



# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

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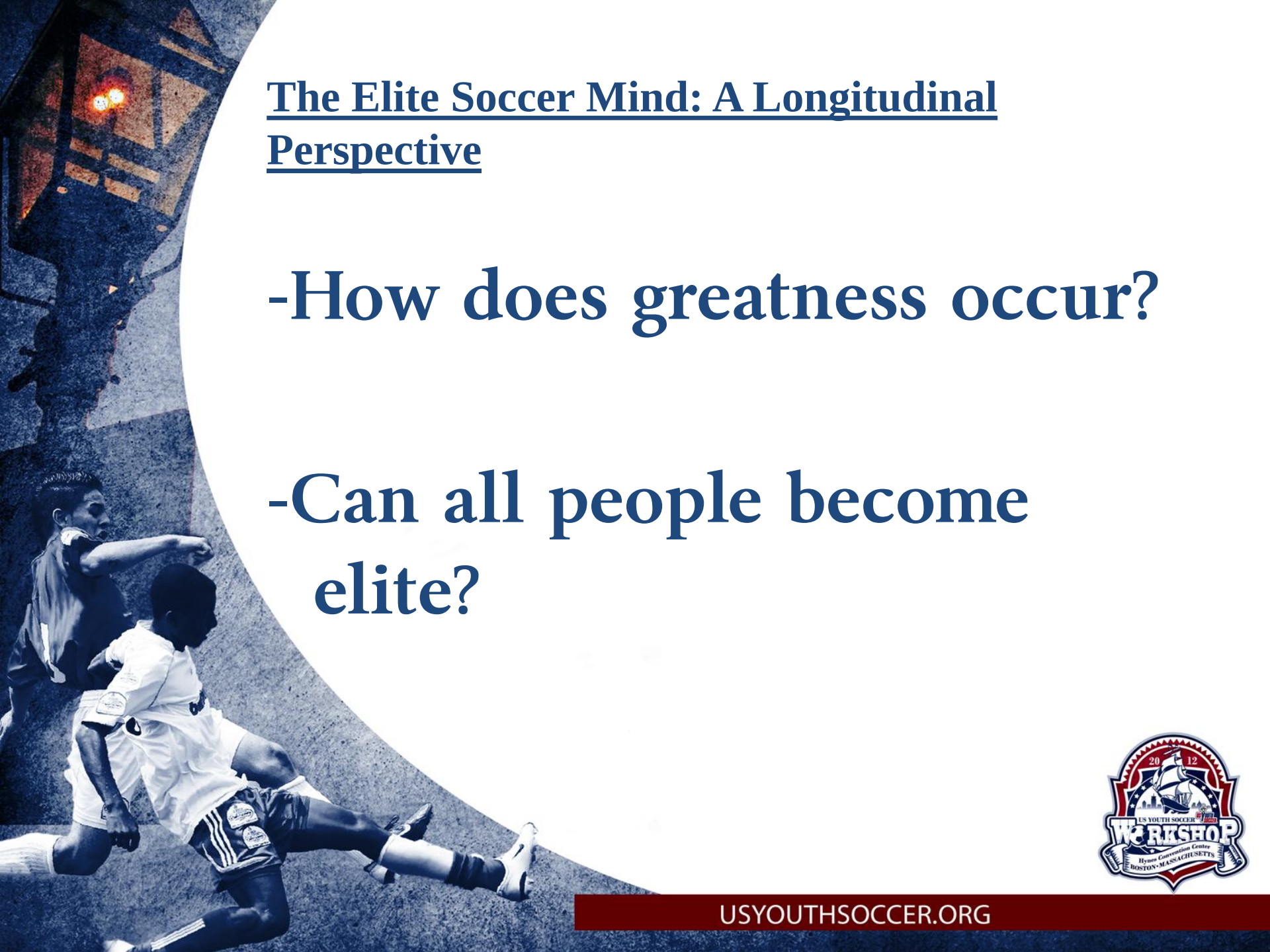




The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal  
Perspective

What is an elite  
soccer mind? (attributes)



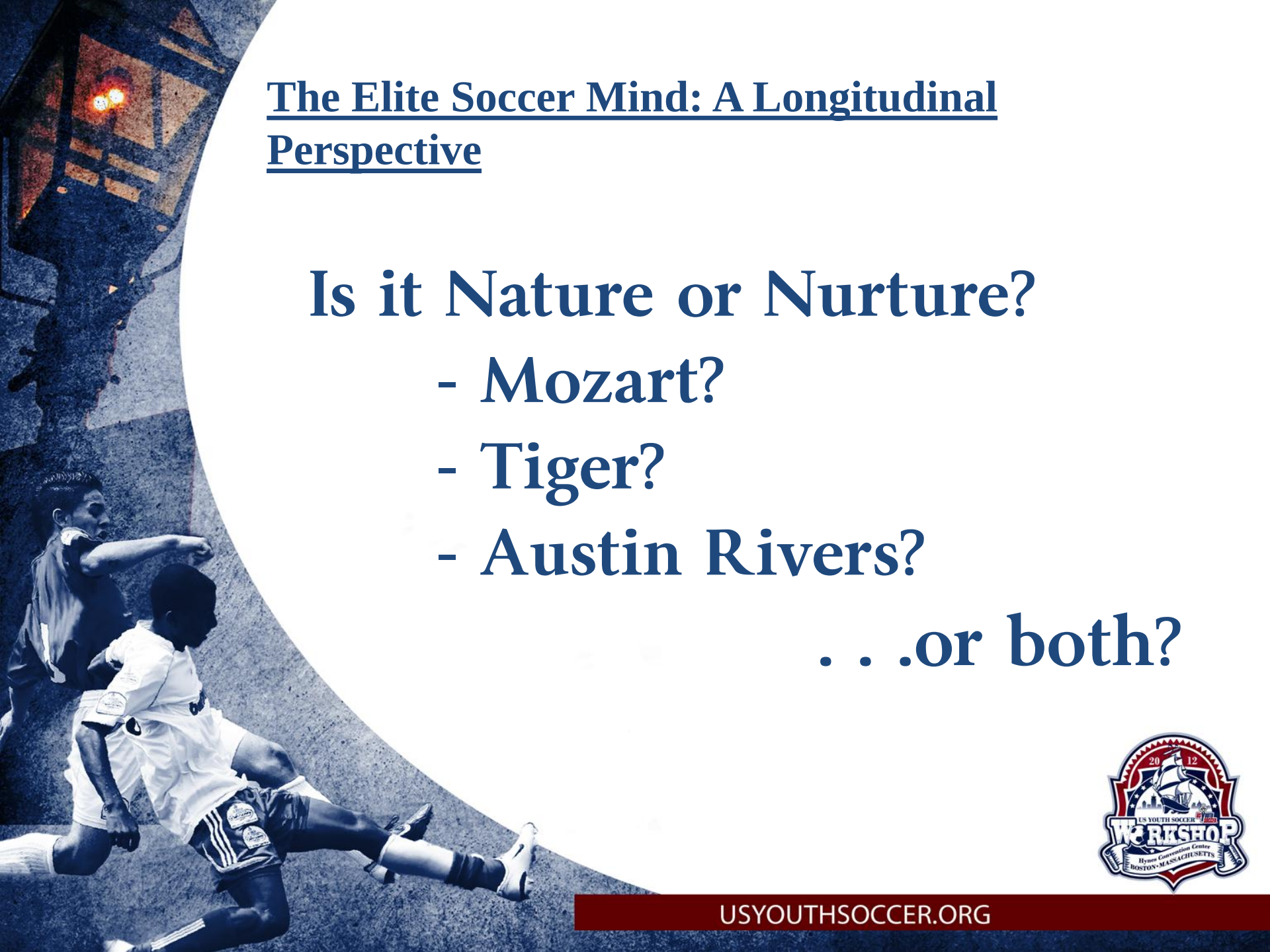


# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

-How does greatness occur?

-Can all people become elite?





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Is it Nature or Nurture?

- Mozart?
- Tiger?
- Austin Rivers?

. . .or both?





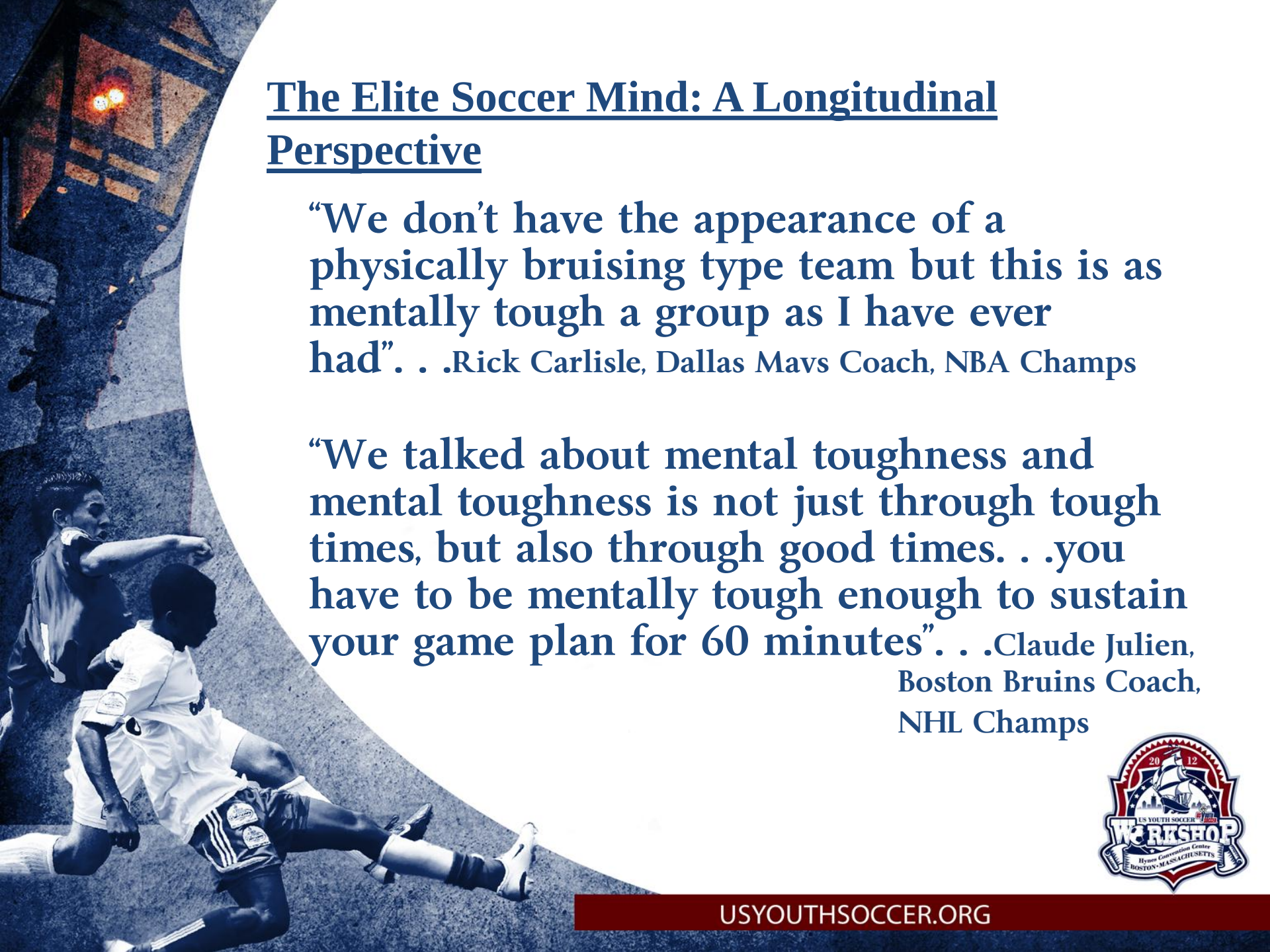
# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## How Important is the Mind?

