

# Weston AYSO Region 644



May 18, 2006

In this week's edition, **Section 1** is designated as the AYSO Region 644 roundup which will highlight what has been going on in our region over the past two weeks and what is up-coming.

**Section 2-** The article titled "Comfort Zone: Hesitating to push players beyond their comfort level can impede development" points out the importance of the development of the players, even at the expense of win and loss records. By utilizing techniques such as the reduction of space and time, a coach can help to develop their players to their greatest potential.

**In Sections 3-6** we have four articles outlining different aspects and activities related to the game of youth soccer. In Section 3- the Keepers Corner, We discuss the importance of practicing good habits in order to replicate them in game situations. In Section 4 titled "1v1 Play" emphasizes how important it is to win the small battles. By dictating play, one player and one player at a time over the course of the match you will be successful. Section 5- Soccer Activities- Stays with the 1v1 theme by describing a 1v1 activity and then a progression into a full team activity utilizing time, space and field awareness. Section 6- The title says "Coaching Philosophies" but in actuality this passage brings to light 50 ideas and thoughts from the technical side of youth soccer to the philosophical side of youth development.

## **Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around the Country.**

The first article from Soccertimes.com titled "Galaxy GM, president Doug Hamilton dies on flight home" discusses the life of Doug Hamilton. Doug Hamilton was a great ambassador of the game of soccer. From player to administrator he embodied class and hard work. Doug passed away a few months ago at the age of 43. A former general manager for the Miami Fusion, Doug was a strong supporter of AYSO, being an architect of AYSO days at LA Galaxy games. He will sorely be missed. The second article "For RSL, losing is now a habit", Brad Rock of the Deseret Morning News outlines how Major League Soccer franchise Real Salt Lake has developed a reputation for losing in just one short year. There is talk of building a soccer only stadium for the team despite the losing ways, much along the lines of the new facilities in Chicago and Dallas. The final article of this issue "Americans Prepare for Cup In Comfortable Obscurity" author Paul Gardner outlines how men's national team coach, Bruce Arena has been able to work outside of the limelight in establishing and promoting the team for the upcoming world cup.

**Section 8-. Youth Health Issues-** Dr. Debbie Glasser, in her article "Keeping kids drug-free is an endless quest" discusses ways that we as adults can help keep our kids away from drugs. It is all a matter of communication. See how you are doing in this quest and how to help your child grow up drug-free.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the AYSO 644 Newsletter. Everything we do here in AYSO is ever evolving. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to email to me at [Strikersoccer1@aol.com](mailto:Strikersoccer1@aol.com).

## **Section 1- AYSO Region 644 Roundup**

Well we turn our sights to a new upcoming season, the eighteenth fall season here in Weston. Registration began on May 1, 2006 and is well underway. This season registration is entirely online. In order to register, please visit our website, [www.ayso644.org](http://www.ayso644.org) and go to the link "Register to Play" following the directions. Space will be limited this season so register early. Cost for the program will remain at \$110.00 this year if you register by May 31, 2006 and \$135 if you register after May 31, 2006.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Tammy Davis and Lori Lagamma as our new uniform coordinators. Tammy and Lori thanks for stepping forward for the youth in our community. The differences that you will make will have a lasting affect on all of our children.

Did you know that AYSO Region 644 has a summer coed league? All games are played during the week at the soccer fields at the West Broward Community Church on Griffin Road just east of Bonaventure Blvd. For more information please contact Jeff Lawson at [jlawson@sportslogictech.com](mailto:jlawson@sportslogictech.com).

Are you interested in coaching this fall? Please make sure that when you register your child you indicate that you would like to coach their team. We are in need of coaches for the fall season. We will have multiple coaching clinics before and during the season to help train you. Please help the children of our region, it is rewarding for them as well as you.

Calling all referees!!! If you are age 10 or above we would love to teach you how to referee and get you on the fields to help officiate games right here in AYSO. We have many incentive programs in place including Blockbuster Video discount cards and American Express gift certificates for those who referee. We have multiple training classes slated for late August and early September. If you are interested, please contact Pat Henderstein at [pat@andrewstuart.net](mailto:pat@andrewstuart.net).

We are pleased to announce that our U-14 boys and U-19 boys will be traveling up to Chicago Illinois on July 9, 2006 to participate in the AYSO National Games. We have never sent a team to the National Games and this should be an exciting once in a lifetime experience for these players. During their stay in Chicago a few of the kids will have a daily column on our website documenting their experiences. We hope that you follow them in their endeavors to bring the national trophies home back to Weston.

