

A Curriculum for PARENT Education

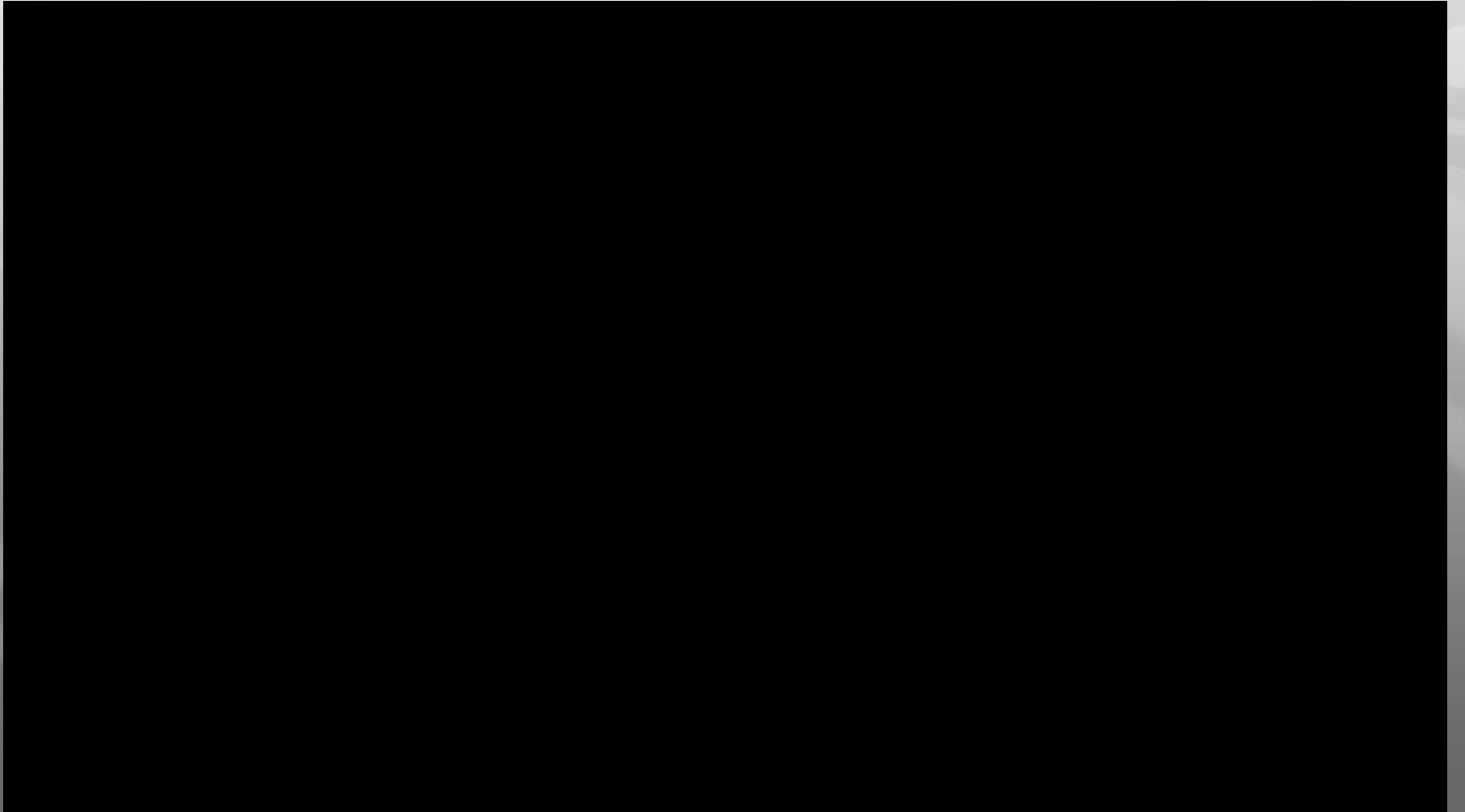
Zac Crawford

Technical Director

Alabama Soccer Association



Role Reversal



US Youth Soccer

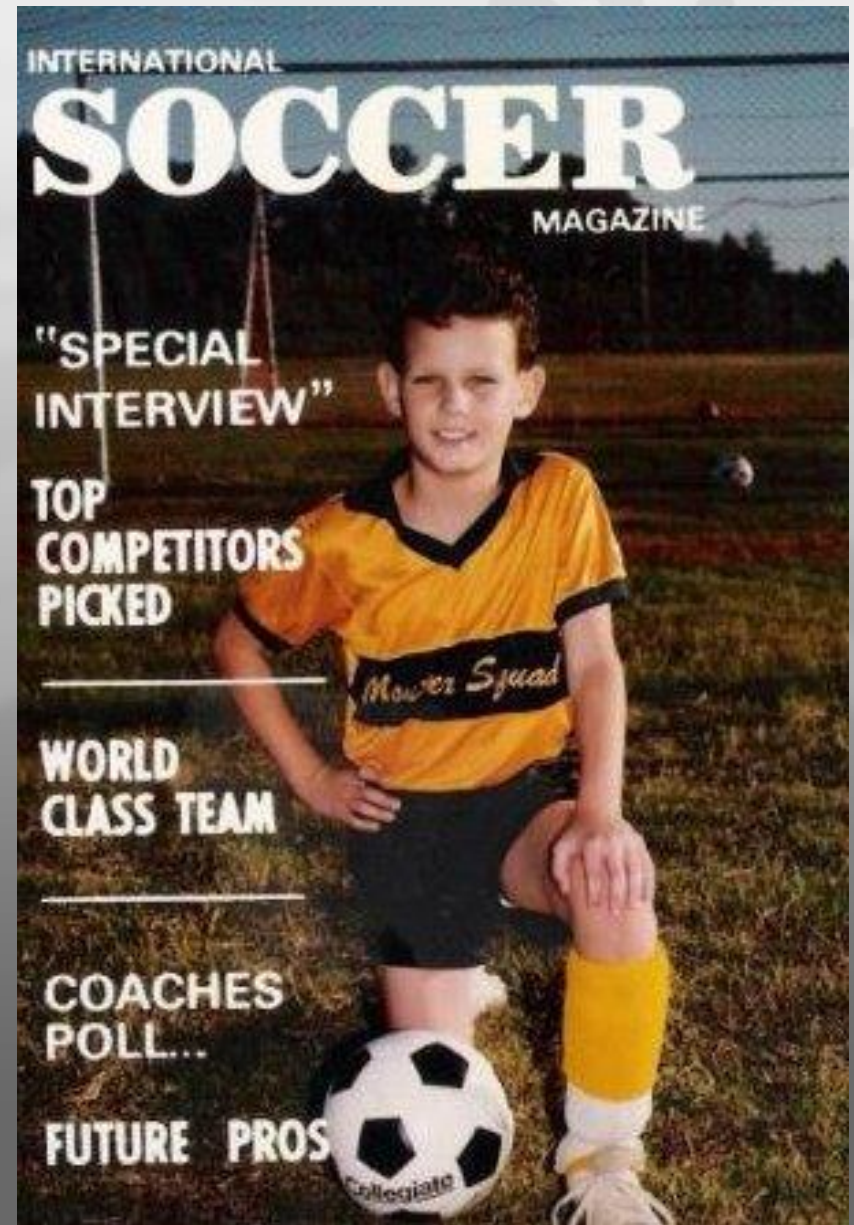
- *Lifelong participation is the goal!*
- US Youth Soccer is non-profit and educational organization whose mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of America's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition.



Who am I?

Zac Crawford

- Life-long soccer player across different levels.
- First job was as a youth referee.
- Played collegiately at Bethel College.
- Have two masters degrees- Cognitive Psychology & Human Performance/Sport Management
- USSF “A” License, USSF National Youth License, NSCAA Premier Diploma



What do I do?

- Technical Director for Alabama Soccer Association (Coach, Player, Parent Development)
- Oversee:
 - Olympic Development Program
 - Grassroots Soccer/Outreach- TOPS
 - Education- Coaching, Parents, etc.

Careful !! - Children at Play

Our Generation

- Had more unsupervised free time
- Made our own rules/games
- Ownership/power to decide what to play/how long
- Parents dropped off kids

Our Children

- Constantly supervised/shielded
- Monitored by overbearing adults
- Evaluated to adult standards
- Fast tracked to achieve goals