- with respect to becoming elite
- with respect to maximizing potential

## What Do Top Coaches Think?



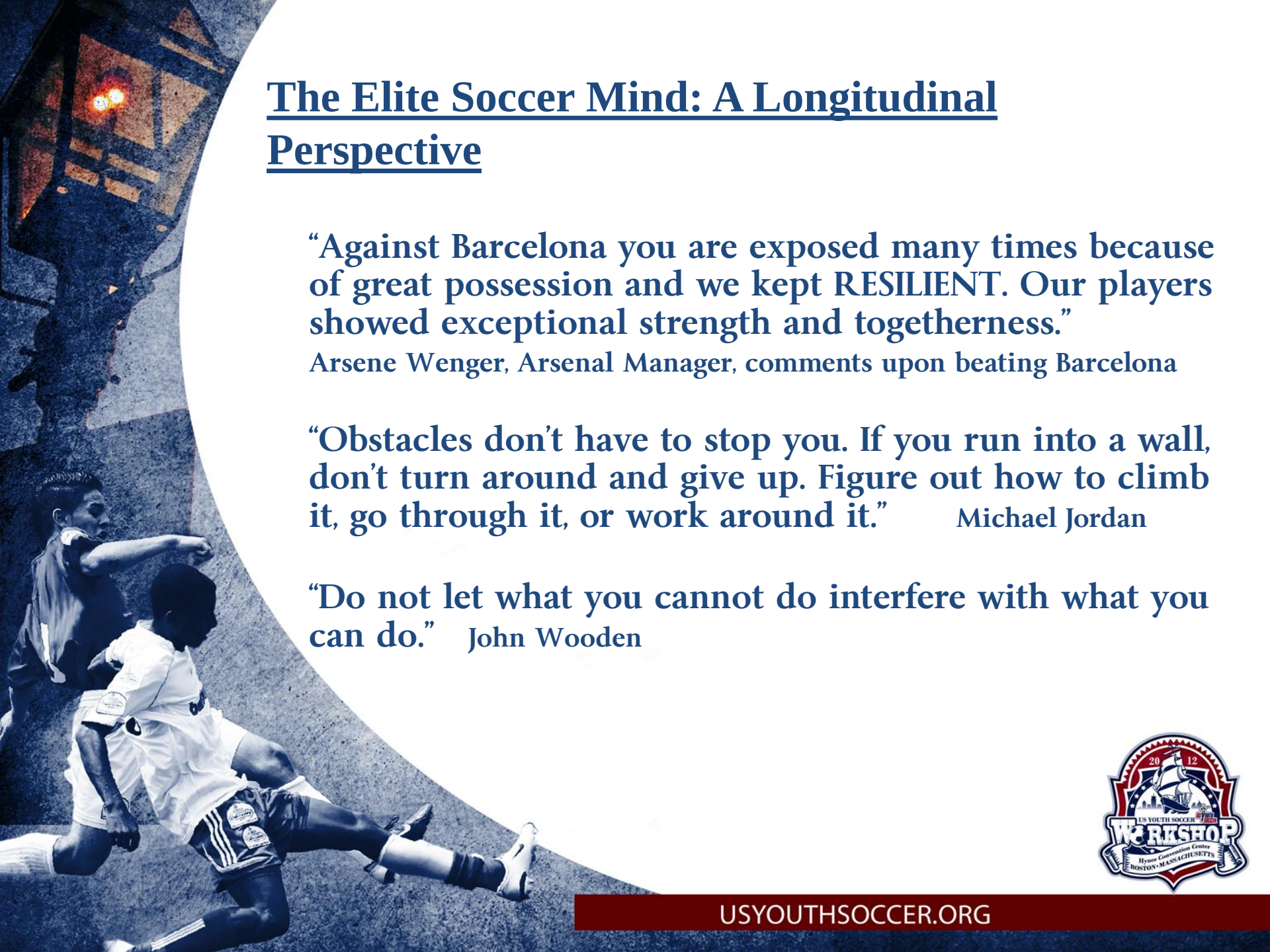


## The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

“We don’t have the appearance of a physically bruising type team but this is as mentally tough a group as I have ever had”. . .Rick Carlisle, Dallas Mavs Coach, NBA Champs

“We talked about mental toughness and mental toughness is not just through tough times, but also through good times. . .you have to be mentally tough enough to sustain your game plan for 60 minutes”. . .Claude Julien, Boston Bruins Coach, NHL Champs





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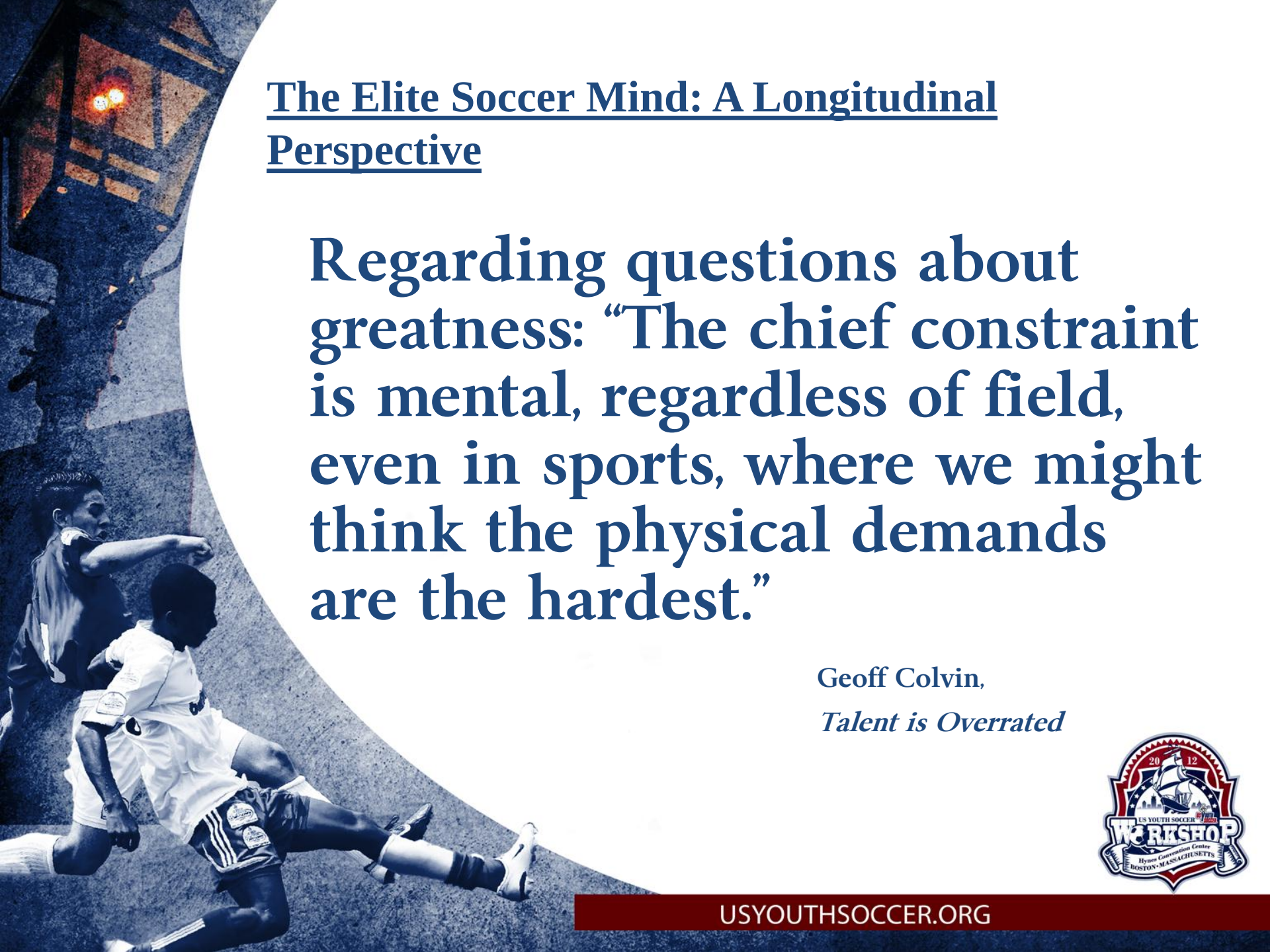
“Against Barcelona you are exposed many times because of great possession and we kept RESILIENT. Our players showed exceptional strength and togetherness.”

Arsene Wenger, Arsenal Manager, comments upon beating Barcelona

“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.” Michael Jordan

“Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” John Wooden





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Regarding questions about greatness: “The chief constraint is mental, regardless of field, even in sports, where we might think the physical demands are the hardest.”