Did you know that we have multiple sponsorship packages for the fall season. These sponsorship packages are listed on our website [www.ayso644.org](http://www.ayso644.org). Our program is totally volunteer and in order to keep the fees low and provide additional services like our annual AYSO Region 644 Fun Day, we need to obtain sponsorships. We ask you, on behalf of the 2,500 kids playing soccer here in AYSO Region 644, to consider sponsoring your team or a soccer field at the Weston Regional Park. It is tax deductible, but more importantly a statement that says you support the children in our community.

## Section 2-Comfort Zone: Hesitating to push players beyond their comfort level can impede development

An issue I have noticed to be a huge problem in youth soccer these days is that coaches are hesitant to push their players outside their comfort zone. It's a concept that most coaches either don't understand or don't seem concerned about, since they fail to address it in a variety of ways.

Describing what a person's comfort zone is exactly isn't easy to do. The best way I can do it is to say that many players like to only compete with and against players who they believe they can be successful against. They are not willing to go out on a limb and take the chance of being embarrassed or experiencing failure. Unfortunately, this does not force the players to get better in order to remain competitive.

Some coaches are so obsessed with winning at the youth level that they will not play teams that will force them to get better. When I hear coaches talking about their won-loss record, I wonder what the level of competition they faced to achieve the numbers they're so proud of. Are they facing the best competition available, or just playing against teams they are confident they can beat?

One region championship team I worked with had a surprisingly poor won-loss record considering their level of play. (I actually don't know what their record was because I don't keep such records, but I do know they lost more than people would have expected.) Did they lose because of poor performance? They actually were a group of very consistent performers. The reason they had so many losses was that they played up in as many tournaments as possible. They also competed in as many major tournaments and high-level friendly get-togethers as they could find. Was there grumbling from the parents after losses against older teams? Of course there was, but I place little emphasis on the short-term goal of keeping parents happy. I'm more concerned with doing what is best for the players and their development.

There are other ways coaches can force players out of their comfort zone. The easiest way to force a player to improve without traveling all over the country for competition is to increase the pressure in training. Pressure is defined in soccer as the absence of space and time. Pressure can be increased by reducing the amount of space used for small-sided games or by increasing the number of players in the same small-sided games while demanding the quality of the play remain the same.

It's easy to decrease the space or increase the numbers, but both are useless without the demand to keep the quality of play high. It will take players some time to get used to the increased pressure, but they should be able to adjust and, in fact, improve with the proper encouragement.

One of the most annoying things I hear on soccer fields is players automatically saying "I'm sorry" or offering some type of apology when they make a mistake. While it's nice that they are willing to acknowledge their mistake, it's far more important to do something about the mistake to make sure it doesn't happen again. It's one thing to recognize that a mistake has been made, but it's another to turn that recognition into a learning experience to avoid having the same mistake being made over and over again. There is nothing wrong with a coach demanding that things be done correctly every time. Until the coach does this, the players will never get better.

In short, by decreasing space, decreasing time and striving for perfection during training sessions, coaches can get players out of their comfort zone and force them to improve. If you are a coach who is not forcing your players out of their comfort zone, you will never help them achieve the highest level of play they are capable of competing at.

### **Section 3- Keepers Corner**

**This is being written to help goalkeepers learn more about the position and become better keepers.**

**Today's topic is very simple. It's a bastardized version of the 5 P Rule (for those of you who don't know what that is, it's Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance). In this case, it stands for Proper PRACTICE Prevents Poor Performance. I see so many keepers not concentrate during training sessions and maybe make a save but not worry about doing it right every time. To use another cliché, remember that practice does not make perfect but rather, practice makes permanent. Keepers who make lazy kick saves in training will make that same lame attempt in a game because that is what you are conditioning yourself to do. Any keepers who have trained with me know that I start every training session the same way with an emphasis on the fundamentals. Some have commented how boring this is but then they should look at it from my perspective: I have seen those same drills every training session I have run for 17 years plus the time I actually spent as a keeper. The only reason I don't change is that it WORKS! Constant repetition of correct fundamentals is the way to pursue perfection.**

