



Questions and Answers on the USL Super Y-League

The following question and answer interview with Matt Weibe of USL presents some common questions on the structure of the USL Super Y-League and the 2007 season. Weibe attempts to pinpoint the areas that need attention and explain how the structure of the Super Y-League is doing its part to provide the highest level of youth competition for clubs around North America.

What does the Super Y-League mean to player development?

This is what I call "professionalizing" player development in the United States and Canada. When it comes to the top-level youth players, it is about allowing the cream to rise to the top. Our players compete in top-level soccer 12 months a year. The Super Y-League plants the spotlight on these players during the summer months. Super Y-League focuses the top one percent of all youth players in the U.S. and Canada.



What are the reasons for USL being the organizing body for the Super Y-League and why not the more established national youth organizations?

USL has operated National and North American professional, amateur, and youth soccer leagues since 1986. We are currently celebrating our 20th season. Many fully operational USL clubs will be running these teams in the Super Y-League. We are the facilitators of the Super Y-League. USL utilizes its experience and national influence to produce the best competition possible. We can do this without asking for exorbitant player or team fees – fees that sometimes prevent players from competing.



What makes the Super Y-League different from what national youth associations, such as US Youth Soccer, are already providing on the local or regional level?

The Super Y-League has teams that are much broader in geographical scope. Because of that, they play at a higher level. Even the current number of super leagues in the country are localized in terms of their members. The Super Y-League is different because we are organized

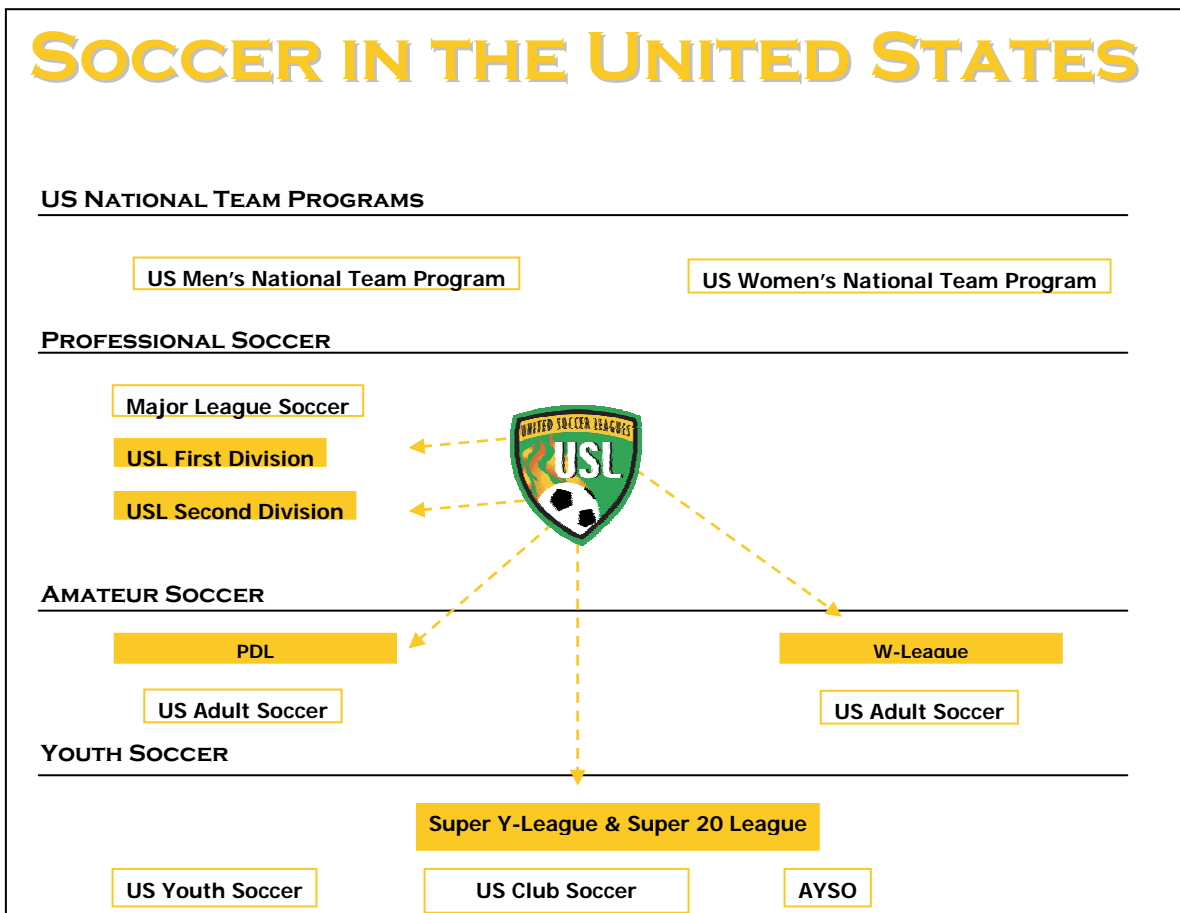
on a divisional level. We include only the top teams within a limited geographical area.

The Super Y-League is designed specifically for the elite level player. We are looking for the player that excels on the club level to the point that they want to take their game to the next level. That extra five to ten percent can only be found in the Super Y-League. The difference can be seen with the expanded roster sizes, no recruiting restrictions, and the club pass system. These are not available within other national youth associations such as US Youth Soccer. Their programs are focused on recreational soccer instead of the elite level soccer.