Geoff Colvin,  
*Talent is Overrated*



# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

# 10,000



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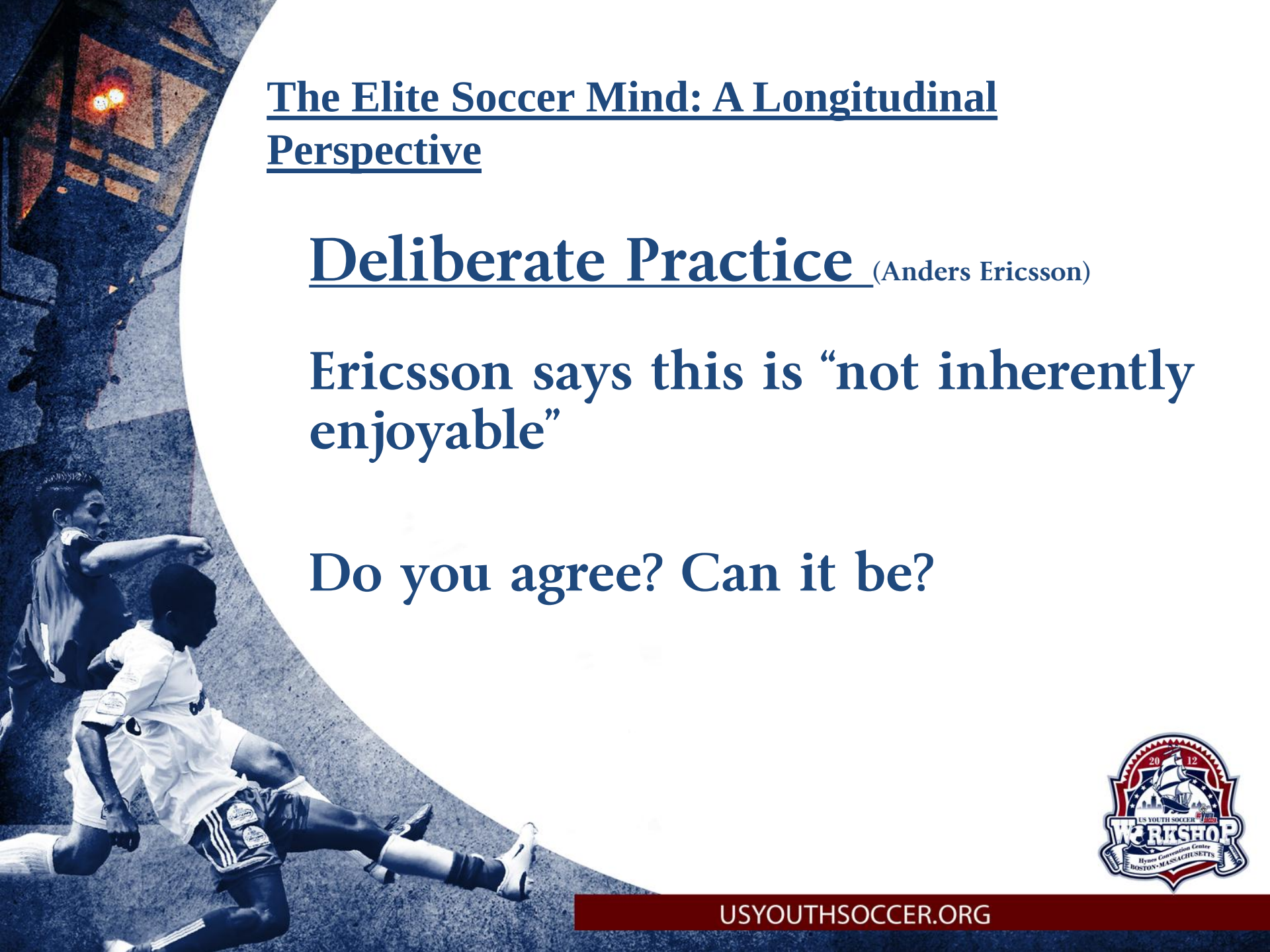


# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Deliberate Practice (Anders Ericsson)

- motivation to attend and work hard
- design takes pre-existing knowledge into consideration
- access to immediate feedback
- repeatedly perform same or similar tasks





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Deliberate Practice (Anders Ericsson)

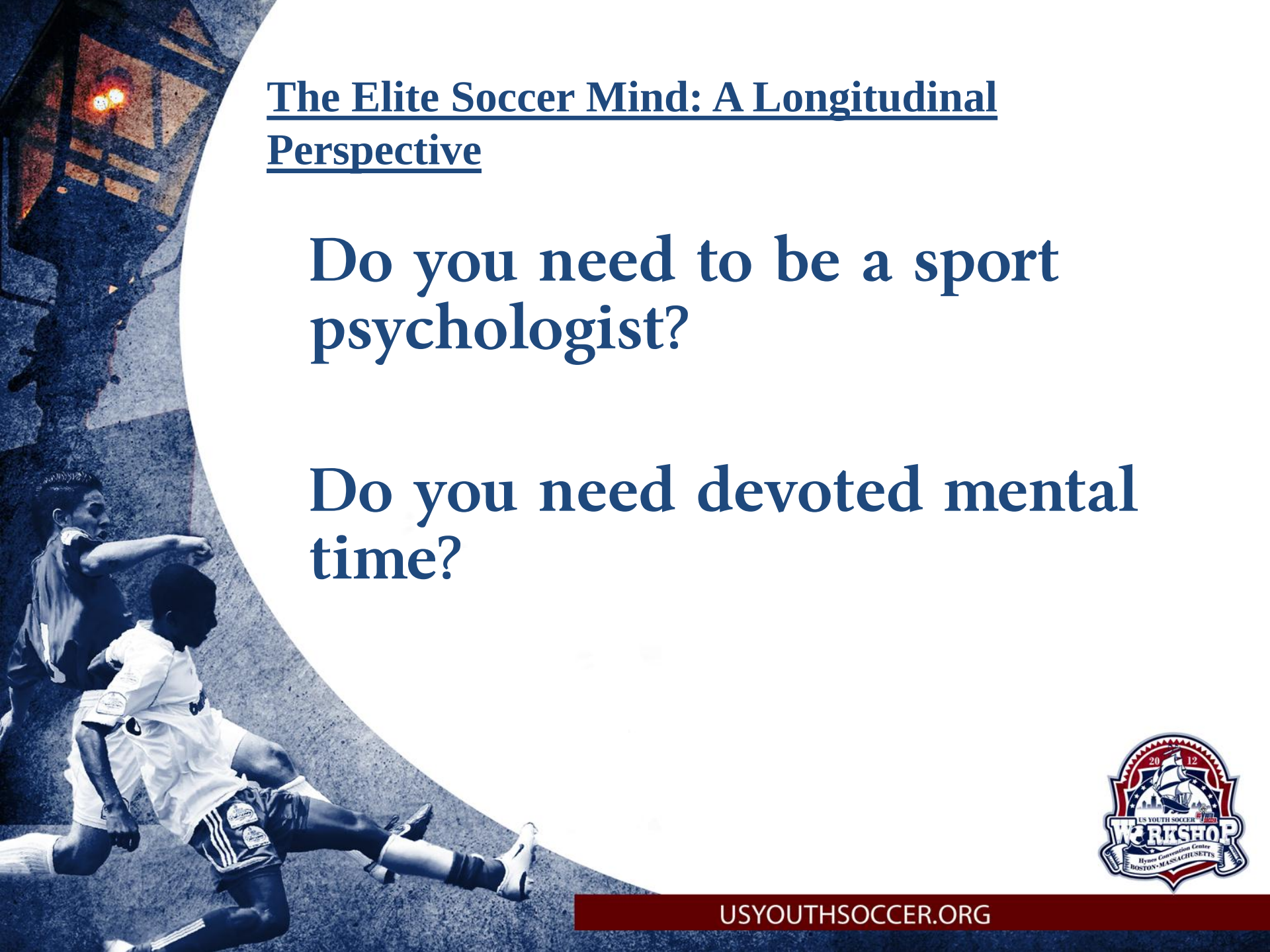
Ericsson says this is “not inherently enjoyable”

Do you agree? Can it be?



# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective





## The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

Do you need to be a sport psychologist?

Do you need devoted mental time?





The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal  
Perspective

Interwoven with current  
games. . .how tweak?

-passing and moving





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## General Concepts

- self-evaluation
- anticipation (trends)
- spatial learning



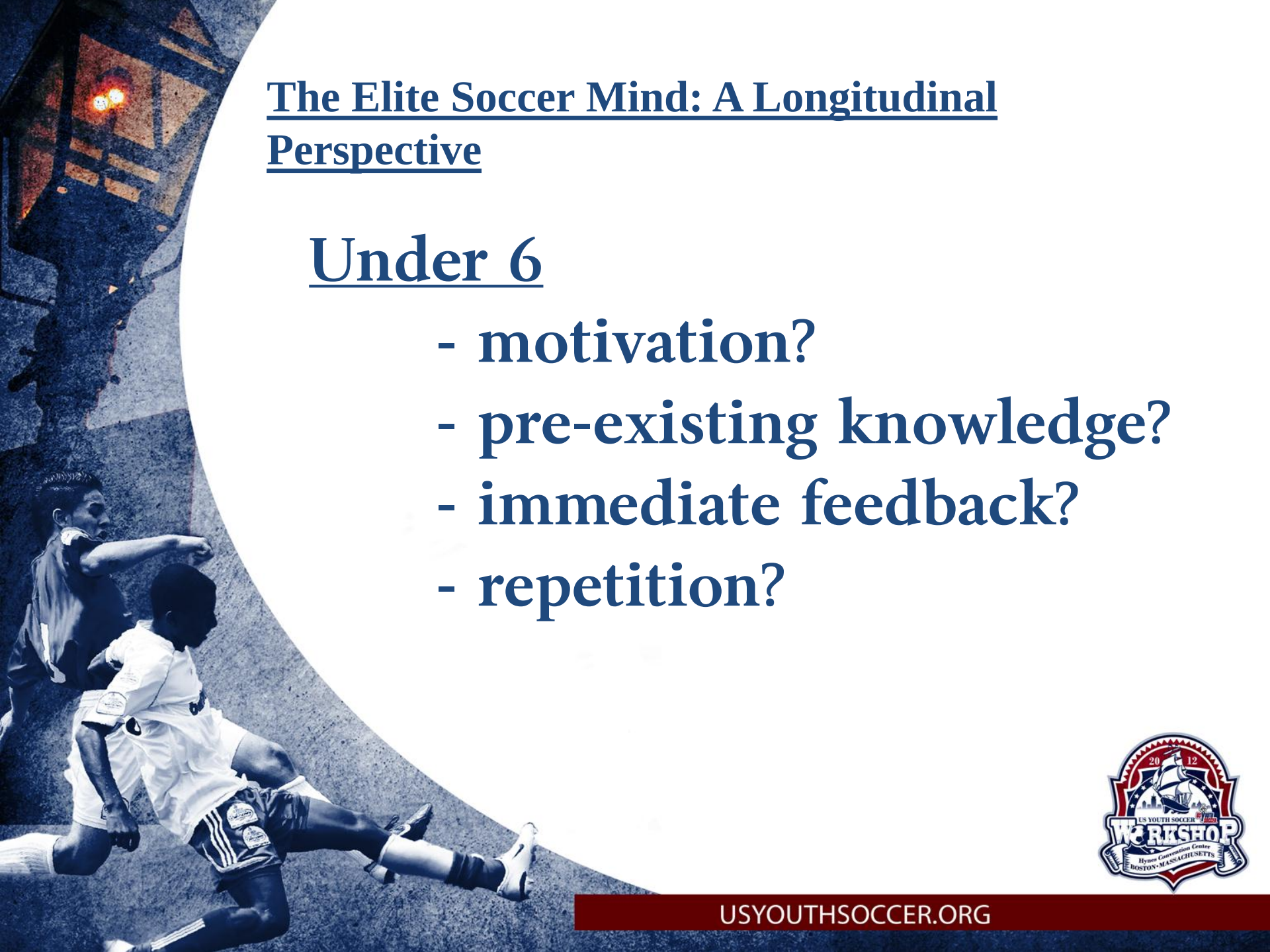


# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## General Concepts

- **cue recognition** (what is next)
- **crumbs** (they have to be better than us)
- **chunks**





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 6

- motivation?
- pre-existing knowledge?
- immediate feedback?
- repetition?