**A couple of examples of what I am referring to are the basic warm-up. If while having a catch, the keeper doesn't concentrate on catching the ball properly, getting both hands on the ball at the same time, getting their body behind the ball, watching the ball into their hands and finally pulling the ball in every time then they will not do these very basic things when they are put under pressure. Another example of developing good (or bad) habits is the way keepers prepare to dive. I watch so many keepers do drills where they are sitting down and the coach/trainer/idiot throws the ball over the keepers head and the keeper rolls on her back and catches it and then throws it back. What exactly is accomplished by this drill besides encouraging the keeper to dive backwards onto her back (a definite no-no) Why not encourage the keeper to do things the correct way and serve the ball to the side and force the keeper to catch the ball while coming forward to meet the ball. Is there a big difference in these two drills? It's easy to say no until you realize one is encouraging bad technique and the other is working on the correct technique.**

**As a keeper, sometimes it is important to realize that many of the drills you are involved in with the rest of the team are not designed for you. Because of this, many keepers don't take them too seriously since they aren't expected/able to save a large percentage of the shots. The common solution that I see keepers choose is to make a halfhearted effort for balls without regard for the tremendous damage they are doing to themselves (as well as to the team but that is an entirely different subject). This is when it's important to realize that you are developing habits all the time, why not make them good habits?**

**So the moral of today's story is Proper Practice Prevents Poor Performance. Next weeks subject will be on how to create a good training session when you are the only keeper available.**

## Section 4- 1v1 Play

Today's edition is dealing with 1v1 play. The interesting part of this discussion is that I will be dealing with it from both the offensive and defensive side of things. The reason for this is quite simple. Most of soccer can be broken down into real small battles between one offensive player and one defensive player. Whichever team ends up winning the majority of these small battles usually ends up winning the entire match. There is no way to talk about 1v1 without talking about both sides so this will be the first subject of the Soccer Newsletter. In dealing with this subject, I am going to make the assumption that the offensive player has a decent repertoire of moves. If you don't know many (any) moves, don't worry, as that will be an upcoming subject of the Soccer Newsletter.

I will start with the defensive stance of the first defender. Her knees should be bent, feet approximately 12-18 inches apart (width) and one foot in front of the other. All of the weight should be on the balls of the feet. This position should enable the defender to move in most direction at a quick pace as well as to change directions quickly. The first decision the defender must make is which direction she would like to push the attacking player. IN most cases, the defender would like to push the attacker away from her support and towards the defenders support. On the sides of the field, this frequently means pushing the player toward the sideline, which can be considered a second defender. If the attacker is coming down the middle of the field then a number of quick decisions have to be made. First of all, where are the supporting defenders? Secondly, where are the supporting attackers? Thirdly, which foot does the attacking player want to be using. Once all of these factors have been taken into consideration the decision of which side should the attacking player be pushed becomes much easier. Lets assume for the moment that the decision has been made to force the opponent down HER right side. This is best accomplished by the defender by placing the right foot in front of the left and 1-2 feet to the side of the attacking players left foot (assuming you are facing the attacking player in the proper stance and a few yards from the player. By standing to the side of the attacking player this way, she will feel she can beat you down her right side. If she tries to beat you down this side, YOU, THE DEFENDER, HAVE WON! You have made her react to your movements and this means you have won the first battle. Please understand that you must maintain a cushion from the attacking player since if you get caught up to close to her, she will blow past you since she is facing forward and you are essentially having to match her step for step going backwards. Does this mean that anytime the attacker goes in the direction that the defender wants her to that the defender has won? NO! What it means is that long term if the defender gets the attacker to go in her direction she will usually win.

To combat this, a good offensive player will attack the defenders front foot. Using the example from above, this would mean the attacker dribbling at the defender's right (front) foot. By doing this, it will force the defender to do one of three things. If she stands her ground, the attacker will get close enough to her that she can blow by her real easily. That would be option 1. Option 2 is for the defender to shuffle backwards maintaining the same distance from the attacker. If this happens, the defender will eventually get pushed out of bounds since she will be going both backwards and toward the side in trying to push the attacker down her right side. The third option is for the defender to, at some point, perform a drop step and change the direction she is forcing the attacker. This is accomplished by having the defender switch from having her right foot in front to rotating the hips and stepping back with the right foot so that now the left foot is in front as well as being to the side of the attacking players right foot. Of the three options, this is the only one that doesn't involve complete surrender of the particular battle although if the defender does this, the attacker is certainly in control.

