

NWUnited Responds to Parent Comments and Suggestions

(Based on 2009/10 Parent Evaluations)

Parent Comments on the Left. NWUnited Responses on the Right.

Parent Comments	NWUnited Responses
General Comments	
<p>In the soccer community statewide NWU is not considered a "serious" club, and if a kid is looking to play at a higher level (college, etc) they must travel elsewhere to get the training and exposure necessary. It would be great if that wasn't the case. That could begin with NWU putting a Director of Player Development in place.</p>	<p>NWUnited is a medium size club with moderate fees. We do not have the population base nor the financial resources to be all things to all players. Clearly, clubs in larger metropolitan areas have many advantages in that regard. But, we are serious about what we do and we are <u>always</u> open to improving Club programs and operations: We are eager to do so, within our player population and financial limitations. To that end, we are searching for a Development Director. You can look on the Club website to see a description of the position. We hope to fill that position soon.</p>
<p>I would like to see NWU hire a Director of Coaching to establish a common approach throughout the teams</p>	<p>We intend to do that very thing.</p>
<p>Need to be more involved on WSYSA</p>	<p>We are not sure what greater involvement would be, but we are interested in any suggestions.</p>
<p>Add two or four more days of practice a month during the summer and before the regular season is a good thing.</p>	<p>We feel that this might be appropriate for some teams; but it should be a matter for discussion among coach, players, and parents of a given team.</p>
<p>I don't think most parents know about the monthly meetings and how to get involved. We should have a club night again so new parent's can be better informed.</p>	<p>We agree with both suggestions and would like to make that happen this year.</p>
<p>It would be nice if you actually used these evaluations!</p>	<p>We are taking this comment and all other comments seriously and hope we do a good job of acting on them.</p>
Outreach	
<p>Work with the local rec clubs to improve their programs and skills rather than bringing kids into a high cost select.</p>	<p>We agree in part and and disagree, in part. We do have plans to assist rec clubs this year: Offering technical assistant to rec coaches and having the new Development Director contact local clubs and coaches to explain how we can help. We also will take another look at our fees and hope we can bring in all players who could benefit from our programs. And, we will continue to offer, and hopefully increase, scholarships.</p> <p>However, we do not believe that a short rec season can offer the development opportunities of our 10-month select program.</p>

Parent Comments	NWUnited Responses
Reach out and talk with parents about select early U9 U10. If you had a specific person to address the U9-U10 teams around this county it would be a great help.	We agree and this year we are planning to initiate a) the NWUnited Development Academy of U9/U10 boys and girls; and b) do a better job of outreach to rec clubs—in large part through our Club Development Director.
The club could be more visible in rec. leagues and at school in terms of recruiting. Everyone who plays soccer or has a kid playing soccer in Skagit County should know who and what NW United is. Media exposure could compliment this as well.	We agree. We need to do more and a better job. And we are always eager to have parents join one of our Communication Committee (or other committees) to help us get to that level of awareness.
How about having a few NWU soccer "ambassadors" visit some schools to promote NWU soccer, which might improve try-out participation. There are lots of people in outlying communities that have never heard of NWU.	Great ideas! We will work on that. And, would love to have some help doing it. One (or more) “ambassador” in each community would be a great asset
There is a misconception about select soccer regarding the money, travel and commitment. Find a way to educate and inform the parents before tryouts.	Every year, we try to provide accurate and complete information at tryouts. But, we know we can always do better. This year we hope to meet the standard you are asking for.
Tryouts and team formation	
Tryouts were not good. the girls were not able to show case their skills. Were teams picked before tryouts?	Tryouts are challenging. At the older ages, trainers have already seen players quite a bit in prior years, so we don't think it's as much of a problem there. At the younger ages—particularly U11 & U12-- it is difficult to assess players in a short time. Here's a partial answer to your concern: 1) At U11 this year, all players will train together with our best trainers rather than be rostered directly to teams. “Fluid teams” will be formed for tournaments and up until the point in mid-fall when the State requires roster freezes.
I could only suggest that you do more recruiting, if that is possible.	We agree and hope some of the communication and outreach actions mentioned above will help.
Tryouts and team formation seemed disorganized, but worked out in the end.	We are always considering how to do a better job. Hope you find this year better. Eager to hear of any specific suggestions for getting rid of the”disorganization.”
I feel that the team selection process was not very fair. <i>(We omitted more specific comments to protect the confidentiality of the parent.)</i>	We really hope that tryouts are fair and unbiased. If parents have a concern about a particular situation, we encourage them to speak to a Board member—before, during, or after tryouts.