- Losing their autonomy/creativity opportunities
- 'ME' Generation: Lack coping mechanism/life skills
- Text Message Age- short attention spans
- Parents stay to watch kids during practice

FA Respect Campaign- Scene 1



YOUTH SPORT HIJACKED BY ADULTS

- Whose needs are considered?
- Whose expectations are met?
- Whose agendas are fulfilled?
- Why parents find it hard to view youth sport as just another leisure activity?
 - Playground example
 - ROI-return on investment syndrome
 - should be “NO STRINGS ATTACHED”
- **YOUTH SOCCER, YES – BUT PLAYED BY ADULTS**



#1 Priority- Educate

- “The primary task of every soccer club is PARENT EDUCATION. If you do it diligently, then you have a chance at task #2- player development.” Sam Snow, USYS Coaching Director
- We must wisely invest in parents. This is the top of the to-do list, #1, 365 days a year through every medium possible.
 - Bulletin boards, email blasts, commercials, meetings (frequent, not just at the beginning)



Educate-Start Early

- IF WE DON'T GET THEM AT THE BEGINNING...the youngest age groups are the most important age groups, but how cool is it for coaches to work with Zone 1?
- Developmental timeline for players to come into their own
 - 26, 27 years for field players, 31 for goalkeepers
- What then is the developmental timeline for parents?