The best way for the defender to combat the opposition attacking her front foot is to utilize a proper feint. People spend a lot of time working on various moves and feints on offense, but it's equally as important on defense. As the attacker is driving at the defenders front foot, the defender can feint as if she is going to go in for a tackle. This will do one of two things. Either the attacker will put her head down and slow down, or she will lose possession of the ball. Either way, the defender has taken control back from the attacker. Note that at no point have I mentioned diving in and stabbing for the ball. In defense especially, patience is a virtue. If you are in control of the situation by forcing the opponent in the direction you want them to go and are controlling pace and vision through proper feinting, in time the attacking player will give you the ball. Be patient and good things will happen. Some of you might say that this is not true and they know such and such a person who never makes mistakes with the ball. My response to that is this is not true. I have had the privilege of working with a number of All Americans as well as a few national team players and they are just like everyone else. If you give

them enough opportunities to make a mistake they will make one. The difference with most of them is that if you are not patient and let the dictate play, they will kill you. Remember that the best way to hurt an attacking player is to simply put her under pressure. In soccer, the two variables that affect pressure are time and space. If you can take away the attacking players time and space through proper positioning and feinting, she will feel pressure and this will force her to lose possession of the ball.

The next time you see two players going 1v1 against each other, see who is winning the individual battles most of the time. Chances are, whoever wins these battles will also win the match.

## **Section 5- Soccer Activities**

The first thing to do is start with a warm up for this drill. Set a number of gates up throughout half of the field. Each gate should be 2 yards wide (a gate is imply two cones set up as things to go through such as a goal)

Have half the players wear white and the other half blue. Have a white and a blue player match up with each other with one ball per pair. This is simply a 1v1 game where the players try to score points by dribbling through as many gates as they can. The white player starts with the ball and tries to score as often as possible in the first one minute half. If the blue player wins the ball, then she tries to score goals. The only restriction is that the players can NOT dribble through the same goal two times in a row. After a one minute half, they rest (and stretch) for a minute, then play the second half with the blue player starting with the ball. With a team of 16 players, there will be 8 games of 1v1 going on at the same time. This will encourage the players to dribble with their heads up (or run into each other). The key is to turn this into a very competitive match. The next game should feature a white winner matching up with a blue winner and also have the losers match up with each other. You can do this three times and get a very strenuous work out going which will continue into the next drill.

The next progression of this series (which will begin to work with spacing and switching fields) is set up the exact same way with the gates remaining the same. It's essentially the same game with the major change being that there is only one ball for the whole team. Now it's all of the whites against all of the blues. In order to score a goal, the ball must be passed through a gate and received by a teammate. Those are the only rules that need to be explained. Start them off playing a 6 minute game with a 1 minute break at "halftime". This break is very important because typically, the first 3 minutes of this drill is dreadful. It has been my experience that players will try to dribble to a gate and then pass the ball through to a teammate who inevitably is marked up. During this one minute break, explain to the players that it actually takes 3 players to score a goal and not just the two they are trying to use (the player with the ball and the target through the gate). The three players are the player with the ball, and then two other player who are working together to find an open gate. Once they find an open gate, the player with the ball can drive (or chip) the ball to one of these open players who then play it through the gate to the other one). Once they start to think in terms of needing three players to score a goal and that two of them must find an open (or unmarked) gate, then they will start to experience success in this game.

As the players get accustomed to this game, they will get more comfortable with playing with their heads up and looking to players who have proper support and spacing. This drill is a great way to prepare for the next drill that will continue to work on getting better spacing and the switching of fields in the attack.

## **Section 6-Coaching Philosophies**

The following are some coaching philosophies that have been expounded by some well-versed coaches from across the country:

1. On good days we play good soccer, on bad days we TRY to play good soccer
2. My players can and will learn.
3. Developing skill, sportsmanship and the value of teamwork without sacrificing fun
4. Success is something we strive for, and victory by training
5. When we have ball, entire team attacks. When other team has ball, our entire team is on defense.
6. Coaching (teaching) philosophy is bringing a collection of young people together in a common setting of instructing them on the basic fundamentals of the game and instilling in them through that process a personal sense of self worth to themselves and their selves to the common good of the team and the team's goal for the season.
7. It doesn't matter what the score of the game is at the end, if you have learned something NEW, then you have WON the game anyway
8. Improve skills and have fun
9. Don't give the ball away cheaply, if you have the ball the opposition can't score
10. My coaching philosophy is to teach the basic skills, to encourage aggressive play beginning at a young age, and to make the game fun to play.
11. Soccer is chess with a ball
12. Especially in younger ages I think that teaching and mastering fundamental skills and verbally reinforcing/recognizing proper technique, form, and performance should be an essential element in coaching.
13. Fun, learning, sportsmanship
14. Do whatever I can to develop my players so that they have great skills and attitudes, are great team players, and are great human beings
15. I wish to enhance my players' love for the game
16. Fun, Skills , Work Rate, Tactics, in that order for any level !!
17. Have fun!!!
18. Respect and make use of the fact that the kids have chosen to be there, and always lead by example - physical conditioning (running/sprints) as well as skills.
19. To create a fun environment where players want to come to practice and games, while facilitating each players soccer growth and development to the complete extent possible.
20. We as a team want to play hard, play smart, play with heart, have fun all the time, put constant pressure on the opposing defense and make sure that our goalie is the most bored player on the field.
21. Defend, defend, defend, the rest will follow.
22. Age appropriate skill, conditioning, and decision making improvement and growth interwoven with FUN
23. Fun, Fitness and Personal Best Performance
24. The strength of the wolf is the pack and the strength of the pack is the wolf.
25. If you think winning is the only thing that matters in youth sports, maybe you should volunteer for something else.
26. Let the game be the teacher
27. I like to build the team from the back line forward, keeping the ball in front of my best players and moving the ball up the field in a triangle to maximize our ability to outnumber the other side on the ball.
28. To share the knowledge I learn, the passion I have gained, and the potential that I see; in every person that is willing to listen.
29. Plan what you are going to do, practice what you have planned, execute what you have practiced, and enjoy the fruits of your labors
30. We will continue to develop strong minds and bodies for their future, while we build character on the field
31. You never fail if you try your hardest

32. Attempt to get the best from each individual on the team
33. It's not just winning and losing that matters; it's how you teach your players to win and lose
34. Attack and finish
35. Never turn your back to the ball!
36. First one to the ball wins
37. WORK HARD AND ALWAYS MOVE WITHOUT THE BALL
38. The body will go wherever the mind will take it
39. If the kids aren't having fun while they learn at practice, then they aren't "PLAYING" soccer.
40. Play soccer, have fun, get better, win. Repeat
41. Individual development: coach and give the skills required to learn; then you will improve each player...
42. Create a desire to learn, they will learn to win."
43. Always use the proper technique no matter how easy or tough the shot is, laziness leads to being score on.
44. Coaching youngsters is about imparting a love for the game and a love for playing the game well!
45. Soccer is a simple game confused by the human element
46. Have fun while learning the game of soccer
47. Good feet before any diving
48. Coach at practice, not at games.
49. Winning isn't everything, striving to win is.
50. My coaching philosophy for 11-14 year old girls: lots of ball contact, technique drills that make them move and have fun, emphasize keeping the ball on the ground

## **Section 7- News From Around The World**

### **Galaxy GM, president Doug Hamilton dies on flight home.**

(Thursday, March 9, 2006) -- Doug Hamilton, president and general manager of the Major League Soccer's Los Angeles Galaxy, died tonight on a flight home from San José, Costa Rica.

Hamilton, 43, had accompanied his club for the return leg of a CONCACAF Champions Cup quarterfinal series Wednesday night against Deportivo Saprissa.

The preliminary cause of death was listed as an apparent heart attack. Reportedly, Hamilton had slumped over in his seat just four minutes into the flight.

Galaxy coach Steve Sampson told the *Los Angeles Times* that a team doctor aboard the LACSA aircraft tried to resuscitate Hamilton for 45 minutes before which the plane's captain decided to return to the San José airport.

The Galaxy had remained in Costa Rica for preseason training.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of one of the leaders of American soccer and a truly terrific individual," MLS commissioner Don Garber said. "The thoughts and prayers of all of MLS, our teams, our players and our fans are with the Hamilton family. Doug will be dearly missed as his legacy of passion and dedication to the sport will always be remembered."

Hamilton, who was three times named MLS "Executive of the Year," twice with L.A., started with the Miami Fusion in 2000 and moved to Los Angeles in 2002 after the Fusion folded. Under Hamilton, the Los Angeles club, based in Carson, Calif., won MLS Cup championships in 2002 and 2005, as well as the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup title last year.