<u>Parent Comments</u>	<u>NWUnited Responses</u>
Disagree with coaches coaching players in Spanish—since all virtually all players have a good understanding of English.	We will mention this to the Spanish-speaking coaches. Although, we believe that if the same information is communicated in both languages and players have confidence that it is, some coach instructions in a player's preferred language is appropriate and encouraged.
Picking players just because they have a sibling on a team is not fair to the others trying out.	Your concern is legitimate. However, in a close decision, putting siblings on the same team could be an important service to parents.
Eleven-year olds should not be selected to either win or lose, but rather player that show potential should be developed equally.	<p>We wholeheartedly agree. Forming A and B teams at the U11 level--and in our new U9/U10 Academy-- is no longer appropriate</p> <p>This year we intend to focus on individual player skill development and match awareness. For U11s, we will have “fluid rosters” up until the league play when the State requires fixed rosters. As the club builds its numbers of skilled players, we hope that great team disparities will be reduced. Furthermore, we will identify teams by age and coach name-- not with A or B designations.</p>
Get the best players on the best team at the older age groups rather than have players turn down the top team to play with a specific coach.	We disagree, in part. Where there are two teams, we expect coaches to work together to meet the training and develop requirements of each and every player. However, players still have the choice of not playing for a specific coach.
Allow established teams to enter NWUnited.	We disagree. However, we do encourage coaches of established teams to contact us and discuss the best way for NWUnited to meet the developments of all players on that team. That might include asking the coach to become a part of NWUnited.
Rather than using A,B and C which implies skill level, you could label the teams differently.	We agree—in part. Those labels are gone and at the U11 level we will train all players together, forming “fluid” teams to play in tournaments. However, from U13 and up, the reality we will form teams based upon player skill--and attitude. We are working to increase the number of more highly skilled players so that we can have at least two and perhaps three solid teams at each level.

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<p>Coaches should not evaluate teams at tryouts. It is very noticeable when you see coaches only looking at certain groups and not looking at all kids trying out. And it is disappointing to hear parents of A teams say they know which players on the team at day 1 of tryouts. Especially, when players don't try because they know they are going to be on the team.</p>	<p>Coaches are an important (but not the only) part of tryouts and we believe we should take into account their prior knowledge of players—not to add bias, but to ensure proper placement. However, they should (Must!) be open to real consideration of all players, including new and improved players. It is hard for us to control for parents or players who don't take tryouts seriously. At the very least, it indicates an attitude that isn't respectful of other players trying out.</p>
<p>Try to search out better players to have a really very strong team.</p>	<p>We agree!! We are always looking for way to improve our outreach, within the constraints of being a volunteer organization. We think that hiring a Development Director will help us work on this.</p>
<p>Try to keep teams together don't pull players from teams to help with another team.</p>	<p>We do not believe that players should be taken off teams to help another team when it is a significant detriment to the second team. We do require coach and parent consultation and Board approval before any player movement. This has not always worked as well as we have liked, but we intend to do a better job of reviewing all player movement and its impact each team.</p>
<p>Development Program</p>	
<p>Have something organized for the U10 developmental teams that is meaningful and competitive.</p>	<p>We will institute a U9/10 Academy this year and expect to provide them with high quality training, play in three summer tournaments, and a return to rec for the fall league. We will see them again for training in the winter.</p>
<p>Coach Selection, Licensing, Quality, and Development</p>	
<p>Encourage coaches to attend the board meetings.</p>	<p>Good point. We “require” each team to have a representative at the Board meetings. We do not require that it be a coach—however, we hope more coaches will attend.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to require coaches to increase their license level. • Are all coaches working towards higher levels of certification/qualification? 	<p>We encourage coaches to advance through “C” licenses—and we pay for the costs of doing so. Licenses are one factor in our decision to bring on new coaches. Once we have a club Development Director in place, we hope to work with each coach to identify courses will enhance their capabilities in and understanding of the game. <i>(See next answer for more on this issue.)</i></p>
<p>NWU should recruit more qualified coaches and/or require that their coaches be qualified, with a minimum licensing (D) requirement.</p>	<p>We agree. However, there are excellent coaches with substantial experience but who do not have a license and would not benefit from those courses.</p>