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 6 - what do we know?

**\*\*Myelin is key\*\***

- creative
- energetic
- egocentric



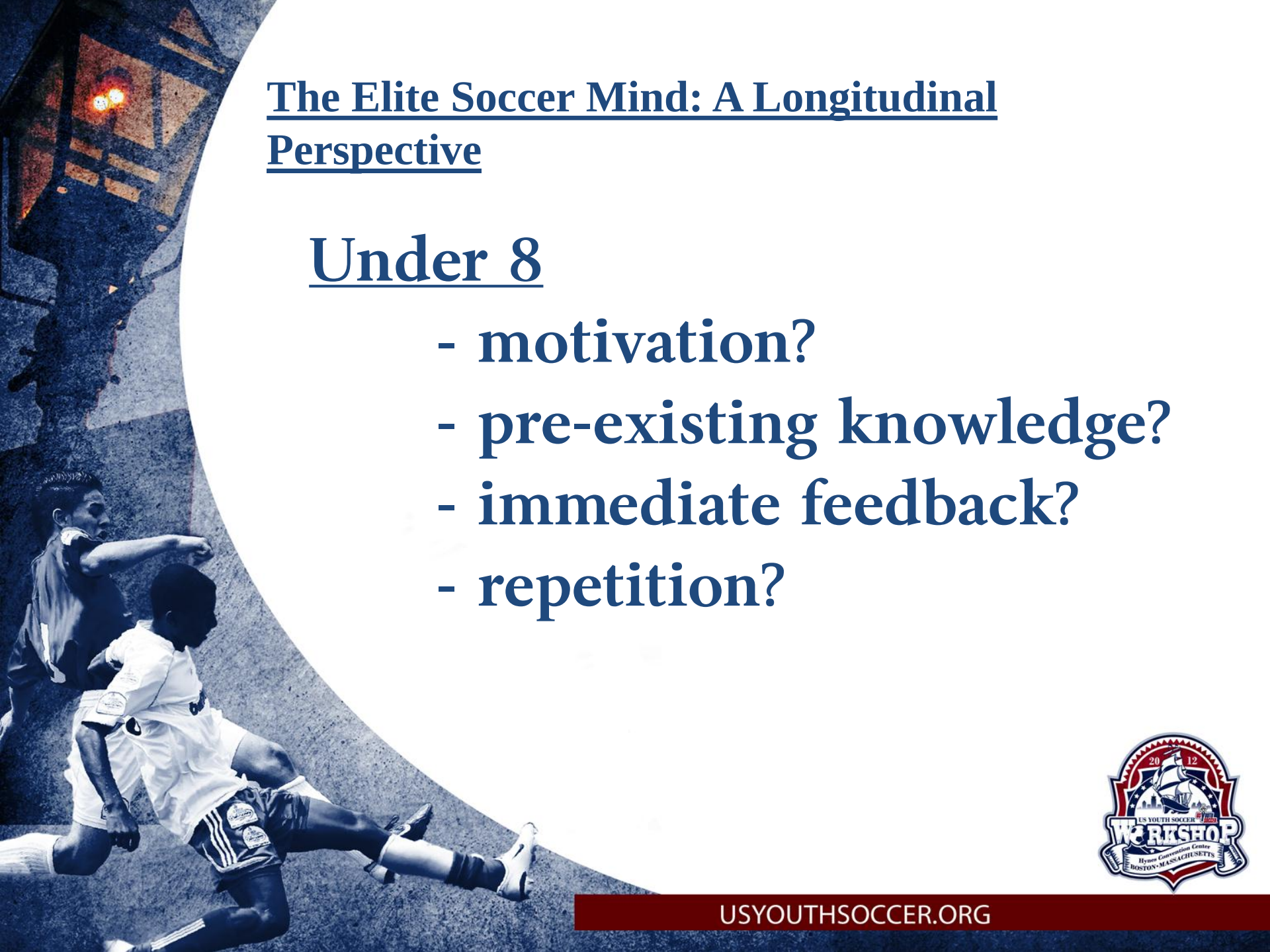


# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 6 - practical application

- fuel creativity
- give spotlight
- problem solving





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 8

- motivation?
- pre-existing knowledge?
- immediate feedback?
- repetition?



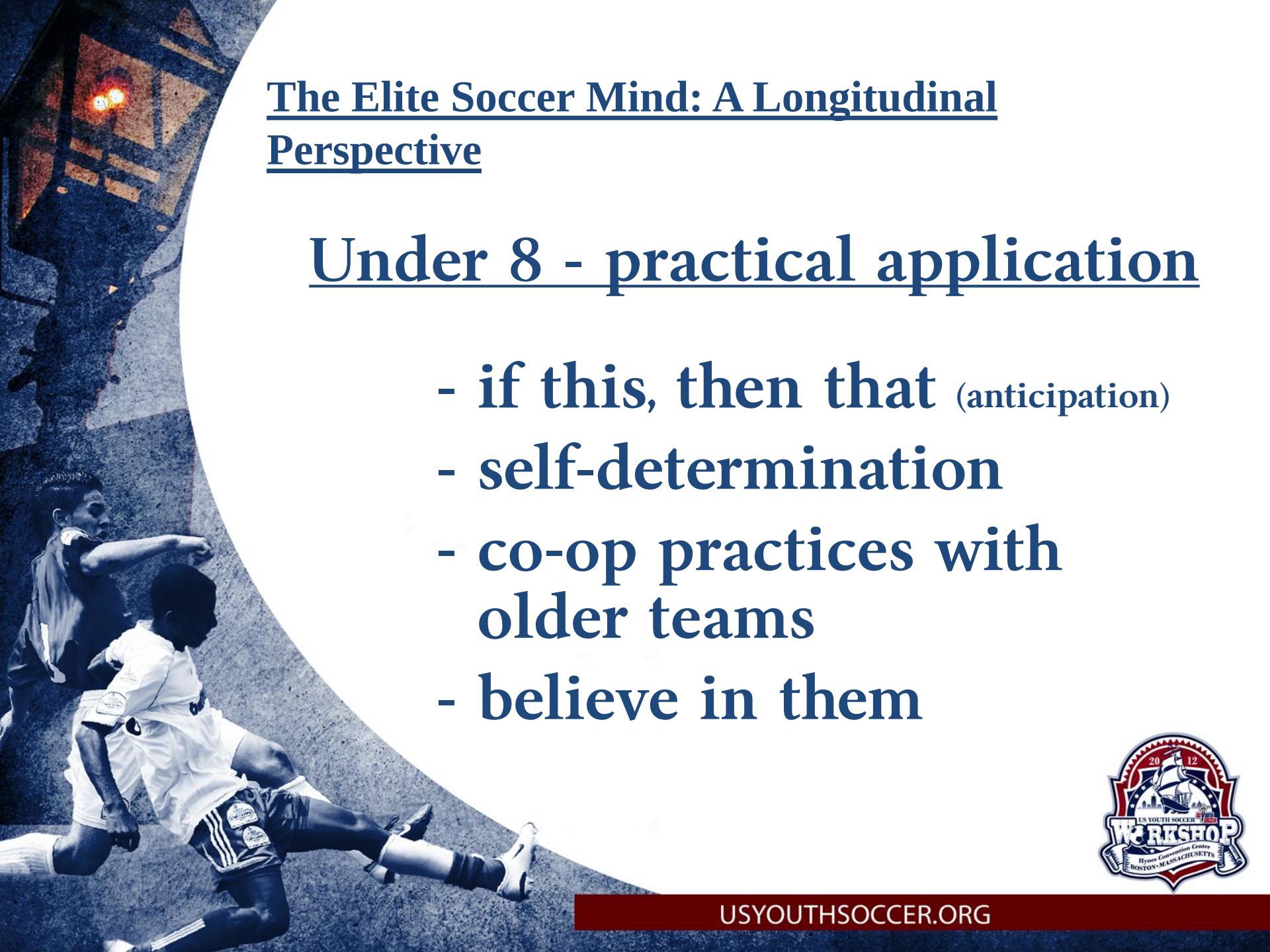


# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 8 – what do we know?