"His passion was the Galaxy," Sampson told the *Times* in telephone interview from Costa Rica. "In retrospect, it's fitting that we won a championship for him this past year because he was so passionate about this team and loved every single player and the organization."

Hamilton also oversaw the opening of the Galaxy's new home -- The Home Depot Center -- in 2003.

Prior to working with the Fusion, Hamilton worked for adidas America for six years where he held the post of director of sports marketing Latin America after serving as business unit manager of soccer and basketball.

Hamilton is survived by his wife Paige and their son Aedan, 5. Doug and Paige met at University of North Carolina-Greensboro where Doug earned a bachelor of arts in physical education.

***Do you have a comment on this story or something to say about soccer in general? Send us a letter.***

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## **For RSL, losing is now a habit**

**By Brad Rock**

Deseret Morning News

Even if Real Salt Lake does get its soccer-specific stadium, and even if 20,000 people really do start attending games, and even if skeptical politicians do endorse a plan to make this the most Real-istic team this side of Madrid, there is still one more elephant-sized hurdle to clear.

They still have to win.

What, you were expecting some deep Socratic observation?

How about this from renowned philosopher Vince Lombardi: "Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing."

RSL stretched its winless streak to 17 Saturday with a 3-2 loss to the Los Angeles Galaxy. The second season of Major League Soccer is well under way, but for all the drum-beating and face-painting, Salt Lake's (Sandy's?) team is still in much the same place as last year.

Isn't there some way to legislate a win?

It's a well-publicized fact that RSL hasn't won since the invention of the cotton gin. Civilizations have risen and fallen in less time. You can wrap it in gold leaf, tie it with a bow and express mail it to Shangri La — and it's still one big woolly problem.

RSL apparently stands for "Really Sure Loss."

"There's no sense putting guys on the field that won't work," sighed coach John Ellinger. "It's criminal that we didn't get that effort at home."

Sound familiar?

If Ellinger felt disconsolate, it stands to reason. A month into the season his team is languishing with a 0-4-1 record. Last year Real finished with the second-worst record in the league, despite playoff aspirations. In the off-season, the club jettisoned disappointments Clint Mathis and D.J. Countess and added 13 new players in an effort to increase both talent and experience. Still, some experts — outside the team, naturally — doubt the components are in place for a playoff berth.

In a way, the changes have worked. RSL is getting more scoring chances and doing better at keeping the ball on the attack side of the field. Real even scored the first goal, on a pass from Andy Williams to Jason Kreis in the sixth minute. But as was the case last year, Real-ity wasn't all that pleasant. Five minutes after Kreis' goal, L.A.'s Landon Donovan scored unassisted. Two more goals by L.A. and the outcome became clear.

RSL was left talking about missed chances, talking about tomorrow.

The loss was just the second punch of the day to the team's stomach. The first came when the morning papers hit doorsteps, chronicling financial information the club had hoped to keep secret. Among the items: Real has been losing millions, and expects to for several years. If not surprising — the Jazz lost money for nearly a decade after moving from New Orleans — it was still disturbing to see in print.

Also revealed were plans to draw 20,000 fans a game, about 4,000 more than the team has averaged in two games this year. Team officials were upset enough over the information leak to threaten legal action against the unidentified source.

Understandably, some county officials are leery of Real's grandiose plan, knowing taxpayers are set to spend \$45 million toward the stadium, and knowing Major League Soccer isn't exactly skipping to the bank.

RSL's argument is that by owning its own stadium it can maximize profits and minimize loss. That model has worked, at least to some degree, in L.A., where the Galaxy became the first MLS team to turn a profit. But L.A. is the defending MLS champion while Real is going through the terrible twos.

Maybe skeptical politicians will stand down and RSL's sparkling stadium will rise from the lowlands west of

State Street in Sandy. Maybe tens of thousands of fans will arrive by planes, trains and automobiles to watch. But RSL's biggest problem right now is neither the release of information nor the fight to get the stadium built. It's changing an old habit and starting a new one. If that doesn't happen, everything else is moot. "The coaching staff went out and got some players, got some experience, and our training sessions during the week have been good," said RSL defender Eddie Pope. "As players, we have to figure out how to get it done on the field."

Before they even begin to worry about building another.

