

ECFC Member comments for SYSA Board of Commissioners

45 Comments

From members who indicated a preference for a “Yes” vote in favor of the Seattle United Proposal Package

Bringing all of the Select and Premier teams under one guiding organization is long overdue. Seattle United is addressing the many problems select and premier families face. Emerald City has failed to address these problems and has resisted change and rejected suggestions for improvement. The ECFC Board should have proposed, instituted, or partnered for this solution years ago. The arrogance and elitism that the ECFC Board and staff have exhibited in the past 8 months finally proves to Seattle's soccer community that ECFC should not be. It is my understanding that SYSA can remove ECFC's Premier status and dismantle the Club by transferring all of the teams to Seattle United. To allow ECFC to co-exist with Seattle United, shows respect and grace by SYSA.

Continue the hard work they have been doing to ensure this new organization serves the players first and foremost. Despite the intense resistance put up by ECFC leadership, continue to reach out to the families in ECFC, who I believe are capable of understanding the potential benefits of Seattle United better than their leaders.

ECFC and Seattle United/SYSA should find a way to get along. This should be about making things work for children; if these two groups need a mediator, find one. It is not OK for ECFC and SYSA to have a split that creates raw feelings and puts children in the middle.

ECFC should work together with the rest of the soccer clubs to make soccer meaningful, affordable and practically feasible for players and families in the Seattle area. All this in fighting is most frustrating and players and families end up losing.

I am thrilled about the merger and that there will be some accountability. Since Bobby Howe has taken as Director of the club I have been very disappointed. My oldest child has played with ECFC since U-11 and it is clearly time that SYSA makes this move for the good of the children. Ego's need to be put aside and the focus need to be put back on our children. I don't believe that Bobby Howe is able to get over himself and do what's best for the kids so I am thrilled that SYSA is making it happen! SYSA will find that there are some real issues to clean up with finances and secretive nature of the ECFC hand picked board of Bobby Howe supports that allow him to do what ever s/he wants. THANK YOU for your assistance SYSA. I have younger children that will greatly benefit for this great merger!

I would like a transition from the fractured, fragmented system now in place to a unified umbrella organization that would hopefully end the divisive comments/attitudes. I hope whatever happens, the focus will be the players--who will provide the best training, development and benefit for the players who commit to this level of play? I think the status quo leads to many clubs vying for the best players and yet there are too many independent teams, so ECFC teams may not consistently represent the most capable players. If all teams function in the same system, the players should benefit.

I would like to see the name Emerald City FC continue to exist as the name of the premier and select organization for Seattle and Shoreline. I love the name and it has a long history and tradition. I support creating a larger organization where administrative costs and purchasing power can be shared.

I'm relatively dispassionate and uniformed about the vote, but from what little I have observed, my perception is that ECFC is behaving like an old boys club that is frustrated by an impending loss of power. I've yet to hear a single compelling argument from any ECFC representative as to why Seattle United should not exist, and why ECFC should remain in control of the premiere category in Seattle. As I understand it, the mission of ECFC is about promoting the player, but everything I've observed suggests ECFC is more concerned about its franchise in this context. If you're reading this and thinking "this guy has it all wrong," then it may simply be that you need to do a much better job with your PR.

My [player] wants to play soccer at the highest competitive level possible. Emerald City is not currently on par with Eastside or Northwest Nationals in sending teams to State, Regional or National championship play. I support the Seattle United proposal to the extent that it will gather a larger pool of players from which the best can be selected. It is mandatory, however, that the proposal include a salary plan for coaches which maintains or increases the current level of pay, enabling the new club to retain the best of the current ECFC coaching staff and/or attract still more talented people.

The concept of one "Seattle United" is great on paper, the finances however, seem to be unclear. Emerald City and Seattle United have done a poor job communicating their positions and should spend more time holding education and discussion sessions.

The most important element for our family is to be <able> (as opposed to willing) to sustain participation in soccer, by playing locally (particularly mid-week practices), and keeping costs at a manageable level.

The proposal of Seattle united is important for the improvement of select soccer in Seattle. The betterment of the select soccer in seattle and the players who play i would ask that whatever your vote is the only determining factor is what is best for the kids. lawsuits will only make things worse and will insrue that parents will take their players to other premier teams.

