

<http://www.oregonpremierleague.com>

Dear EastSide United FC Members:

In December 2006, staff from soccer clubs within the State of Oregon began meeting to discuss the direction of soccer in the State. The purpose was to learn if other clubs had issues in common with the managing of OYSA (Oregon Youth Soccer Association). Over time, eight (8) clubs were consistent in their attendance at the meetings; FC Portland, Oregon Soccer Academy, Lake Oswego Soccer Club, EastSide United FC, Portland City United, Tualatin Hills United Soccer Club, Southside Soccer Club, and Westside Metros. This group of eight evolved into what is now the Oregon Premier Council (OPC).

The OPC began meeting with OYSA in order to present them with common issues that had been discussed and to see what could be done to address these concerns. Over the next few months meetings continued until it became evident that OYSA was not going to make changes based on the issues that the OPC presented them. The OPC continued to meet and in the fall of 2008 the opportunity to run their own U11 league (Oregon Premier League - OPL) presented itself. OYSA had adopted a policy to play 8v8 and during the previous meetings, the OPC had made the decision to not go to 8v8 but stay 11v11 at the U11 age group. The fact that OYSA chose to run an 8v8 league was not the reason that the OPC broke off; this just became the natural transition point for the OPC to break away. The OPL 11v11 league for U11 teams was sanctioned by US Club Soccer and the league ran very smoothly. Schedules went out on time, games were played on quality fields, and there was improved referee coverage at all games.

In 2009 the OPL expanded to serve U10, U11, and U12 players. The league was again sanctioned by US Club Soccer and, once again, everything ran smoothly. On top of the 8 OPC clubs there were another 20 soccer clubs who were represented in the OPL.

As 2010 approached the OPC considered the possibility of expanding the OPL to serve U10 through U14 players. However, with the hiring of Mike Smith as OYSA's Technical Director, the OPC reconsidered and actually volunteered some of their members to become part of a Premier Council operated by OYSA. The ironic thing about OYSA forming this Council is that it was one of the original things the OPC requested of OYSA in their initial discussions. However, after only a couple of meetings it became clear that the OYSA Premier Council was not going to have the power to do much or effect any change for the better. After many meetings and much consideration the decision was made for the OPL to expand to serve U10 to U18 players. We are certain that the new direction for soccer in Oregon will be a great move for the families within EastSide United FC along with the other OPC clubs.

Some of the changes will be implemented immediately, for example, the OPL will not hold QT's. For the past two years the OPL has simply met and placed teams in divisions where they will compete against teams of a like ability. Historically, OYSA's QT's have been held over 2 weekends entailing travel and additional time dedicated to soccer and away from family during the summer months. By eliminating QT's, it will save our families time and money while still effectively placing our teams for the fall league.

The "soccer" calendar will remain the same. After tryouts teams will begin training and participate in Summer Tournaments along with a 4 days team camp. From there they will enter into their league season and at the end of the league season will participate in the OPL Director's Cup. Teams who have finished in the top 6 of the highest U11 to U14 Divisions and top 4 of the highest U15 to U17 Divisions will be eligible to enter the NWCL (Northwest

Champions League). This is an exciting new program offered to teams who participate in the OPL. The NWCL will pit the best teams from WA against the best teams from OR. The 3 group winners plus 1 wildcard will enter into play offs with the winner gaining a berth to the Surf Cup tournament in San Diego.

We will continue to hold Spring and Winter leagues and there will be a State Cup in the Spring. This State Cup is another very exciting development where winners of the U13 and U14 Oregon US Club Soccer State Cup will enter into a play off with the winners of the U13 and U14 Fall league (if it is the same team then that team will have the entry). The victorious team will gain a berth into the US Club Soccer National's. There will still be a Presidents style Cup, (The Director's Cup), held in the Fall for our teams who want an end of season Cup but do not wish to participate in the US Club Soccer State Cup.

The Oregon US Club Soccer Premier League is now only 1 of 3 Leagues to be granted this status in the United States and we are very excited to be a part of this. While US Club Soccer has it's own ODP style program in which our members will be eligible for, our players will still be free to tryout for OYSA's ODP if they wish to play in that program. However, with the Portland Timber's MLS coming to Portland in 2011 there will be changes to the state wide ODP system as the Timbers will begin their own ODP style program. At this time the Portland Timbers have withdrawn from discussions with OYSA about partnering to run ODP. Instead, the Timbers are opting to align themselves with the OPL. We are waiting for an announcement from the Timbers regarding the OPL/Timbers partnership.

EastSide United FC will continue to be one of the premier clubs in the State of Oregon. We have a fantastic coaching staff, great club infrastructure, good facilities, and a tremendous group of families involved. Our members will continue to enjoy the benefits of being involved in one of the best soccer clubs in Oregon. We appreciate that with change there is some anxiety but please appreciate that we have weighed the pros and the cons of this situation and we are confident this is the right move.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Yours in soccer,

Gavin Wilkinson, Technical Director
EastSide United FC