



Yates' Report Recommendations

October 18, 2022

“Youth Soccer”

- “Youth” appears 95 times
- “Youth Soccer” appears 28 times



Key “Youth Soccer” mentions

- Verbal and emotional abuse and sexual misconduct were widespread problems in women’s soccer prior to the NWSL, in both prior women’s professional leagues and even elite youth soccer.
- Some of the misconduct dates to predecessor leagues and some to youth soccer. The roots of abuse in women’s soccer run deep and will not be eliminated through reform in the NWSL alone.



Key “Youth Soccer” mentions

- 9. Abuse in women’s professional leagues appears rooted in youth soccer. The culture of tolerating verbal abuse of players goes beyond the NWSL. While the scope of our investigation was limited to allegations of misconduct in the League, some of the coaches whose conduct we examined had significant connections to youth soccer, and, in Dames’s case, were also reported to have been abusive as youth coaches.



Key “Youth Soccer” mentions

- During the course of our investigation, we confronted multiple historical reports of verbal and sexual abuse of youth soccer players. Players also told us that their experiences of verbal abuse and blurred relationships with coaches in youth soccer impacted their ability to discern what was out of bounds in the NWSL.



Key “Youth Soccer” mentions

- In December 2018, USSF received an anonymous email complaint alleging that Riley fostered an unsafe environment on his Development Academy youth teams and that that one of the coaches in Riley’s FC Fury Development Academy girls youth soccer program inappropriately touched a minor player.
- Less than three months later, The Washington Post followed-up with an article—“Nobody believed those teenagers”—chronicling decades of Dames’s alleged abuse at the youth soccer level.



Key “Youth Soccer” mentions

- Players reported that against this backdrop, Dames engaged in verbal and emotional abuse and created a sexualized environment at the youth soccer level; he made inappropriate sexual and suggestive remarks to youth female players, asked about their boyfriends and sex lives, and sought information about their personal lives



Recommendations

- Recommendations start on page 157 of the report (end on pg. 172)
- Following slides contain those key recommendations as they relate to or impact Youth Soccer
- Bold font used to emphasize obvious and potential impacts on the administration of Youth Soccer.



Recs - Transparency

- USSF should establish **a database containing employment history** for all professional coaches
- USSF should **make public** a list of individuals disciplined, suspended, or banned by USSF, a USSF Organization Member, or SafeSport.



Recs – Accountability

Putting Teeth in the License Requirements

- **USSF should require USOPC-compliant background screenings for all licensed coaches**, as well as a review of disciplinary records from organizational members and SafeSport.
- USSF should require that coaches annually attest to the accuracy of certain background information
- **USSF should suspend or revoke the licenses of those who commit misconduct and discipline Organization Members (including the NWSL) that fail to act on misconduct**
- To ensure abusive coaches do not reenter the landscape, **USSF should enforce its individual registration requirement and expand the program to require registered individuals to provide USSF and/or Organization Members with all relevant affiliations** .



Recs – Accountability

Requiring Rigorous Investigations

- **Teams should not investigate themselves** when there is an allegation of misconduct involving player safety, including verbal or emotional abuse, or sexual misconduct
- If an individual or team is not fulfilling its obligation to fully cooperate in an investigation, the NWSL and USSF should intervene consistent with their oversight authority.



Recs – Clear Rules

- **USSF should adopt uniform and clear policies and codes of conduct that apply to all Organization Members and are found in single place on USSF's website**



Recs – Player Safety and Respect

- USSF, the NWSL, and teams should each designate an individual within their organizations who is responsible for player safety.
 - USSF should establish a USSF Player Safety Officer to oversee and monitor the implementation of USSF conduct policies and reporting mechanisms, and make regular reports to the Board regarding player safety.
 - Teams should identify an individual within their organization responsible for player safety, with the goal of ultimately having a separate player safety officer at each team.



Recs – Player Feedback

- USSF should require the NWSL to implement a system to annually solicit and act on player feedback.



