. Emerald City is not perfect, but I am not convinced that the SU plan is any better.

This seems to be power-driven, not player-driven. Why quash a club (ECFC) that works well for many of us? Have you considered that the fracture will drive premier-level players to other clubs such as Washington Premier and Crossfire, leaving Seattle without a PDL option for outstanding players? Some change may be positive, but this does not seem like a collaborative effort.

This whole thing sounds like a group of parents didn't get their way on something with ECFC and now they are going to dismantle it, regardless of the damage to the soccer program and our kids.

To consider having 2 clubs being Seattle United and ECFC which of course will be a much smaller club but both organizations will offer premier and other programs.

Two clubs should be allowed at all age groups. There are more than enough talented kids to play at the premier level in TWO clubs, ECFC and Seattle United. Moreover, the families will have some choice within the limits of Seattle. Also, allowing two premier clubs will promote competition between them (for players, etc), thus making them more focused on players' needs, development and other relevant issues. It could be very beneficial for soccer in this area and of course for the soccer families.

Use the expertise & knowledge of existing staff to create an improved, inclusive program.

we do not want to lose the premiere team we have now for select, what about pdl? we would not stay with sysa if this happened::

We have and continue to be proud to be part of the Emerald City Family, a premier club representing Seattle honorably, with a brand name, associated with competitiveness, pride, mentorship, team and individual appreciation. Belonging to a big institution like Seattle United, will lose that special meaning of a premier club. I can equate it to replacing your friendly family orientated neighborhood store with a Wal-Mart equivalent! Belonging to ECFC is very special for the players. Is that not what is important?

We should keep Emerald City as it is and not change anything.

We think SYSA should work to improve the availability of district select teams and improve communication between district select teams and ECFC so that the players are playing at the appropriate level. We have been very happy with ECFC and want ECFC to remain the premier club in Seattle. We have been very disappointed with SYSA and it's rush to dismantle ECFC and push the Seattle United concept through without input from ECFC families.

What makes you think that you can do better, or that you even have the right to dismember a club with 30 years of history?

While I approve of some of the goals of Seattle United, I don't agree that the plan presented represents a good enough alternative to the current situation nor do I really understand why disbanding ECFC completely is somehow aligned with the stated goals of SU. Effectively Seattle United's plan will be a big reset for select/premier soccer in Seattle and this is highly undesirable for the kids and development of soccer in Seattle. If SU was worried about attrition, then wait for next year. I expect most ECFC kids to seek playing opportunities at other premier/select clubs in the area if the SU plan goes into effect. Many kids (including mine) know kids and coaches at other clubs and most likely will choose that option over playing for an unknown entity. I just don't understand the plan to completely disband ECFC. Why not integrate it into a plan instead of starting over from scratch? One key aspect that is never discussed in SU's plan is how to get more kids to play soccer on their own outside of SU's or ECFC's participation. If you are interested in promoting soccer, getting kids to play pick-up games on their own should be part of the plan. This is a missing piece in US soccer and no amount of training in a club can compete with the player development that goes on in pickup games.

While the united program developed for Seattle Youth Soccer has merits, I don't believe it has been carefully planned or directed with both the good of the game and the good of the players at hand. This whole process needs to be more carefully developed before being implemented.

Why are you doing this? Why would ECFC be forced to become Seattle United? Why can't Seattle United teams feed in to ECFC like they currently are? Why in the world would you dissolve the U11 - U14 teams? I get some of the logic of having a Seattle United umbrella that feeds in to ECFC for premier play, but the process you are proposing doesn't sit well with me.