Parent Comments	NWUnited Responses
<p>Keep getting great coaches who are passionate about select soccer and teaching kids the correct way to play. We need to get our coaches to work together. Hiring a coaching director will help this.</p>	<p>We hope to do that very thing and very soon.</p>
<p>When a coach receives more than one red card, the club should insist on an assistant coach of the club's choosing. When a coach experiences a multi-game suspension, there should be club communication to all of the parents on the team, rather than just the manager.</p>	<p>We agree and will put that into operation.</p>
<p>Hire coaches that have the age appropriate qualifications.</p>	<p>We agree with the principle. And we want to hear from parents when they feel our selections aren't appropriate.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more parent coaches. • I believe that there should be a rule that the older teams U15 and above should not be coached by parents of the players. 	<p>Each situation needs to be a balance of the qualifications we want a coach to have and the availability of coaches with those qualifications. We wouldn't avoid hiring a qualified coach who has a child in the program, but we would want to make sure that each coach treats all players appropriately.</p>
<p>I am concerned about the lack of objectivity the coach had as well as the lack of higher level coaching experience. I also am concerned with the fact we are paying for select soccer but have a "rec" coach.</p>	<p>We try to be objective and as well as seek out and hire coaches who will make a powerful contribution to the development of the players on the team. We also set coach stipends based upon playing and coaching experience.</p> <p>However, we know parents may have concerns with a particular coach's contribution to player development. We need to hear about this and respond effectively—either through additional training support for that coach, further licensing, providing for assistant coaches. We have not always been effective in doing so. (<i>See “Parent Liaison” below.</i>) Hiring a Development Director will help us do that.</p>
<p>NWUnited could get more involved in each team and give suggestions to get the team going in the right direction. Also it would be nice to see the coaches have a better working relation with each other.</p>	<p>We agree completely!! We expect this to be one of the benefits of hiring a NWUnited Development Director.</p>
<p>I am sure it is hard to find volunteers to help coach but when the team's morale and record is affected due to poor coaching decisions, then it needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>We need to be better informed about how each team is doing in terms of individual player and team progress and development—and in terms of player, parent, and coach satisfaction. Where there are emerging problems they need to be addressed. We believe the Development Director will be a big help in understanding how teams are doing and addressing problems that might affect the team.</p>

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<p>One of the reasons players are not showing up at a team practice is that the player is discouraged and believes that the coach is too negative in his/her treatment of players.</p>	<p>We want to avoid such situations. The Development Director will help in this and we are making a change in the parent liaison position so that we ensure that emerging problems are addressed in a timely fashion. (See below)</p>
Cost and fundraising	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost is almost prohibitive for us. • It's expensive...any way to bring the cost down? • The cost was the biggest part for me, so I hope that my children can play again next season. • Help our low income families with more scholarship funds, this year was especially difficult to come up with dues. • Many families are suffering financial hardships, and changing uniform providers every year is tough. • Thank you for the level of scholarship support and the priority on keeping soccer affordable for all • The program needs to reconsider what the coaches are paid monthly. 	<p>We realize that it costs a significant amount of money to play 10 months of select soccer. We do what we can to keep costs low while attracting good coaches and providing high quality trainers. We have a significant fund raising activity in our three tournaments that helps with scholarships and other costs. We review coach stipends and other costs each year and will do so again this year.</p>
<p>We need more fundraising for all of the teams or we may not end up with many players.</p>	<p>Team fundraising are a big help in keeping select soccer affordable for many families. Last year, we provided teams who were interested with a variety of suggestions for raising money.</p>
Training and PSSA	
<p>Holding the academy more accountable with training they provide and having the academy coaches show up on time, and being more structured on getting the girls under control and ready to practice more seriously.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for the PSSA training opportunities. • More PSSA training. 	
<p>Schedule more specialized training sessions, and make sure they actually happen. Especially position specific training. Our team only got 2 training sessions the entire season. They were supposed to get position specific training, but only received a quick half hour session that was not position specific because somebody forgot to tell the person who was supposed to lead the session. It was never rescheduled, and I feel personally like our team was somewhat neglected by the club. Even though I received a scholarship, for what I did pay out I still don't feel like I got what I payed for from the club.</p>	
<p>Some practices were canceled with little or no notice - mix ups about field lights - PSSA trainers didn't show up do to scheduling mix ups.</p>	

