

## Questions and Answers on the USL Super Y-League

*The following interview with Jeff McRaney, Senior Director of Youth League Development, presents some common questions that explain how the Super Y-League provides the highest level of youth competition for clubs throughout North America.*

### **What does the Super Y-League mean to player development?**

The Super Y-League is designed to help in "professionalizing" player development in the United States and Canada and focuses on the most elite youth players. Our system provides the opportunity for players to compete in top-level soccer throughout the year. The Super Y-League puts the spotlight on players during the playing season, through our North American Finals championship event, and through our Olympic Development Program.

### **What are the goals of the Super Y-League?**

Our primary goal has always been to provide a platform for players to develop and be identified. We strive to ensure that players develop at a faster pace through the Super Y-League system by playing against the best competition. Players will learn to excel in a pressurized environment which should help in preparing players to take the U.S. game to the next level. Other goals include helping clubs and referees develop, which further aids in the progression of the game.

### **What are the reasons that USL is the organizing body for the Super Y-League?**

As an organization, the USL is a "National Affiliate" member of the United States Soccer Federation. USL has operated National and North American professional, amateur and youth soccer leagues since 1986 and is in its third decade of operation. The Super Y-League is the biggest stage for the top clubs in North America.

Many of our fully operational senior USL franchises take advantage of utilizing several Super Y-League teams to develop a vertically integrated professional club. USL uses its experience and influence to produce the best competition possible. We can do this without asking for exorbitant player or team fees – fees that sometimes prevent players from competing. Another advantage of the Super Y-League is its flexibility and proficiency in adjusting to the needs of its members and the evolving youth landscape.

### **How is the Super Y-League competition structured?**

The Super Y-League primarily follows FIFA's laws of the game. We also avoid many common restrictions and offer expanded rosters with no limits on recruiting. The league allows a 26 player roster of which 18 can be named for each match. The Super Y-League starts at age 13, which is the youngest age that fits into our system when coaches can clearly see elite level talent.

This season mirrors the current professional calendar in the U.S. culminating in the annual North American



Finals. Each division within the league is unique in climate, various soccer activities, and the scholastic sports calendar. Each division collectively designs the competitive structure including the number of teams, games, start dates, and age groups. We leave it to the soccer people within these divisions to give us the best input on what they need to have a successful season. We are flexible in allowing clubs to work with their respective associations.

### **Who can compete in the Super-Y League?**

Any player can compete in the Super-Y League in an appropriate age/gender group. We encourage all athletes regardless of race, national origin, or financial background to

compete in the Super Y-League. As long as the standard of play and the club administration is consistent with Super Y-League requirements, we welcome all club teams. Membership in the Super Y-League is not restricted to USL franchises or teams in states with USL franchises.



### **What does the Super Y-League offer that is different from what other national youth associations, such as U.S. Youth Soccer, are providing on the local or regional level?**

The Super Y-League system is much broader in geographical scope and is organized on a divisional level. Our members offer top teams in a geographical area. Because of that, teams can consistently compete at a higher level. Most other leagues in the country are localized in terms of their membership. The Super Y-League is also designed specifically for the elite level player. Another difference is reflected through expanded roster sizes, no recruiting restrictions, and the club pass system. These are not typically available through other youth associations that put heavy emphasis on recreational soccer.

### **How does the Super Y-League spotlight players otherwise missed by the current system?**

The divisional structure of the Super Y-League enables teams to scout their own areas for the best players. These players are then given the opportunity to display their skills on a divisional and national stage. The unique Super Y-League ODP program can also provide an avenue to national identification for players as well.



### **What is the impact on the Olympic Development Program (ODP)?**

The Super Y-League was granted ODP status in August of 2002 for two programs. These programs are: 1) The Super Y-League North American Finals as a National ODP event where players will be scouted by U.S. Soccer National Staff Coaches and 2) The formation of the National ODP Camps where players will be scouted by U.S. Soccer National Staff Coaches. Please note that there is no connection with this system and the U.S. Youth Soccer ODP system.

It is the belief of the Super Y-League and

its membership that we can provide a better system and a better alternative for players to be identified. Our belief is that the identification of players in their natural environment is the best way to consistently evaluate players. Players who excel within their clubs should be identified through their performance in league play, just as it is done in most strong soccer nations throughout the world. The state systems tend to lose players through politics or expense.

### **What is the future beyond the Super Y-League?**

Canada and the U.S. are gradually becoming stronger soccer nations. The leaders in the game are no longer recreational organizations, but Technical Directors from clubs and soccer-focused organizations such as USL. The planning and foresight of USL will mold the game into what it should become in North America. More and more professional clubs both domestically and internationally are focusing on the Super Y-League while players continue to be identified for US National Teams. The opportunities that our vertically integrated structure offers players from youth through the professional levels are something no other single organization can provide.



### **How does a new club apply to the Super Y-League?**

Applications for future seasons are available on the web site during the current playing season. Prospective clubs are reviewed for competition, administration, facilities, coaching staff, and club structure. After the review, the league will notify the club of the acceptance or non-acceptance into the league.



### **What does a team get for the \$1,250.00 administrative fee?**

Services provided for each Super Y-League team include league administration, scheduling, referee assignment, ODP administration, web site management, press and public relations including updated standings and statistics, player discipline, and the opportunity to qualify for the championship event in each age group.

One reason for these fees is greater overhead cost for operating a North American youth league. However, tournaments these days can run from \$400-\$1200 for only three to four games. Clubs must consider that playing in several high cost tournaments per year far surpasses our annual league fee. Our cost is very reasonable and comes with added services to clubs. Super Y-League's ODP system allows players to be scouted while in their natural club environment thereby eliminating the need for players to pay for the State ODP system.

NOTE: Individual player registration will remain separate from the administrative fees. Teams can participate in any other open USSF sanctioned competition year round with their SYL player cards.