- more coordinated
- imagination
- relationships are key



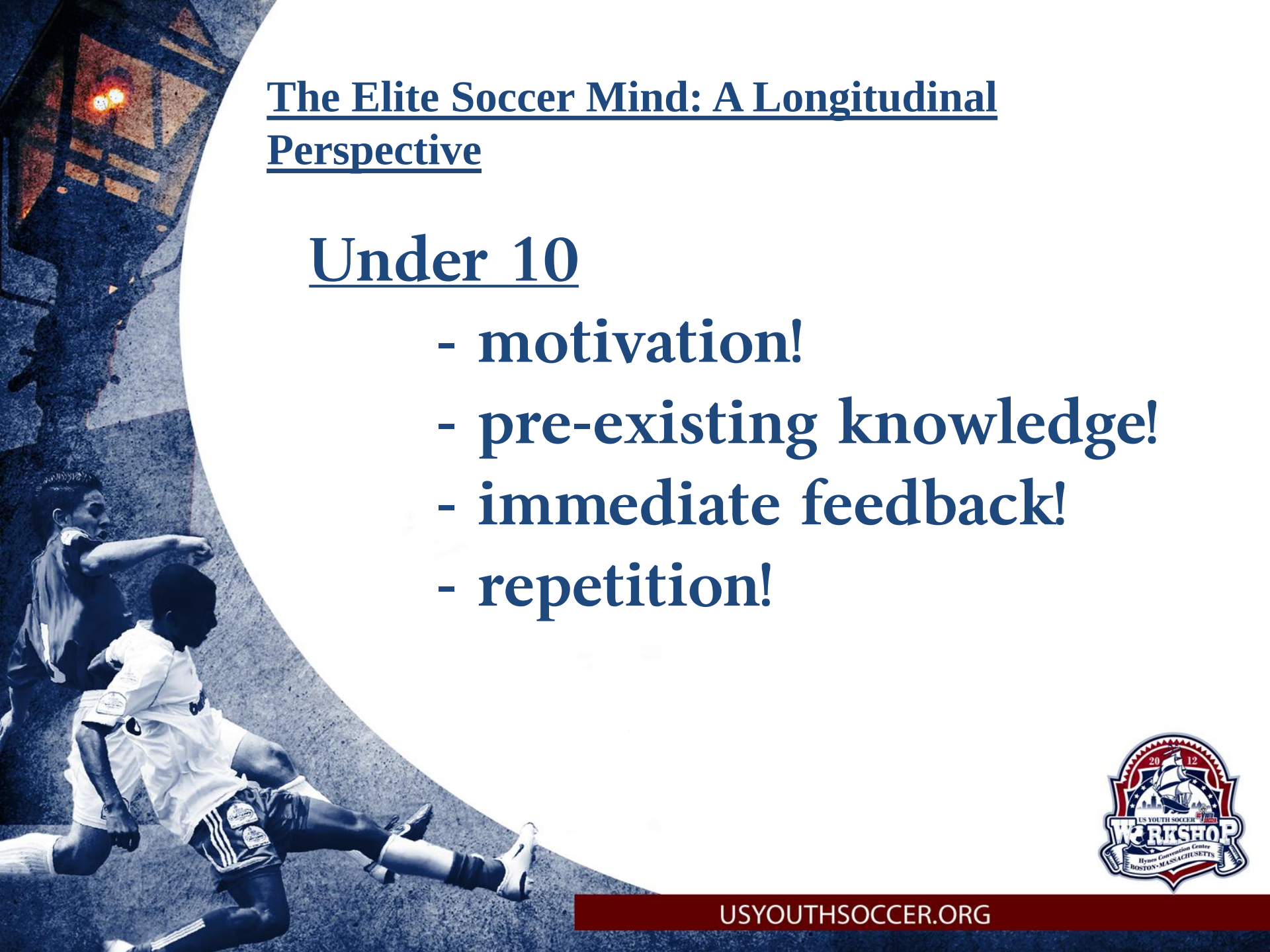


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## Under 8 - practical application

- if this, then that (anticipation)
- self-determination
- co-op practices with older teams
- believe in them





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 10

- motivation!
- pre-existing knowledge!
- immediate feedback!
- repetition!



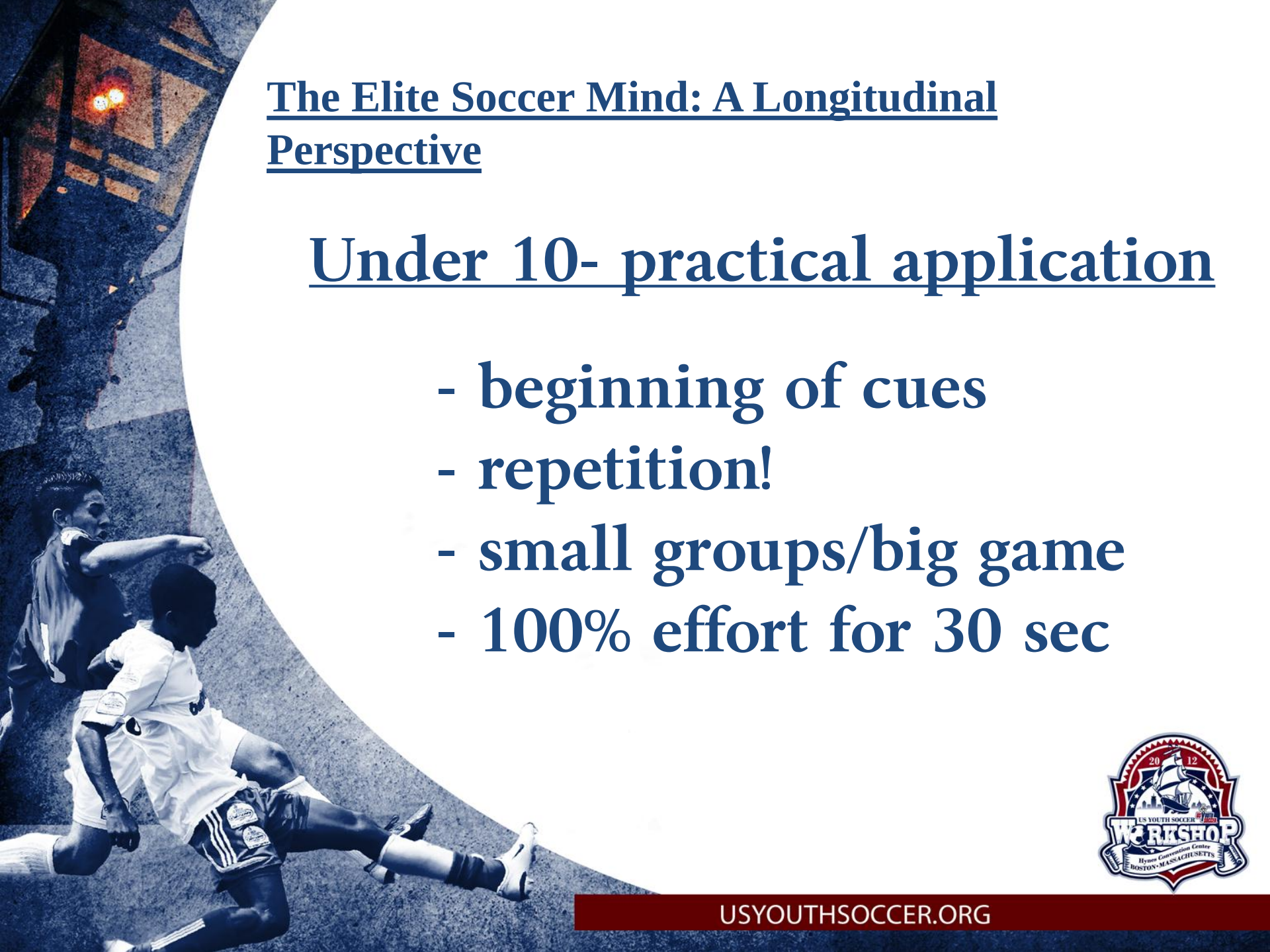


## The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

### Under 10 – what do we know?

- growing competitiveness
- imagination/rules
- leaders emerge
- some see the light



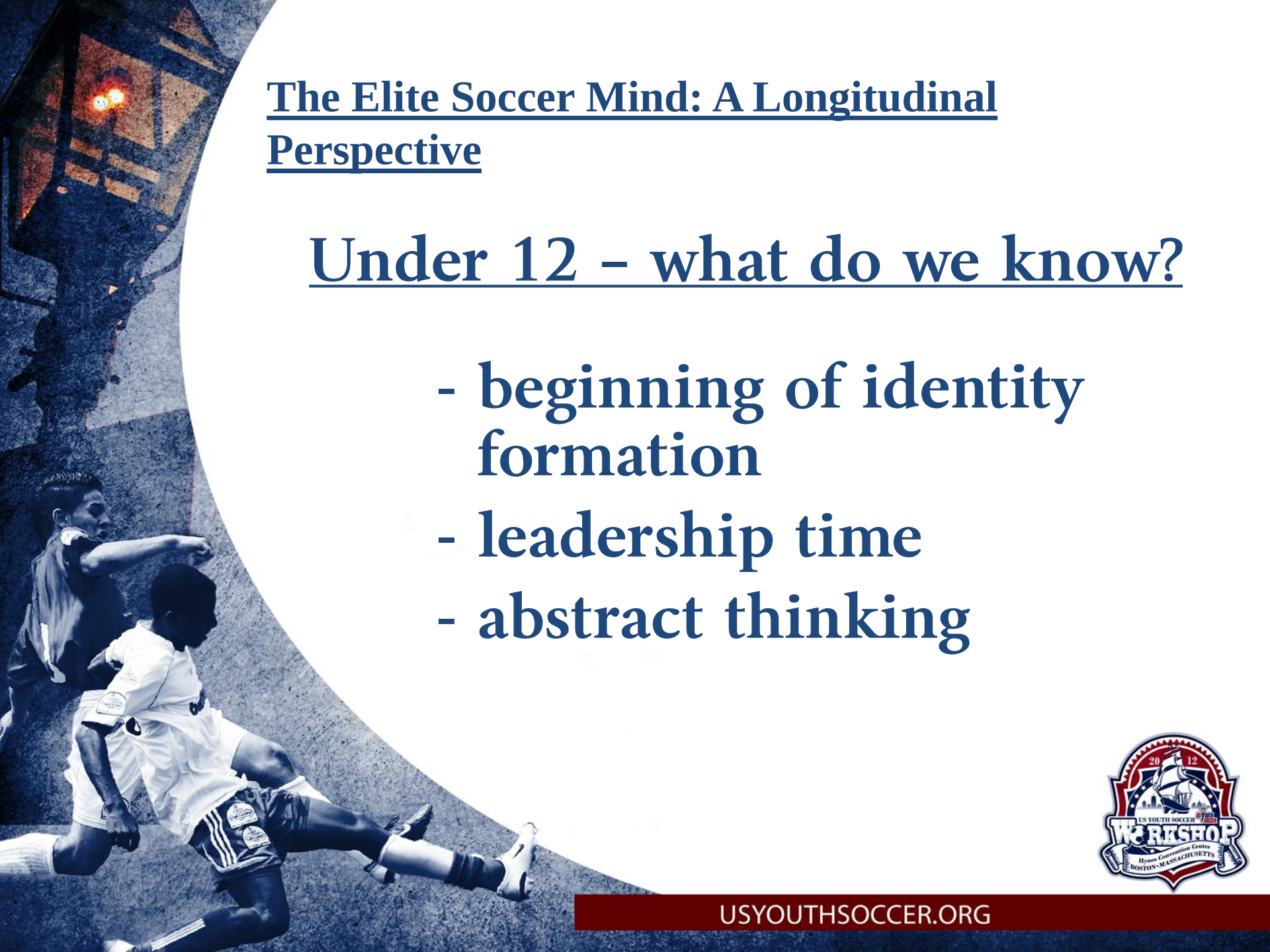


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## Under 10- practical application

- beginning of cues
- repetition!
- small groups/big game
- 100% effort for 30 sec