The Seattle United project concepts are what has been missing from Seattle Select soccer for years, i am sure everyone could come up with a few things here or there that they would like changed in the Seattle United plan but the reality is we will never satisfy eveyone and as of now the plan is overall a good one. As in every plan the success will be in the execution and I encourage SYSA to get the BEST people in all areas to execute this plan so Seattle can have the best Select Soccer program in the country.

"Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at will change."

A city approach is good -- we should join Seattle United -- for years too much parent energy has been spent on trying to find the right solution and then wondering why is their internal battles within Seattle about which org is the best? and why are we forced to see politics and infighting when all we want is to have fun for our kids and have a great time cheering on our kids

As the parent of a [player] on an ECFC team and a [player] on an independent SYSA state premier team, I am strongly in favor of the Seattle United proposal. The select soccer world in Seattle has been far too fractured and disjointed for far too long. It is only becoming a more fragmented system with the formation of the Player Development League by the large clubs and the resulting exclusion of the independent SYSA select teams and their players. The Seattle United organization would bring all of the select teams under one umbrella where players would have different levels of play to choose from and more fluidity between the levels. I believe the opportunity for coordination of teams, players, and coaching would be a significant improvement over the fiefdoms that now exist. I strongly support a united select soccer system in Seattle and urge the SYSA commissioners to vote in favor of Seattle United.

Become part of Seattle United and please get back to the ECFC mission statement...it's about the kids.

Encourage ECFC to work with SU to form a single, united club preserving the heritage of ECFC, its coaching and families -- and ideally some of its name -- as part of the new organization.

I believe inevitably the process will move to one system for Seattle. I realize that ECFC wants more of a say in the process and I agree that should be done, but to hold up things advancing as it seems to be, will prevent good dialogue. I am not suggesting ECFC rolls over and lets the rest of SYSA tread on them, but to move ahead, there needs to be good dialogue on what's best for the kids and have everyone sit around the table to plan together. It seems to me (from afar and not being involved in any meetings/discussions) both sides have their own theories and haven't been able to find a common ground. Rather than separate years of experience and knowledge - let's find the common ground. It isn't easy and it will take time, but it is needed to move ahead. I do not see any positives, if ECFC splits off and Seattle United and SYSA move ahead by themselves. In the past year, our family has experienced other issues at another PDL Club. I don't think ECFC is immune to conflicts. Things are changing and I believe we need to adapt to it, but have a say in the process too. Yours, ECFC xxxx parent former [neighborhood club] Coach and parent current [neighborhood club] Coach and parent

I believe that a youth soccer organization should be run for the benefit and development the youth. To keep their interests in the forefront ahead of the egos of spent jocks. Having an organization that is truly in the busiess of providing a clean, safe and competitive club dedicated to player development should be your mission statement.

I believe the name Emerald City has brand recognition and that you should strongly consider keeping the name and transitioning to Seattle United in Stages. You should also consider naming the club Emerald City United under the new umbrella. A corporate sponsor for the new club should be considered and pursued.

I find the ongoing negative interactions between SYSA and ECFC to be detrimental to all families involved. I would like BOTH clubs to find ways to work together more positively to make this the best outcome possible, without the negative bickering that's been going on. I find the current attitudes and communications unprofessional and off-putting. Given that some form of SU seems inevitable, let's just move forward and work together to solve the problems and make it effective. Delaying this inevitable outcome won't serve much purpose, in my mind. By moving forward, the process of improving and refining and solving problems and oversights can more effectively begin, rather than the current stalemated arguments.

I have had two children participate in select and premier soccer. This change has been a long time coming. For too long ECFC has thumbed it's collective nose at SYSA, WSYSA, and the majority of soccer players in this region. Many talented players have refused to participate in the current system - change is and has been in order. There seems to be a lot of ECFC energy behind halting the progress of ECFC, and I don't understand that. This effort should be about the players and what's best for them collectively. I believe Seattle United will serve the best interest of select and premier players in the Seattle area.