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Parent Liaison	
<p>We were excited to be on Select and supportive. After this season we can understand why the league is struggling. We spoke with a board member (Bob Raymond) about an issue of great concern to us. We were told it would get researched and we would be called back - received no response. Very frustrating!</p>	<p>From Bob Raymond: “I was not as effective as I intended and I regret and time that I failed to return any of the calls or respond adequately to the concerns of parents. “Parents deserve to have some resolution of all issues they raise. Clearly, I left at least two parents without satisfactory answers. The parent liaison position is a very important one. I have resigned and nominations are opened for a new liaison. As I explained to the Board, I am sure others are more capable than I to fulfill the duties of the parent liaison.”</p>
<p>Standards for coaching~I called Mr Raymond in May with my concerns and no changes occurred.</p>	
Club Communication	
<p>I appreciate the emails we receive about lost and found items, bits of news, and club meeting minutes.</p>	<p>Thanks! We intend to provide more (useful and important) information during the coming year.</p>
<p>Getting the word out there for all ages about Select Soccer. That Select Soccer is just that, not everyone will make the team but the experience is a positive one. Maybe, the Club as a whole having more of a commitment to the community (Club puts on toy drives, Boys & Girls Club fundraising etc) would boost awareness and having an active roll in the community would make it easier for the Club to attract sponsors for tournaments, or sponsor training apparel. Also having club team members wearing the same training t-shirts would build unity and club awareness.</p>	<p>Great ideas!! We will put them on our list of program improvements to consider when time and talent allow. (By the way, if you are not already assisting a team or the Club, we need idea people and organizers like you to help us improve all of our operations.)</p>
<p>Handbook of procedures, game etiquette, where to buy equipment, people to contact in NWU for new players, especially U11 teams.</p>	<p>Agree!! We are developing handbooks for coaches, managers, and families.</p>
<p>Possibly translate info sent out to families in Spanish, as we have several Spanish speaking parents that would benefit.</p>	<p>Agree!! We haven't always done that, but we intend to do so.</p>
<p>The WSYSA website is my go-to place for information. As long as that is packed with information...I'm happy and able to share it with friends and family.</p>	<p>If you have any suggestions for nwunited.org website, please let us know: nwunited.communications@wavecable.com</p>
Uniforms	
<p>Many families are suffering financial hardships, and changing uniform providers every year is tough.</p>	<p>We do hear a number of complaints about our uniforms and uniform selection process. We need to make sure we are making the right choice—cost and durability--in the future</p>
Referees	

<u>Parent Comments</u>	<u>NWUnited Responses</u>
<p>Get some good refs, get rid of the ones with bad reputations. This sport is for the boys, not a venue for some frustrated adults to feel big. Power trips don't fall into the realm of "Good Sportsmanship" Please.</p>	<p>There may be individual problems with ref performance. Specific problems with referee need to be reported promptly to the referee assignor. See www.skagitrefs.org.</p> <p>However, based on years of experience, we are pretty confident that the select refs in our area are among the best in the State.</p>