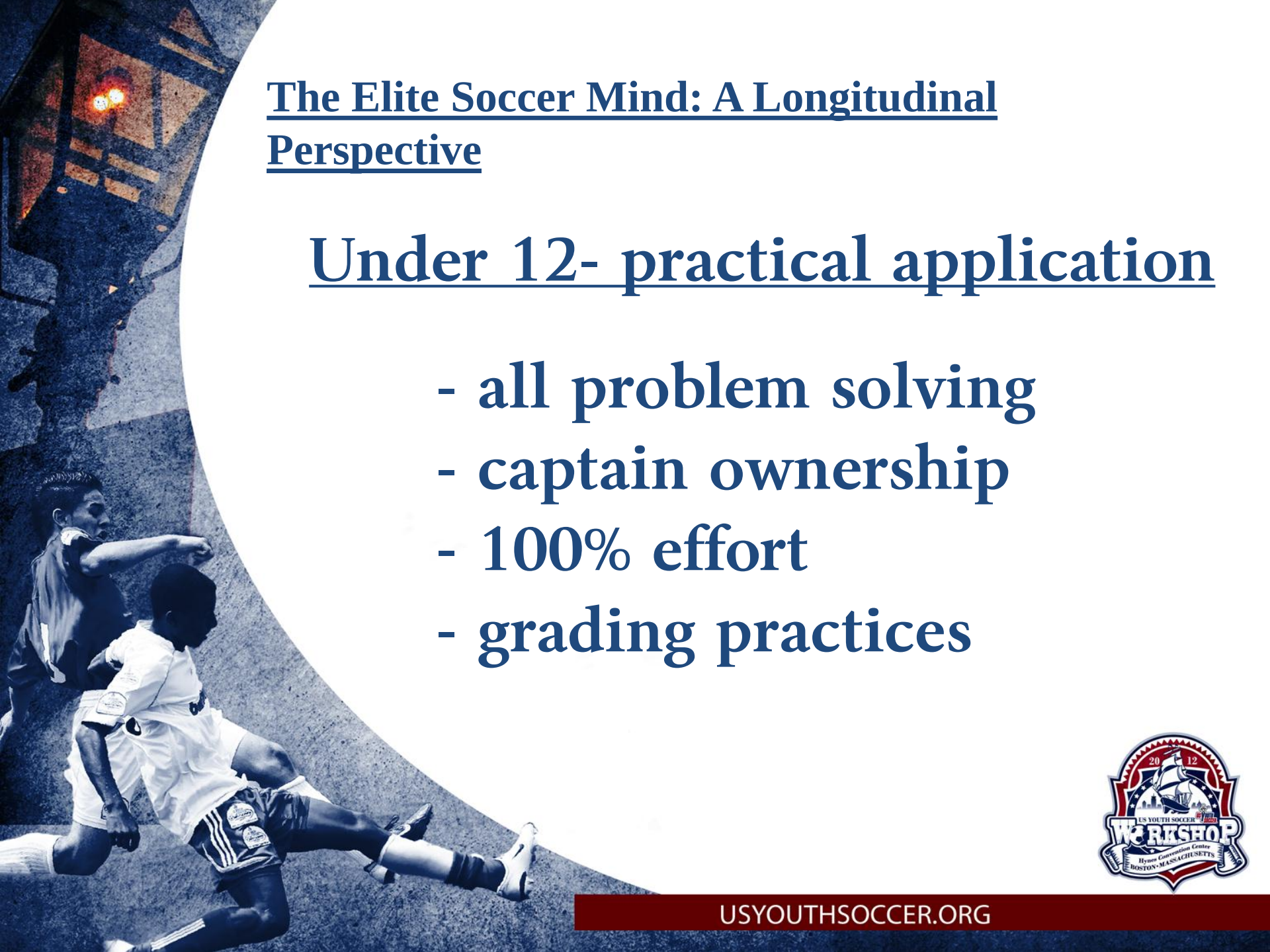


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## Under 12 – what do we know?

- beginning of identity formation
- leadership time
- abstract thinking



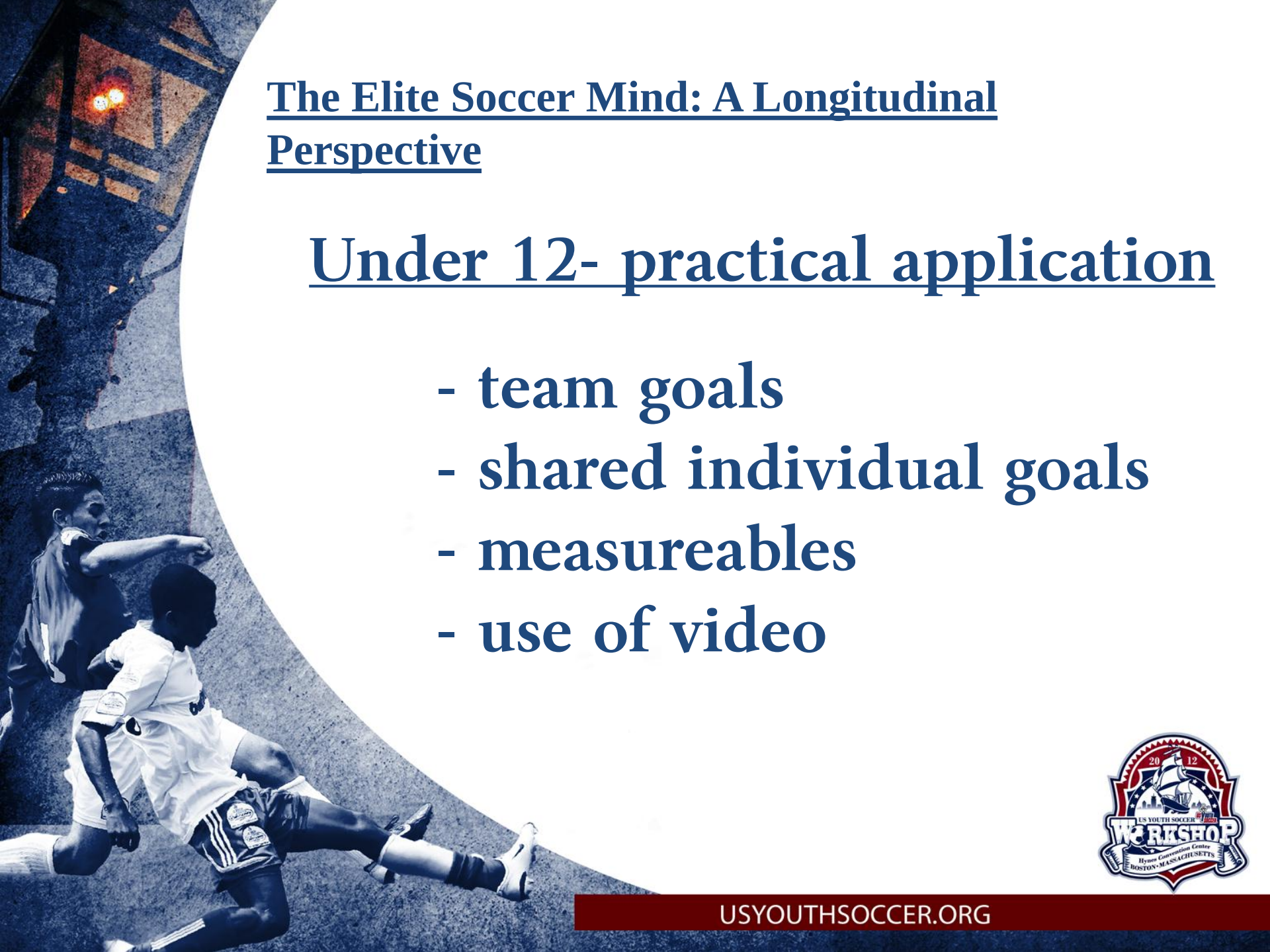


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## Under 12- practical application

- all problem solving
- captain ownership
- 100% effort
- grading practices



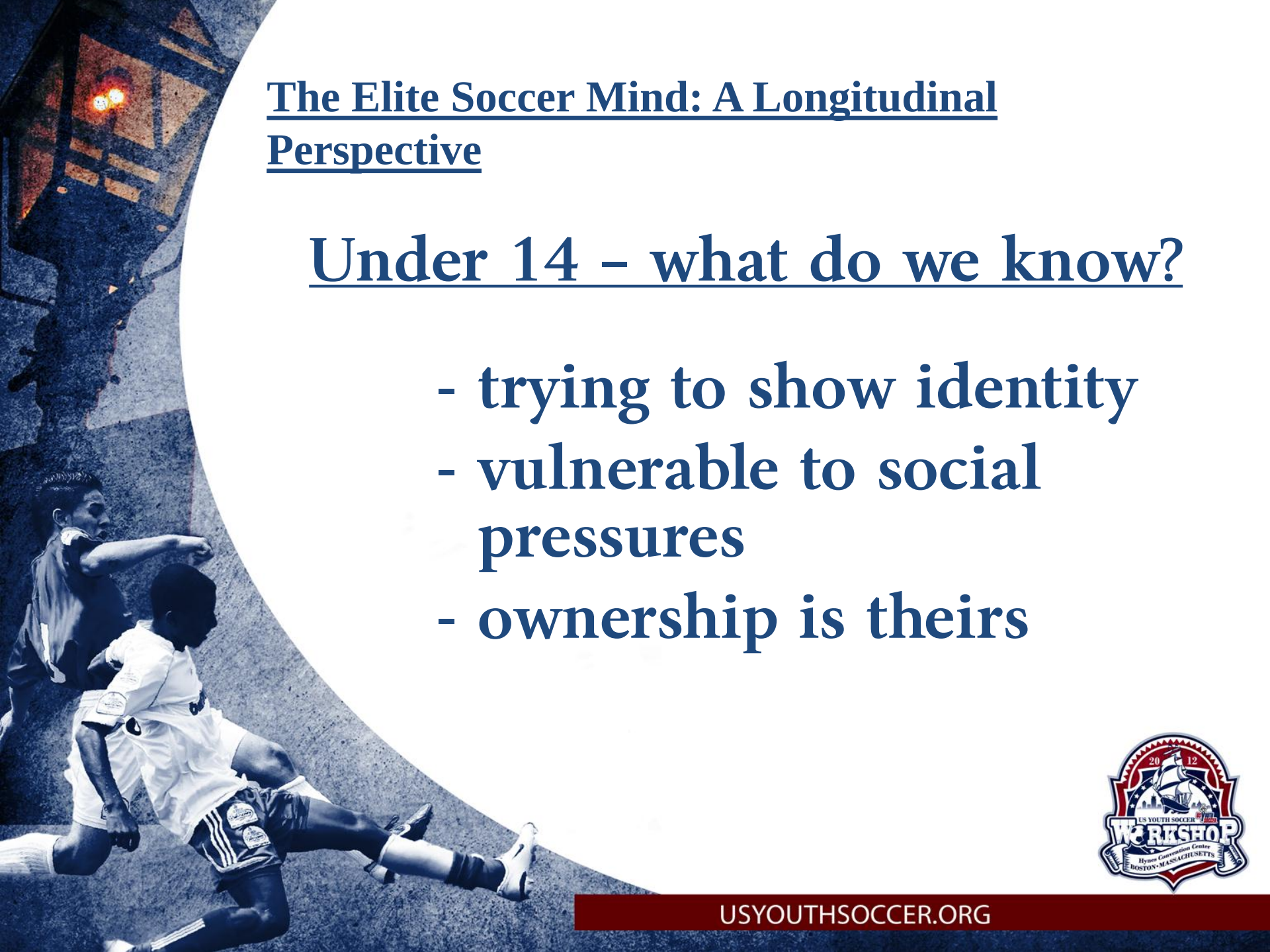


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## Under 12- practical application