FA Respect Campaign- Scene 2



Educate- Training > Games

- Training is far more important for skill development than games (many more touches, more opportunities to make decisions/solve problems– school tests)
- Youth Soccer's Biggest Issues
 - Over coaching by coaches AND parents
 - Children learn from trial and error
 - Misguided emphasis on games
- **TOURNAMENTITIS**

PRACTICES VS GAMES

(*R = REC, S = SELECT)

AGE GROUP	GAMES PER YEAR	PRACTICES PER WEEK
U-8	20-25	1-2
U-10	20-30	2
U-12	25-30	1-2(R*) 3(S*)
U-14	30-35	2(R) 3-4(S)
U-16	35-40	2(R) 3-4(S)
U-18	35-45	2(R) 4-5(S)

Educate- Science

- Use empirical data from trusted sources to support the reasons for the design of your programs.
 - Cognitive Stages of Development
 - 4 Pillars of Soccer
 - Long Term Athlete Development
 - Various Pathways

Educate- Cognitive Stages of Development (Piaget)

- **SENSORY – MOTOR** (birth to age 2)
- **PRE-OPERATIONAL** (2-8 years)
 - Egocentric – Imagination – Symbols
- **CONCRETE OPERATIONAL** (8-11)
 - Logical thinking related to concrete objects
 - Live in the Here and Now
 - Less egocentric – more cooperative
- **FORMAL OPERATIONAL** (11 and up)
 - Logical thinking related to abstract objects
 - Time and space – Thinking in advance

Educate- Pillars of Soccer

- Technical/Skill
 - Ability to control the ball/execute under pressure
- Tactical
 - Ability to solve soccer problems (cognitive), when/where to use certain skills
- Physical
 - Endurance, speed, strength, agility
- Psychological
 - Enjoyment, coping with anxiety, confidence
 - Learn to play before learn to compete



Educate- LTAD US Soccer

U6-U8	Initial Stage
U9-U12	Basic Stage
U-13-U14	Intermediate Stage
U15-U18	Advanced Stage
U19-U20	Specific Stage
SENIOR	Performance Stage

Educate/Communicate-Pathways

- Player Development Pathway- for every group for continued participation & educate about each pathway.
- Long-Term Player Development
- Long-Term Coach Development
- Long-Term Parent Development
 - We need to offer various pathways because at any age we do not know what pathway they will *choose* to take