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## Americans Prepare for Cup In Comfortable Obscurity

**Paul Gardner**

U.S. national team coach Bruce Arena enjoys the sort of job security that must turn his colleagues among the world's top soccer nations the darkest shade of green. Appointed in 1998, he is the longest-serving of the 32 World Cup coaches. Only England's Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson, who was appointed in 2001, comes close.

There is another reason for Eriksson and his peers to be jealous of Arena. Not just security, but tranquility. Eriksson has been the object of intense criticism and invasive press attention ever since he took the England job, his name rarely out of the headlines, his private life considered fair game for the English tabloids.

The man has become a target for the press, and Eriksson's days are now numbered. He will quit in July, immediately after the World Cup, and his replacement has already been named: Steve McClaren, currently the coach at premier league club Middlesbrough.

The trigger for Eriksson's departure came earlier this year when he gave an embarrassingly naive interview with a wealthy Arab interested in investing millions in English soccer. The wealthy Arab was, in reality, a reporter for a London newspaper, which duly published Eriksson's remarks, including comments on the abilities of a number of his England players.

The contrast between the turmoil surrounding Eriksson and the serenity with which Arena can pursue his work is staggering. That any American newspaper would constantly feature Arena's name in its headlines — never mind go to the expense of setting up a scam interview — is unthinkable. Indeed, throughout his 27-year coaching career with the University of Virginia, D.C. United of the MLS, and the American national squad, Arena has never even had to face a hostile press conference.

But then — why would he? He has hardly known failure. After five Division I colleges titles with Virginia and two MLS championships with D.C. United, Arena has qualified America for two World Cups and led the team to a quarterfinal place in 2002.

There was a time, early in Arena's career as national coach, when he made it all too clear that he regarded press sessions as a waste of time. He always knew more, usually much more, than the journalists he dealt with, a superiority that he had trouble disguising, and that came across as arrogance.

We don't have an arrogant Arena any more. We have a supremely confident Arena, one who learned quickly how to suffer fools gladly, how to be serious without being threatening, how to be humorous without being sarcastic and without losing the seriousness.

Every so often, there comes an apparently careless moment of outspokenness — as last year, when he criticized the MLS for scheduling too many meaningless games. Feathers were ruffled and Arena promptly issued a masterful apology, which praised everyone who had felt slighted but left his original criticism very much intact.

This being soccer, Arena does not get a lot of television time. His latest appearance was last week, when ESPN decided to devote a few minutes at 6:45 p.m. to Arena's announcement of his World Cup squad. Hurried and ill at ease, Arena dashed through the list of 23 names and was dismissed. Hardly a significant moment for ESPN, but for soccer it was further proof that Arena, though not yet a TV star, is in total command of the mechanics of running the national team.

How so? Because the announcement of the 23 players came nearly two weeks before FIFA's May 15 deadline. Such is the certainty of Arena's touch, that he felt perfectly at ease making the early announcement, the first of the 32 World Cup coaches to settle on his roster.

Again, Arena has benefited from the lack of pressure — some would say lack of interest. After he fielded what was basically a second-string American team that got wiped out 4–1 by Germany in March, Arena blithely admitted it was a mistake to schedule the game. No withering criticism followed, no one called for his head to roll. The road to Germany '06 has been a pretty smooth one. There has been no drawn out bickering over rival candidates for the World Cup team, such as the Germans staged in arguing over the relative merits of goalkeepers Jens Lehmann and Oliver Kahn. There were no demonstrations over the dropping of a favored player, as happened in Mexico when coach Ricardo La Volpe left Cuauhtemoc Blanco off his preliminary list.

Arena did spring a couple of surprises: defender Greg Berhalter didn't make it, the younger Jimmy Conrad did; more controversially, Brian Ching was preferred up front to Taylor Twellman. A polite banner reading "Why Not Taylor?" at Saturday's New England Revs' home game was about as torrid as the criticism got.

And nobody got too upset when Arena's rush to publish went awry within 24 hours when wingback Frankie Hejduk was found to be injured and had to be replaced by Chris Albright.

Nor was there an uproar when Arena ruled that the Americans' base in Germany would be the Park Hyatt Hotel on the busiest shopping street in downtown Hamburg. Considering that the American team is thought to be one of the tournament's biggest potential terrorism targets, this cannot have been to the delight of the German security forces. But Arena got his way.

