

Do we want to win the World Cup or Not? (USA)

Written by Dennis Justice

An cool excerpt from www.bleacherreport.com

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3. Futsal programs everywhere. This should be priority 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 for any new USSF boss. We are too soft in this country. We spend \$millions of taxpayer dollars on perfectly manicured soccer pitches for third graders, but nobody wants to invest a dime for futsal programs in inner city recreation centers. Meanwhile, South American kids play on streets and futsal courts.

We need to find way to get futsal programs better funded and working together for once. Have MLS teams set up promotion and relegation futsal leagues, with the winning team in each top flight a trip to the MLS Final for a "Champions League" style tournament. A one-week tournament of these teams from different MLS cities would be great publicity for the MLS Final.

Every recreation center in America needs to have a futsal program if physically possible. We need to get this game to young kids, especially African-American kids who can't afford the overpriced American soccer programs. As it has been said before: In the rest of the world, soccer is the poor kids' game, in America, it's the rich kids' game. Until that mentality is broken we will never get the best talent from all parts of our country.

On top of this, stop worrying about perfectly manicured soccer fields in youth play. Accept the realities of artificial turf up through high school. Just focus on better technologies for turf. The cooler field technologies from companies like Mondo and Tiger Turf are promising. GeoTurfUSA uses an infill system of crushed coconut shells and cork for a much more stable, cooler field. It sounds crazy but it works. The technology will get better, so we should be embracing it.

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4. Move all college and high school soccer to the spring. Find a way to do this, it's even more critical for high schools than colleges. We need to stop settling for the best athletes that didn't play on the football team. I bet there are a ton of good athletes who would gladly play football in the fall and soccer in the spring. I bet a few of them would have been better defenders than Ricardo Clark.

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5. High school soccer programs need revamping. We have totally the wrong mentality for American soccer development. First we depend on having kids in over-priced academies, and then inexplicably put our kids in high school programs that draw flies for attendance. In high school football, the high school coach runs the entire program in his district basically, all the way down to pee-wee levels. That networking is partially why football draws much better.

Come on, soccer has been in high schools for decades now, there are no excuses for low attendance. Having larger crowds does make a difference in recruiting kids to play. Start networking better. In the fall offseason, those kids who are not playing football in high school or middle school should be playing in futsal leagues.

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