Recs – Youth Soccer

- The scope of our investigation was limited to allegations of misconduct in the NWSL. Several NWSL coaches whose conduct was at issue also have deep connections with youth soccer. During the course of our investigation, we confronted multiple historical reports about misconduct in youth soccer. Coaches and Federation officials have observed that verbal and emotional abuse is common in youth soccer, and players told us that verbal and emotional abuse in youth soccer made it more difficult to determine what was out of bounds in the NWSL. We recommend that:
 - **USSF should collaborate with its youth member organizations and other stakeholders to examine whether additional measures are necessary to protect youth players.**



Recs - Discipline

- The NWSL should determine whether discipline is warranted in light of these findings and the findings of the NWSL/NWSLPA Joint Investigation.



Recs – Intersection with SafeSport

- Teams, the NWSL and USSF should not rely exclusively on SafeSport to keep players safe and should implement safety measures where necessary to protect players in the USSF landscape.
 - Teams and leagues should be primarily responsible for protecting their players from abuse. **When necessary, however, USSF should conduct safety inquiries and implement safety planning to protect players in the USSF landscape, consistent with SafeSport guidelines**
 - Unless specifically prohibited by the SafeSport Code, **USSF should disseminate misconduct information to all relevant parties, including Organization Members, leagues, and teams potentially affected.**



Recs – Implementation of Recommendations

- The Federation should determine the most effective structural mechanism, whether through an existing board committee, special committee or task force, to evaluate and implement recommendations, as well as to consider further reforms in support of player safety.



From U.S. Soccer

- U.S. Soccer is committed to thoroughly addressing the report's recommendations. In the most immediate term, U.S. Soccer will:
 - Establish a new Office of Participant Safety to oversee U.S. Soccer's conduct policies and reporting mechanisms;
 - Publish soccer records from SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database to publicly identify individuals in our sport who have been disciplined, suspended or banned; and
 - Mandate a uniform minimum standard for background checks for all U.S. Soccer members at every level of the game, including youth soccer, *to comport with the USOPC standards*



From U.S. Soccer

- U.S. Soccer has created a new committee of the Board of Directors to comprehensively address the report's recommendations going forward.
 - This committee will thoroughly study the report's recommendations and their potential implementation over the next few months. On or before Jan. 31, 2023, the group will share an action plan with U.S. Soccer membership and the public outlining next steps for implementation of the report's remaining recommendations.



From U.S. Soccer

- U.S. Soccer will create of a new player-driven Participant Safety Taskforce to convene leaders in soccer at all levels across the country – from professional leagues to youth and grassroots clubs – to coordinate efforts to implement the report’s recommendations and to ensure increased clarity on conduct related policies and procedures.



From U.S. Soccer

- U.S. Soccer has taken several meaningful steps many of which were implemented before the independent investigation began – to strengthen protections for players, including:
 - Hiring a SafeSport Coordinator to oversee athlete safety and SafeSport compliance (2020) and hiring an additional full-time SafeSport Coordinator (2022);
 - Implementing a new online incident reporting and case management system (2020);
 - Offering anonymous text message reporting to all U.S. Soccer employees and national team program participants (2022);
 - Launching a publicly available tool to verify coaching and referee licenses (2022);
 - Creating a taskforce to explore a recommended universal standard for background screening in U.S. Soccer’s membership (2021);



From U.S. Soccer

- (Cont.)
 - Using the U.S. Soccer Learning Center to automate tracking of SafeSport training and background screening compliance for fulltime employees (2022);
 - Adding additional background check requirements for members of the U.S. Soccer Board of Directors and U.S. Soccer employees to comply with the USOPC background screening standard (2020); and
 - Strengthening membership education on abuse prevention and reporting (2017-22).



WVSA

- Board Meeting
 - Review the Yate's Report and Recommendation with focus on Youth Soccer
 - Discuss and understand
 - Focus on Recommendations and Actions
 - Provide insights for WVSA communication to our membership
- Next Steps
 - Continue to provide communication to our membership



Board Discussion Topics

1. Report - What are your reactions to the report?
2. Recommendations- After reviewing the recommendations from Yates, what do you suggest we recommend to US Soccer?
3. WVSA Communication - What are the focal points we must hit with our communication to our membership?