One thing Arena's team does have in common with virtually all the World Cup teams is that the majority of its players play their club soccer in Europe. This is the overwhelming truth of the world game in 2006. Of the 32 World Cup qualifiers, only Saudi Arabia is likely to bring a squad whose players are all with domestic clubs. Ivory Coast is at the other extreme, where all of its likely picks play in Europe.

Brazil and Argentina will probably not have more than four home-based players between them. Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has not yet announced his full squad, but he has stated that the team taking the field for its opening game against Croatia will be the same as that which played in the last qualifying game — which means 11 Europe-based starters. It will probably be the same for Australia, which has more than 30 of its best players with European clubs.

But America, Arena's America that is, has avoided the extremes. Thirteen — maybe that should be "only 13" — of the American squad play in Europe. For the Americans' first game on June 12, against Ghana, a likely 4–4–2 starting team would be: Kasey Keller; Steve Cherundolo, Eddie Pope, Oguchi Onyewu, Eddie Lewis; Pablo Mastroeni, Landon Donovan, Claudio Reyna, DaMarcus Beasley; Brian McBride, and Josh Wolff.

That would mean five domestic MLS players plus seven Euros, a balance of sorts that seems to reflect Arena's remarkable ability to do things a little differently from everyone else. So far it has worked like a charm.

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NO PRESSURE U.S. coach Bruce Arena has enjoyed a smooth road to Germany. GERARD BURKHART/AFP/GET T Y

## **Section 8- Youth Health Issues**

**POSITIVE PARENTING | BY DEBBIE GLASSER**

# **Keeping kids drug-free is an endless quest**

Last week, representatives from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's Anti-Drug Youth Media Campaign came to South Florida to host a panel discussion with local mental health professionals and teens, and report on recent drug trends in our community.

First, the good news: Illicit drug use among teens is on the decline both locally and nationally. Now, cause for concern: In Florida, the abuse of inhalant and prescription drugs is increasing.

While progress is being made on the anti-drug front, the message from community advocates and teens was clear: There's still more work to be done.

According to Jose Szapocznik, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Miami, many parents don't have an accurate sense of the drug scene and pressures faced by teens.

"Parents need to recognize that our children's world is different than anything they can imagine," he said.

"Drugs are much more dangerous and available than in the past; sexual behavior is more risky; and the world is a more complex place."

In today's society, parents worry about the potential risks their children face. And many wonder whether they can positively influence their children's choices. In fact, parents do matter. And they can make a difference.

According to Robert Denniston, director of the Anti-Drug Youth Media Campaign, "Parents remain the single most powerful voice in the lives of their teens."

What can you do to guide your teen toward healthy choices? Here are some tips:

- **Build relationships.** Because healthy relationships are key in promoting open communication, experts encourage parents to start building relationships with their children early. "Work toward building a strong relationship with your kids from the beginning," Szapocznik said. Spend time together as a family. Be available. Let your children know that you value their unique qualities.

- **Talk and listen.** Look for regular opportunities to connect with your children. Driving in the car, shopping and eating together can provide opportunities to talk and listen to your kids, answer their questions, and gain insight into their lives and beliefs, Szapocznik said. "Don't be afraid to share your opinion with your children," he said. "They have to know what their parents think and believe in. If they don't get your opinion and beliefs, they'll get someone else's."

- **Promote healthy activities.** When children are involved in safe, supervised activities, they'll be less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Encourage your children to participate in social activities like school clubs, team sports and faith-based youth groups.

- **Set limits and guidelines.** At every age, children need appropriate limits in order to feel secure. It's up to parents to set limits and clearly communicate expectations about substance abuse as well as other issues like curfews, homework and chores. "Families are organizations," Szapocznik said. "They need successful leadership."

- **Connect with other adults.** "All the adults in a child's life have to collaborate and share the same message and goals," Szapocznik said. "Get to know your children's teachers, coaches and friends' parents."

- **Be involved.** "Know where your children are and what they're doing," Szapocznik said. But keep in mind, "It's a delicate balance between privacy and involvement." The key is to monitor children in the context of a respectful relationship. Szapocznik encourages parents to pay attention to their children's relationships with peers, as well as their grades, mood and behavior. Another important way to be involved: get active in their school and activities.

- **Be a role model.** Pay attention to your own behavior and make responsible decisions. It's important to practice what you preach.

- **Be informed.** The more informed you and your teens are, the better. Seek reputable resources to learn more about the issues facing teens and how you can address them.

A good place to start: [www.TheAntiDrug.com/](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com/) parentresources.

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