I personally feel that Emerald City does not have the greater interest of the all the children in the club. It is very clear that as the players get older, the focus of better coaching, training, and overall attitude is all focused on the "A" teams. Players not considered "a" players, or to have the potential are treated differently. This was evident this year in the U-xx girls try outs. The entire process was to fill empty spots on the "a" team. The other girls were not even looked at, and simply spent three unnecessary days of angst to find out they were remaining on their original teams. So far our "tournament" season has included practices which are lightly attended, coaching which is laid back. There is not player development with skill trainings. We have played one tournament, which was after only a few practices, now we have the month of July off, only to return to practice one week before the xx tournament in August. Then off again until November. The "a" team is continuing to practice, playing in tournaments and friendlies and getting skill development. We all pay the same, and have kids just as dedicated, who deserve better than to be treated as "second" class soccer players. It appears to me that Seattle United will offer better coaching and development for all players. I have been very disappointed in the direction of Emerald City this past year, and their attitude. It is unfortunate, because there are great kids that want to play soccer and deserve the chances. This was the premise Emerald City was founded on, apparently they have lost their way.

I support Seattle United. I do not think the ECFC Board of Directors is capable of providing a quality soccer program. When only 5 players show up for try-outs for a P1 team, but 75 show up at Crossfire and NW National try-outs for P2 teams, then Seattle players have already provided feedback about the "quality" of ECFC leadership. You don't need this survey. It's time for a new organization so our players have a chance at participating in a quality club IN SEATTLE.

If this has been going on for the last 8 months, why are you now scrambling to get parent/player input only a few weeks before the vote? I think this only shows the lack of organization within the ECFC governing body and general disregard for family input. I think a change of leadership and structure may not be a bad thing.

Its a good idea to enact the "Seattle United" plan. From my prespective the majority of the players in the emerald city program at a young age are there because of their parents wanting it for their children.

My hope with the change would be that the opportunities for kids to play soccer at levels appropriate to their skill level and desire to play year round would be matched by true player development. We have suffered under ECFC maintaining teams formed at U-11 for presumably financial reasons. Kids are playing on teams at the higher age levels simply because if they were "moved down" they would leave, and take their money with them. I would hope for a culture of fairness and objectivity, while always keeping kids' health, both physical and emotional, front and center. Having more than one director of coaching is necessary. There is a cult of personality at ECFC.

Need more information and better communication, but the basic idea seems good. The biggest concern I have heard about Seattle United would be to give families less input at the upper select level. This should be addressed.

Please ensure that all current ECFC players are taken care of and that ECFC coaches be given a fair shot at coaching for Seattle United.

Please work efficiently and cooperatively for the benefit of the players in seattle to create the best orgnization with the highest quality of female and male coaches.

Seattle United will unite the fractured select system in this city, allowing the new club to retain players. The city's select system will cooperate rather than compete for players. It will also provide regional teams so families can choose to play high level select soccer without having to drive all over Seattle at rush hour, and absolutely crazy prospect. It will also create regional part-year select teams, so kids wanting to play higher level soccer but also play another sport in the winter and spring (basketball and baseball for example) will have a chance to do so. All these things will keep kids in the system which is good for all. Finally, it will create a teaching academy which will train U-8 through U-10 rec players and coaches. These rec players are the backbone of the Seattle soccer system and have never had any attention from ECFC. The best clubs in the nation pay a lot of attention to their rec programs and it is time we do the same. Please do not listen to the protestations of ECFC. They have failed Seattle youth soccer which is exactly why SYSA got tired of waiting and formed Seattle United. Forming Seattle United was the right thing to do, and passing it will be the same. This city will be just fine without an arrogant and disconnected ECFC at the top of Seattle soccer. Seattle United will allow SYSA to join the top programs in the country and will indeed be a breath of fresh air.

Thank for your continuous efforts to realize a fc for the youth with their best interest at heart, with a board open, accountable & transparent in addition to including all levels of play. We hope seattle united will attract the best coaches so we are truly competitive.

thanks for the hard work and years that you have spent trying to get this reform accomplished!

The current organization is dysfunctional and needs to be replaced due to many issues (financial, board appointment, policies, etc.). I urge the commissioners to wipe the slate clean and incorporate the Seattle United concept to take Seattle's select soccer program to a level where it needs to be to benefit the kids as well as attracting and retaining good future players and coaches to be a competitive (and enjoyable!) club within the league as well as nationally.

Comment not posted on website because of liability concerns if published.

The Seattle United proposals are in the best interest of ALL players wanting to play select, is much more transparent than the existing club, and moves the club away from the my way or the highway mentality that has taken over the administration of the club.