- team goals
- shared individual goals
- measureables
- use of video



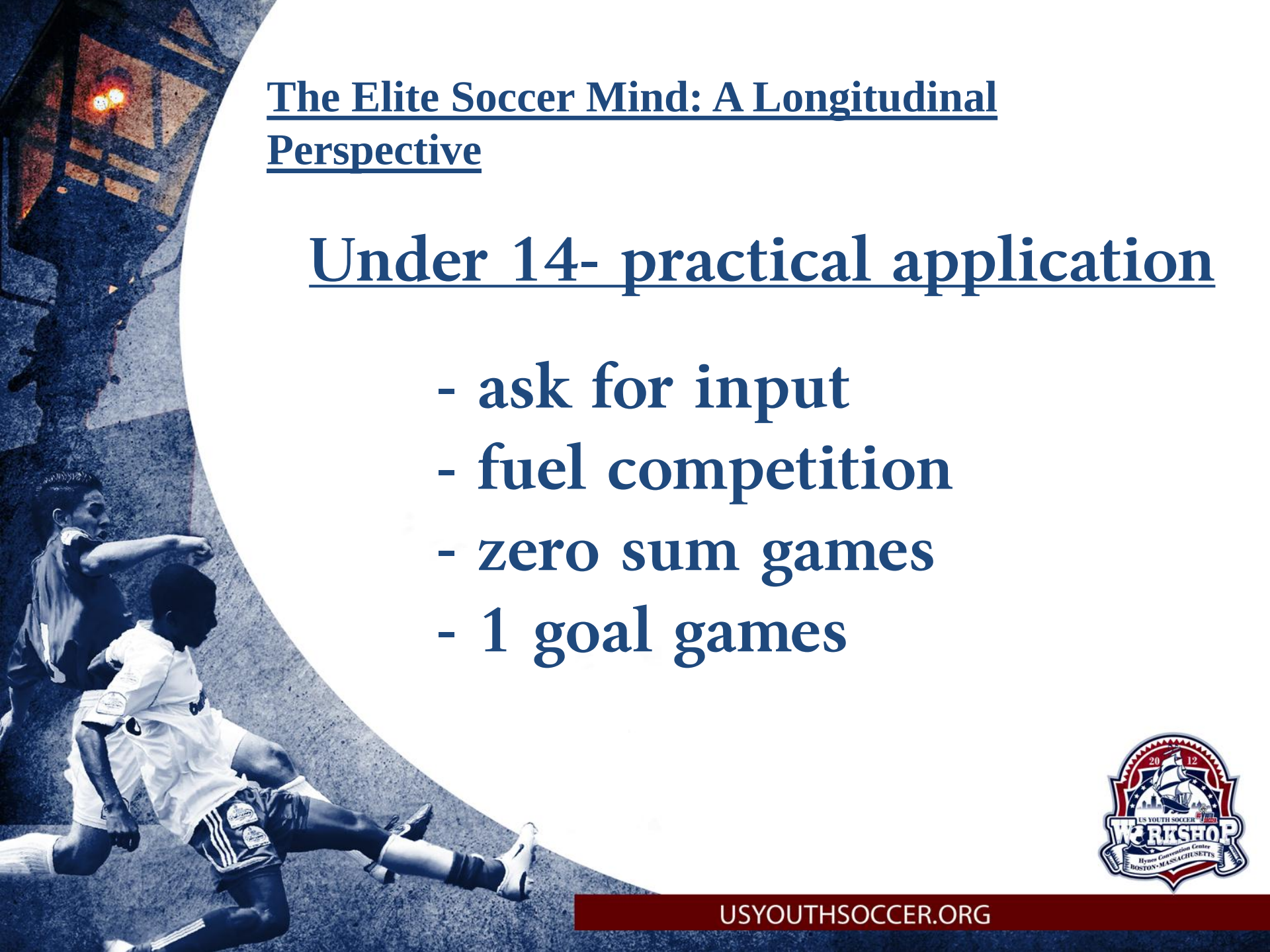


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## Under 14 – what do we know?

- trying to show identity
- vulnerable to social pressures
- ownership is theirs





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 14- practical application

- ask for input
- fuel competition
- zero sum games
- 1 goal games



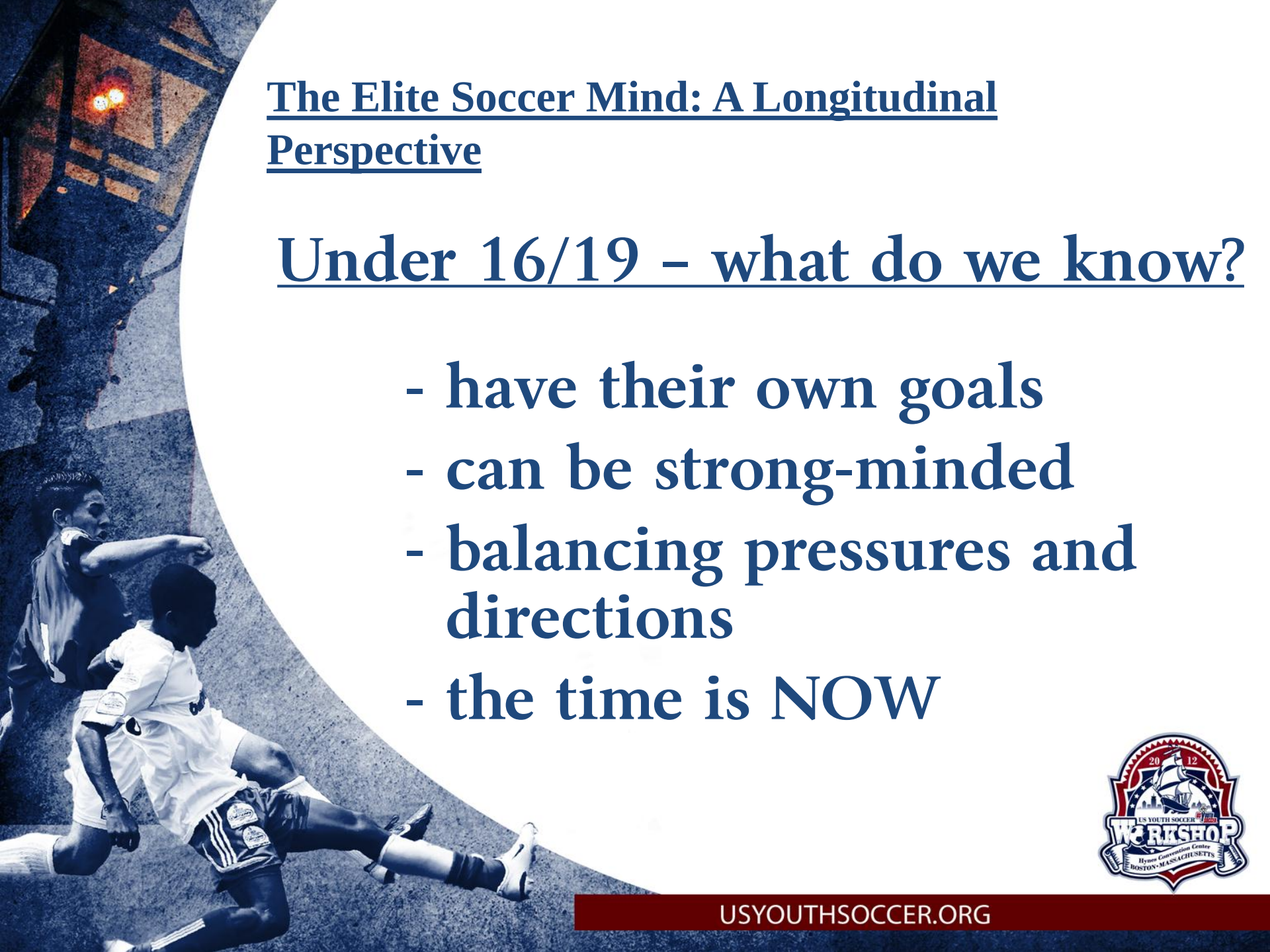


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## Under 14- practical application

- have the conversations
- “The Rage to Master” (Winner)
- self-determination
- off field is key to building mentality