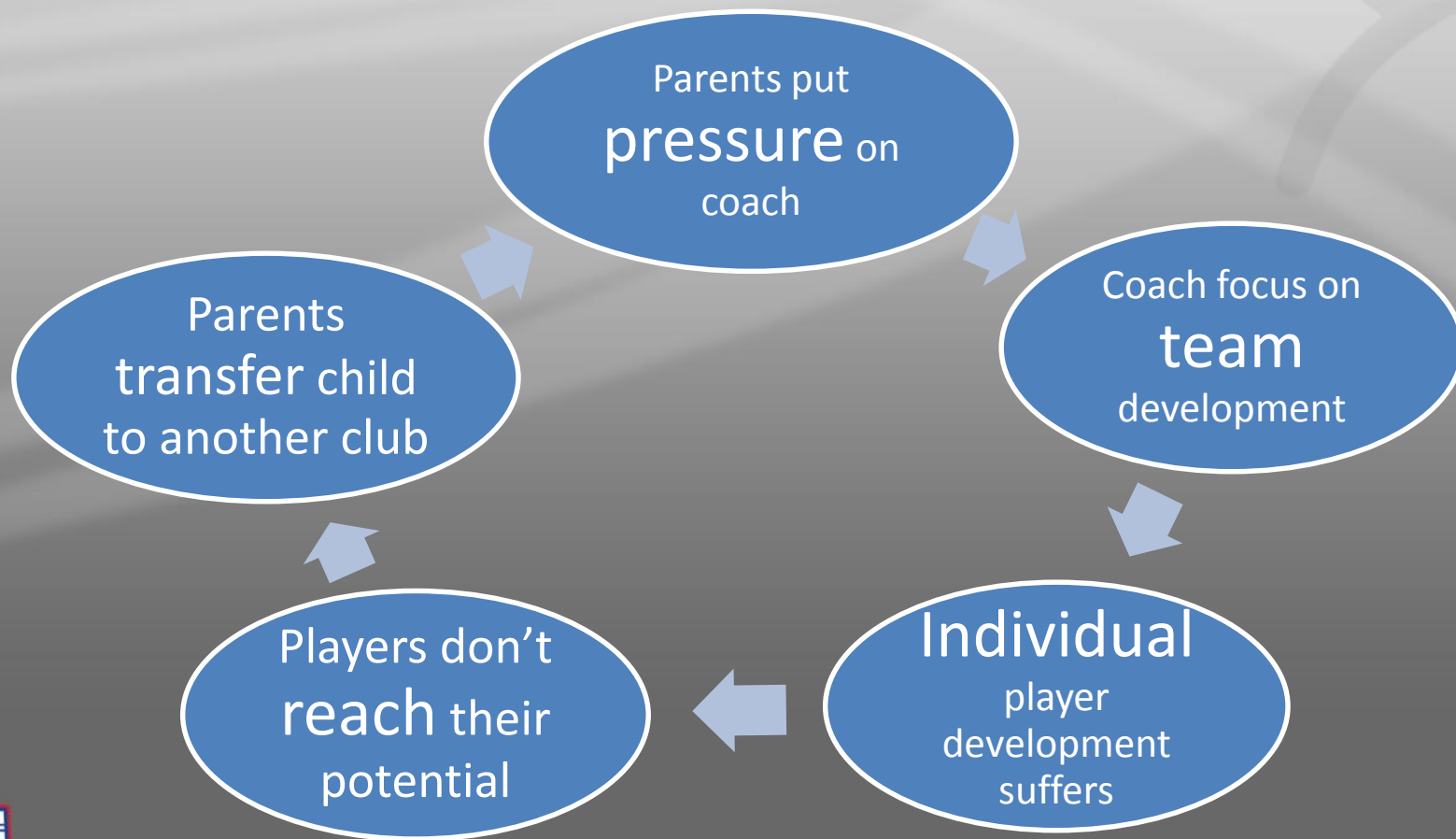


Communicate-Presenting Various Pathways

- Select/Competitive, TOPS, Recreation- all need each other.
 - REC=bulk of participation- how do we reach them?
- GOAL=have fun, exercise, and create lasting relationships.
- Core objective- develop good citizens, no matter what pathways they participate and give back to the game. -ROI



THE CYCLE OF UNDER-DEVELOPMENT



Parents' Picture of Ideal Coach



Communication- “Show Me”

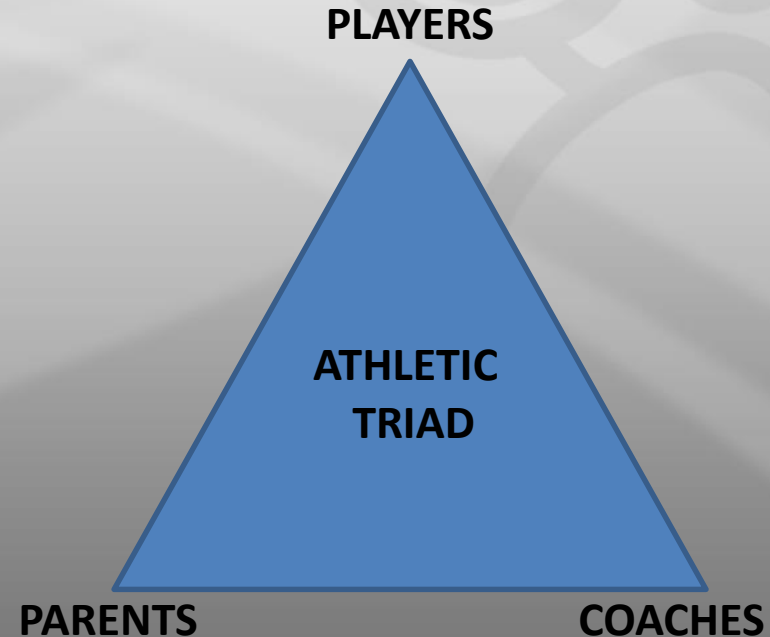
- Most parents derive their ideal picture of what a coach looks like from ESPN
 - Coach centered
 - Where do coaches derive their ideal picture of what a parent looks like?
- It’s our turn as coaches to “show them” what a coach focused on player development looks like based on:
 - Coaching philosophy, morals, guiding principles
 - Body language

Communicate-“Fill the Void”

