



February 25, 2020

J. Todd Durbin
Executive Vice President - Major League Soccer
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New York, New York 10018

21st Century Model for Men's Soccer

Dear NCAA Soccer Stakeholders,

We have been asked to provide Major League Soccer's ("MLS") view of whether the proposed 21st Century Model for Men's Soccer will impact players who enter MLS via the annual SuperDraft. As set forth in further detail below, we do not believe the proposed change will adversely effect college players, and is likely to provide material benefits in the decision making process for players considering a professional career.

By way of background, the SuperDraft is MLS's annual mechanism to assign the playing rights of: (i) players who have exhausted their NCAA eligibility (college seniors); and (ii) younger players who enter the draft via the League's Generation adidas program (these players may be either college underclassmen or players who forego attending college). The Generation adidas program represents a very small percentage of the SuperDraft (4-6 players in total per year).

Unlike the NBA or the NFL for whom the draft is the primary initial entry point into their respective leagues, most MLS players currently enter MLS via a process separate from the SuperDraft. Most players who join the League are added directly to an MLS roster, not as part of the SuperDraft. For example, MLS signed 222 new players in 2019. Of those new signings, only 32 were players selected in the SuperDraft.

More importantly, players considering a professional soccer career are impacted by overseas interest. That is, their decision as to when and where to play is a function of the international market, and therefore, the SuperDraft does not solely determine the timing of that decision. MLS signs college age players outside the SuperDraft throughout the season.

In addition, MLS is considering whether to lower the SuperDraft age (e.g. 18 years old). Such an approach would be comparable to that used by the NHL wherein teams maintain the rights to drafted players even as they play up to four years in college.

From the perspective of student athletes, the proposed change to the 21st Century Model for Men's Soccer would likely encourage more players to attend college, and further encourage



those players to remain through graduation. Soccer players view their professional potential through an international lens where their global peers are training year-round. The current view is that college soccer may impede development as the players cannot train at a level consistent with their competition. While the proposed change will not lead to a “professional” schedule, it will provide a more balanced training and playing experience which should make the college choice more attractive – benefiting both current and prospective student athletes.

If you need anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Durbin', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

J. Todd Durbin
Executive Vice President - Major League Soccer