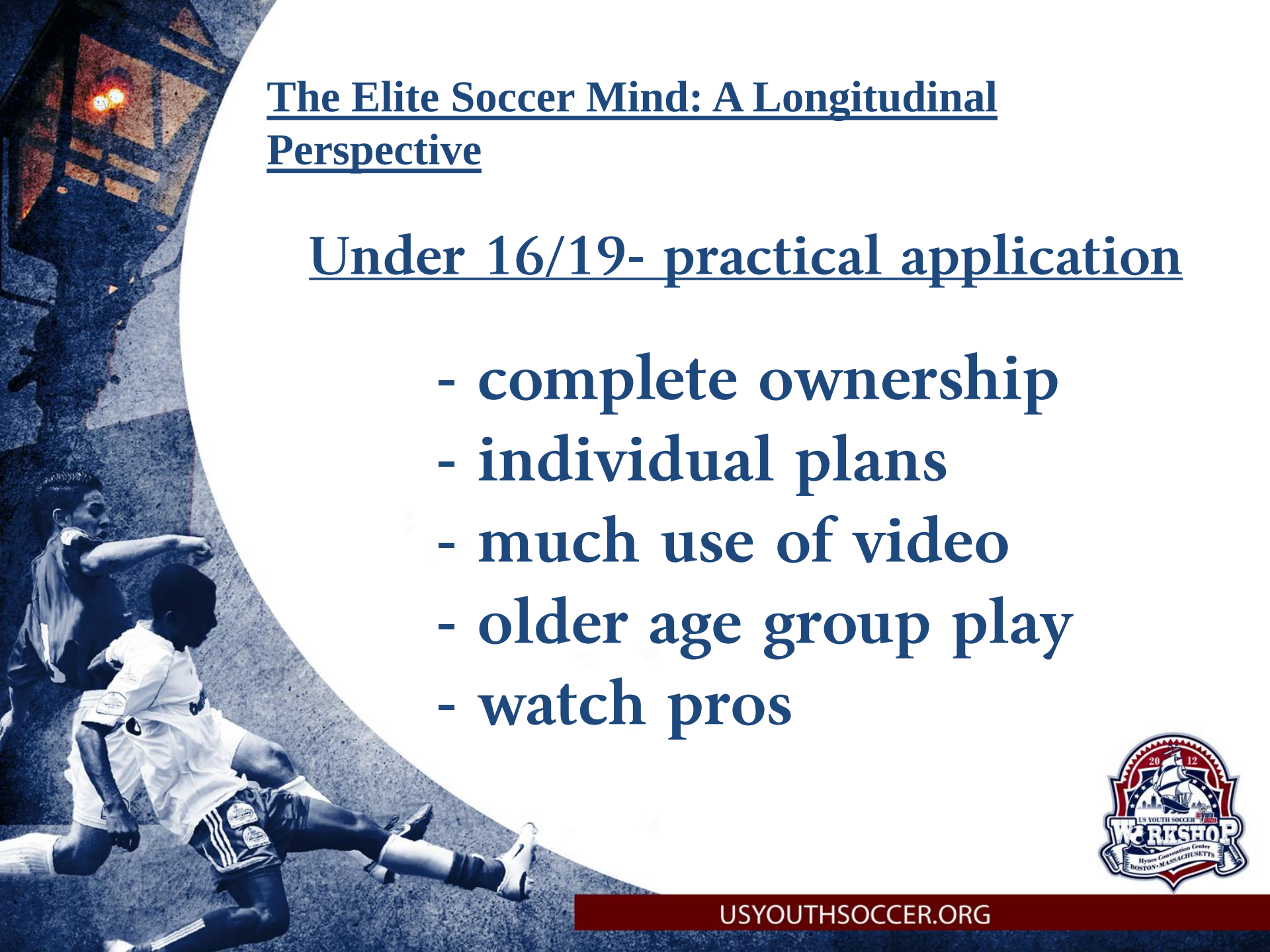


## The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

### Under 16/19 – what do we know?

- have their own goals
- can be strong-minded
- balancing pressures and directions
- the time is **NOW**



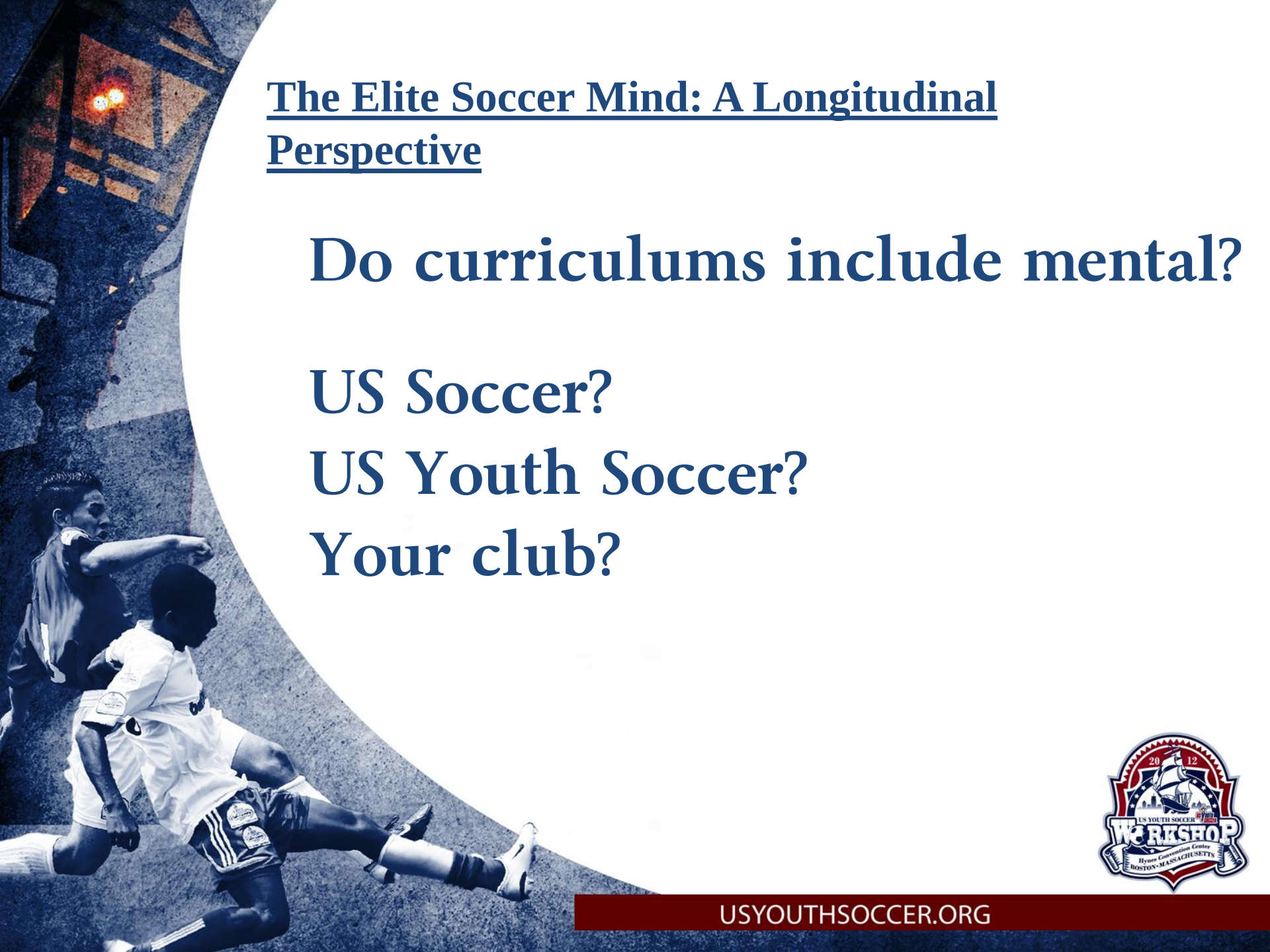


# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## Under 16/19- practical application

- complete ownership
- individual plans
- much use of video
- older age group play
- watch pros





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

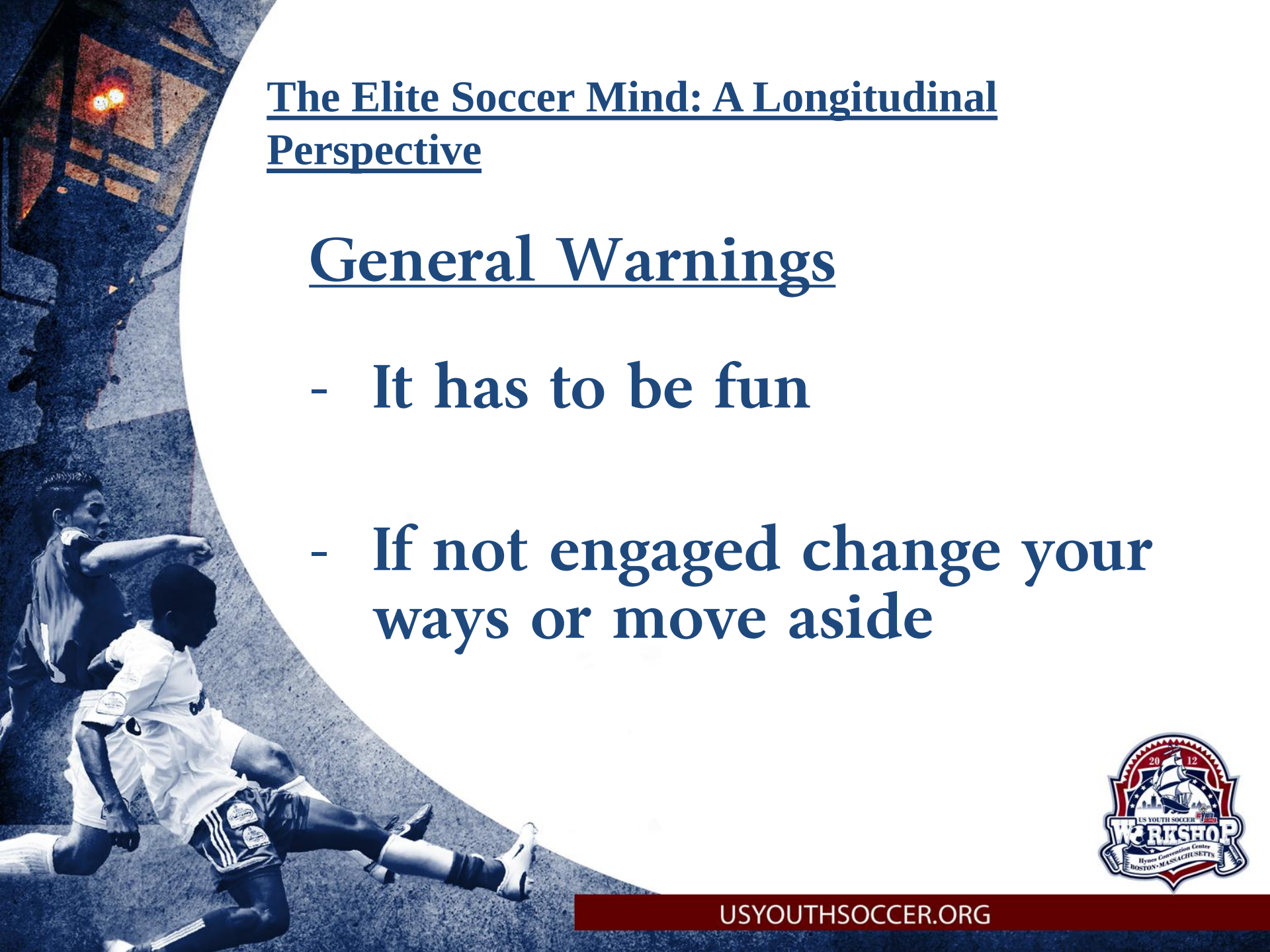
Do curriculums include mental?

US Soccer?

US Youth Soccer?

Your club?





# The Elite Soccer Mind: A Longitudinal Perspective

## General Warnings

- It has to be fun
- If not engaged change your ways or move aside





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## Questions?

Thank you for your attention ☺

Mike Singleton

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