- Fill it with the Missions Statement, coaching philosophy, and how you plan to measure success.
 - Don't wait for the parents to come to you, or it's already too late
 - Very similar to academic progress- grade school to college progress
 - *Do parents ask first grade teachers what their child must do to become a doctor?*

Communication-Using the 3 Cs

- *3 C's*
 - *Communication*
 - *Over communication*
 - *Cooperation*
 - *We are in this together*
 - *Coordination*
 - *Of schedules, roles, and goals*



Communicate- Using Guided Discovery on Parents

- Can you effectively use guided discovery with parents?
 - Learning is more permanent, but requires patience
 - Coach/Parent- “I’ve told you a 1,000 times....” but have you ASKED them?
 - Do we want to create robotic players/parents?
 - Who has more time each week with the players?
 - Invest in your parents! It takes longer, but it’s more permanent.
- Can we teach them how to say no?
- *Do parents go to watch their players brush their teeth?*

Communication- Customers, Consumers, & Devisors

- Soccer is not the retail industry, it is part of the service industry. Soccer is a business.
 - Without a margin, there is no mission.
- Parents are the customers, players are the consumers, coaches/admins are devisors of soccer.
 - Should/can we create a player centered environment that takes into account the needs of parents...?



Communication- Parent Logistics

- No matter what the child's potential is, if it doesn't fit their schedule(s), it won't work!
- Can we go to them?
- Can we *listen* to parents?
- Can we make ourselves available to receive feedback?
 - Via surveys, meetings, etc.
 - During set boundaries

Accountability/Document- Responsibility of the Player, Parent, and Coach

- For any registration with your association, can you have an agreement/contract between the player, parent, and coaches to document the expectations, rules, and procedures.
 - If anyone deviates, you can always refer back to it as a guiding document to help hold everyone accountable.
 - Coaches need this as well because they need to be held accountable also.



Accountability/Document-Responsibility of the Soccer Parent

- 1. Make sure their player is SAFE, and other basic needs are met.**
 - Nutrition (fed properly), hydrated, sleep
 - Medications
 - All necessary gear is prepared (but responsibility of the player)
 - The environment is proper for that individual player's development.
 - “We are often too busy preparing the path for our children, rather than preparing the children for the path.”

Accountability/Document-Role of the Soccer Parent

2. Understand the role of sports

- Develop a healthy lifestyle (Sport = Leisure)
- Develop sport skills
- Games: Learning Opportunities > Contest
- Develop life skills
 - Social skills
 - Positive self-image
 - Values, character and coping skills
- Mission of youth organizations



Accountability/Document-Role of the Soccer Parent

• 3. Understand the odds

- Academy/Select no guarantee of success
- Only 6% high school soccer players to NCAA
- Only small percentage get athletic scholarship
- Only 2% of NCAA soccer players to pro
- Only 0.08% high school to pro
- Need to prepare your child for disappointment. Not build up his/her hopes unrealistically.
- College coaches only interested in U-16+
- 'Exposure' over-rated

FA Respect Campaign-Scene 3



Accountability/Document-Role of the Soccer Parent

4. Be a role model

- Actively Listen to your child
- Sideline behavior – NO COACHING!!!
- **Referee Crisis**
- Dealing with performance (unconditional love)
- How to praise and how NOT to praise
- Don't compare or be critical of others
- Don't become his/her coach
- Focus on process/journey (paradox of sports)
- Shield from abuse, NOT from life lessons

Accountability/Document-Role of the Soccer Parent

5. Evaluate the club and its coaches

- Consistent with mission statement
- Coach Effectiveness
 - No lines/lectures/laps
 - Certification level
 - Philosophy of coach, motivation skills
 - Focus on learning instead of result
- Ethical issues
 - Best interest of the individual players
 - Playing time
 - Zero tolerance for abuse

FA Respect Campaign- Scene 4



Accountability/Document-Role of the Soccer Parent

6. Understand pursuit of excellence

Intrinsic motivation (if you need to push....)

Know the pathways

Know the two best coaches in the world:

- Watching soccer
- Playing pick up games

How to reach potential

- Touches on the ball
- Self training
- Practice to game ratio

How to measure success- two questions to ask



The Car Ride Home



MAIN Role of the Soccer Parent

- Let the **players** make mistakes.
- If we take care in the beginning, the end will ENRICH itself

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- www.alsoccer.org or email zac@alsoccer.org
 - Parent Education page (under 'EDUCATION/Resources')
- WWW.USYOUTHSOCCER.ORG
 - [USYS Vision Statement](#)
- WWW.USSOCCER.COM
 - US Soccer Best Practices Guide
- Respect Group, Inc. <http://respectinsport.com/>
- FA Respect Campaign