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USYS Announces Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

USYS takes action to strengthen organizational culture and bring communities together through the power of soccer.

FRISCO, TX (October 6, 2020) – US Youth Soccer (USYS) has taken firm action to establish and reaffirm their long-standing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. These actions will further strengthen USYS culture and will foster an inclusive, bias-free and equitable community that enables all of its members to achieve their full potential.

The goal of these USYS national initiatives is to make meaningful impact in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I). The execution of tangible action is critical to the USYS community even amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. USYS intends to be a catalyst for real change and hopes to accelerate long-standing principles into real-world action that will unify the USYS community.

“USYS believes an inclusive culture is an invaluable asset. It allows us to fulfill our vision of bringing communities together through the power of soccer, making lifelong fans of the sport. It also allows us to deliver against our mission to provide world-class support, resources and leadership, helping every member fulfill their goals on and off the field of play. USYS benefits immensely from the diversity of its members, and it is this diversity that drives outstanding performance, innovation and excellence. USYS members are the future of soccer, and the power of our diverse community will move the sport we love forward. Together we can achieve the kind of success that American soccer players and fans expect,” said Skip Gilbert, CEO of US Youth Soccer.

The following five actions strongly reinforce USYS’ commitment to DE&I:

- Formation and resourcing of a new standing DE&I Committee
- Support and inculcation of a new DE&I Policy
- Commitment, distribution and reinforcement of a new national DE&I Pledge
- Hiring of a DE&I Consultant
- Dissemination of recommended DE&I actions/initiatives to USYS membership

USYS will support and commit to these DE&I initiatives and their impact across all of major functions; governance, culture, programming, education, training, etc.

The work of the USYS DE&I Committee will encompass a broad scope of responsibilities including, supporting the USYS board of directors, staff and 55 State Associations in developing priorities, recommendations and implementation strategies for all facets of the organization. From reviewing

governance processes to coaching curriculum, staff hiring, recognizing and promoting underrepresented members of our community. The committee will play a key role in leading USYS forward in all areas.

Outcomes of the actions above may include:

- Increasing the presence of underrepresented candidates on interview slates
- Increasing investment in early career programs for DE&I candidates
- Establishing new mentoring and leadership development programs for women and people of color
- Maintaining appropriate pay equity
- Recognizing diversity in the national office calendar
- Fostering partnerships to support underrepresented communities (HBCs, Boys/Girls Clubs)
- Establishing a signature multi-year college scholarship program for under-represented youth

“At the heart of the matter is the opportunity to expand existing pathways for all to enjoy the benefits of this great sport. As the largest youth soccer organization in the nation, we will lead the way in expanding comfort zones and demonstrating our resolve to include players, coaches, referees and administrators from every community. And by doing so we expand our leadership base to make even more opportunities possible,” said Hugh Goodridge, Chair USYS Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee.

Today’s announcement builds on USYS’ ongoing commitment to DE&I efforts, and a report on these programs and initiatives will be shared at the next USYS Annual General Meeting.

About the United States Youth Soccer Association (US Youth Soccer)

US Youth Soccer, the largest youth sport organization in the country, is on a mission to provide world-class support, resources and leadership, helping every member fulfill their goals on and off the field of play. US Youth Soccer registers nearly 3 million players annually. Through its programming, resources and leadership, US Youth Soccer is advancing the game for its 55 Member State Associations, 10,000 clubs and leagues and nearly 1 million administrators, coaches and volunteers. US Youth Soccer connects families and communities to the power of sports and its shared love of soccer. US Youth Soccer provides a path for every player, offering programs that provide a fun, safe and healthy environment for players at every level of the game. We Are Youth Soccer. For more information, visit www.usyouthsoccer.org.