The SU plan is an improvement in my mind to the current system for a few very important reasons. As a mother who has had at least one child in ECFC (and at one time both children) since U-11 there are major problems. The most critical one had to do with my [player], who had a love of soccer and desire to play for the big name ECFC like her/his older brother. S/he is not an A team player, but nevertheless was a solid good player who wanted to improve her/his game. Her/his coach was not very strong and the team did not coalesce as we had hoped they would due to a series of unfortunate circumstances (including unimpressive coaching). The next year s/he didn't make the cut and was devastated. S/he was beyond the local rec level soccer – but not “good enough” for ECFC. S/he almost quit the game of soccer entirely because s/he felt like s/he wasn't worthy due to the structure of ECFC. This caused a great deal of anguish for a middle school child who doesn't need any more angst in their world. I felt angry at the ECFC system and ashamed as a parent to be involved in such an unnecessarily destructive selection process. The second problem is that ECFC doesn't seem to have the slightest care about creating teams that are closer to its player's communities. This has forced all of our carpool families to endure hundreds of stressful rush hour commutes to fields that were far across town, burning fuel and time and always with the undertone of anxiety of trying to get kids to practices 10-15 miles away year after year. Although there are many fields closer to us, our [player's] teams have never had practices there. ECFC has unresponsive about resolving this issue of balancing access based on regional demographics. The result was that many of our friends did not choose ECFC for this reason – they could not commit the time to commute to practices across town when there were ample fields in our communities. So ECFC had many lost opportunities with these soccer players and parents and never seems to care about trying to include them in the system. It is clear that there was no place in ECFC for them. And this, from an organization that claims to have the best interests of the children at heart.

This has been an obnoxious process by both sides and quite frankly seems to have been moved forward on the SYSA end by parents whose children are not able/ ready to play at the highest levels. Though I think this may well screw the best players in the club, I think it is a done deal and should move forward as amicably as possible. I have significant concerns about ECFC financial management issues and though I don't suspect fraud, incompetency appears to have ruled and for that reason alone, this club needs better oversight. In the long run, it will be fine. This just has not been a very competitive club for a many years. I don't think the ECFC board can fix it, especially given the continued presence of at least one board member who was not up for re-election this year. The worst possible scenario would be to try to move to US Soccer league/ club- that would be totally a non-player centric decision and frankly would only serve bruised egos at the ECFC level.

This should be about the kids, but it is not. It is about who is in control and where the money goes, which is unfortunate. Even though it is a flawed plan (people making decisions based on personal agendas, we can only be hopeful won't have the same results). It is unfortunate that those in control find it necessary to dissolve a good entity in an effort to move forward. I can only hope that the petty differences get resolved. In the end SYSA and the coaches within the system need to understand, this is not about them and their teams, but truly about allowing the best players to compete together. I see and understand the structural change, but don't see a fundamental change because the same people that hindered ECFC are still involved in the process.

Vote for Seattle United. It would be the best for everyone. Unite Seattle soccer under one well functioning club.

Vote yes for the package, but move into immediate negotiations with the Seattle United folks to request a FULL MERGER rather than doing a stepped merger leaving the older kids in a fragmented ECFC. It's my understanding from leaders of the Seattle United movement this has been their desire all along (full merger including all kids) and only brought up the stepped merger because they thought ECFC might appreciate keeping their older kids under the ECFC moniker as they finish their youth playing years. So, please convey to Seattle United a FULL MERGER is the desired approach. A stepped approach is counter productive to running successful programs.

We've had two [players] come through the EC system - they're xx & xx now. We never been happy with the management of the organization. It's time for a change. The org should attract the best coaches, and the best players, and it doesn't now.

What I think would be a better solution than creating Seattle United is to recreate Emerald City by getting a new board and coaching director and then implement the changes that are needed.

Writing is on wall and plan will be approved, so ECFC board needs to deal with reality and do its best to serve membership even if medicine is unpleasant: 1) ECFC board should tell SYSA that it will cooperate fully with the complete integration of ECFC, not just younger ages. 2) ECFC board should be willing to lose the ECFC brand. Royals was far more successful than ECFC and managed to control egos, so should not be a big deal. 3) ECFC board should acknowledge the development advantages of the proposal, namely that there is a commitment to player development before U11. In the past there has been none, other than cursory training programs immediately preceding tryouts. 4) ECFC board should make finances transparent. Where there's smoke, there's fire. ECFC needs to communicate very openly with members about timeline for completion of audit and when results will be made public.