Some of the regional leagues operated by other youth organizations consist of three or four mini-



tournaments for their league season, and have minimal standards. The Super Y-League is a week-in week-out league with significant league requirements that each club must maintain. A heavy importance is focused on home and away series for competitive reasons. We want to promote quality play rather than overplay. An extended league format is a better alternative for these players because it does not overload their play. The number of quality matches without overloading a player is the most important aspect to player development.



How does the Super Y-League spotlight players otherwise missed by the current system?

There has been considerable discussion about players who somehow have been missed by the past systems of identifying top national team prospects. The divisional structure of the Super Y-League enables teams to scout their own areas for the best players. These players are then placed in a position where they can display their ability on a divisional and national stage. The ODP programs of the Super Y-League will certainly provide this aspect for players.

There are more opportunities for players in the Super Y-League at the National Team, professional, and amateur levels. Over the past four years, the Super Y-League has already seen players that have moved on to the National Team Program. Now that the Super Y-League has developed its ODP programs, this will become more of a factor. By bringing the top one percent of the players together at the peak of the development pyramid, we increase the amount of exposure that players will have with the National Team and professional clubs, domestic and



foreign. The Super Y-League enjoys a fantastic relationship with U.S. Soccer. We hope to build on this relationship with future programs.

How does the Super Y-League calendar prevent player burnout?

Player development models provide a system that maximizes team and player performance. Creating this balanced schedule can be done through the Super Y-League.

The U.S. does not have a national soccer calendar. This evidence shows the challenges in providing balance with clubs and players. As the game progresses, some significant changes will have to be made as to how many games per year a youth player can compete in, national cup dates, league dates, ODP dates, training to competition ratios and a standard break time for player recovery.



Clubs themselves are the only ones who can put an emphasis on this. The Super Y-League replicates of the timeframe of the MLS and USL First Division seasons. We want to build this into being the traditional season for players, because it provides consistency with all soccer, starting at the top level. With the competition the league can provide in a consistent time period, less emphasis can be placed on clubs focusing on other leagues and tournaments, where a team only participates in these activities to gain

additional competition in the first place.

The one factor that cannot be controlled is scholastic soccer. Each of the scholastic state associations are even more fragmented than U.S. Youth Soccer. As more clubs are moving towards having their players compete in their clubs year round, this will be less of an issue.

Why is age 13 the best group to start with for the Super Y-League?

This is generally the youngest age when a player's talent starts emerging and coaches can clearly begin to see potential. This is also when most of the world starts to work with their best players. Top clubs in the world, such as Holland's Ajax, begin training their best players as early as six years of age. We have to get on the same page as the rest of the world or we will fall farther behind. It is not our goal to turn 13-year-old kids into professionals. We just want to professionalize the system and process whereby these players can ultimately reach their full potential.

How does the Super Y-League cooperate with high school and college seasons?

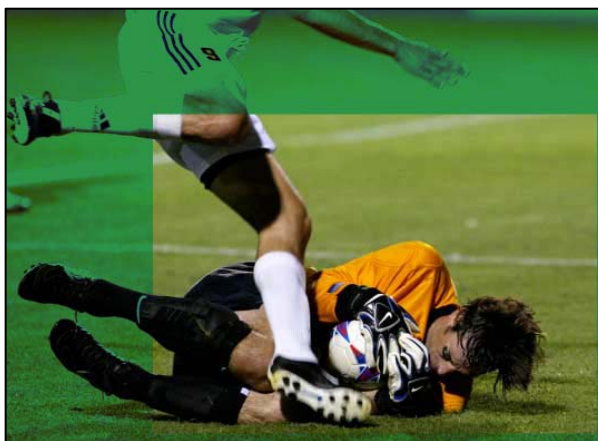
The initial Super Y-League schedule is put together to work with scholastic institutions. Our season is completed by the time college players must report for the start of the fall season. This is evident with high school players who compete in the fall and who have even more time before the start of their respective seasons.



As America becomes more entrenched with developing soccer, there will come a time when elite level youth players must make a choice between playing scholastic soccer and preparing for a professional career. As top-level youth players are identified at an earlier age, parents of serious players who have the opportunity to train at higher levels must help their youngsters think through the benefits of playing on a scholastic team vs. entering the early stages of a professional career. Ultimately, the player will have to choose between these conflicting paths of opportunity.

Could you summarize your goals for the Super Y-League?

Our primary and permanent goal is to provide a platform for players to be identified. We strive to ensure deserving, talented players will not fall through the cracks as easily as they have in the past.



If there is a budding Pele somewhere out there, he or she will be found. Players will also improve at a more rapid pace under the Super Y-League system. They will be playing more often and against better competition. Players will learn to excel in a pressurized environment, creating fine tuned soccer players ready to carry U.S. soccer to the next level.

While we respect the rights of each state association or US Soccer member organization to conduct business as it sees fit, it has been proven over a number of years that localized structure may not be the best environment for developing elite players. The state-by-state ODP system served the purpose for a time. We now need to move beyond that to a more direct way of finding a elite player candidates. The development of the Super Y-League ODP system generates more opportunities. It is a healthier environment for player recognition by U.S. National Team Programs.

United Soccer Leagues believes that ultimately, players and their parents/guardians will make the right decision about what is best for a young player's soccer future. This, in no way affects the goals of USL in establishing the Super Y-League as a main element in the overall USL national development structure.

What is the future beyond the Super Y-League?

Canada and the U.S. are gradually becoming soccer nations. The new leaders in the game are no longer the basic recreational organizations. They are being surpassed by the level of involvement of the Technical Directors from clubs and soccer-focused organizations encompassed by USL and US Club Soccer. The planning and foresight of these two groups will mold the game into what it should become in North America.

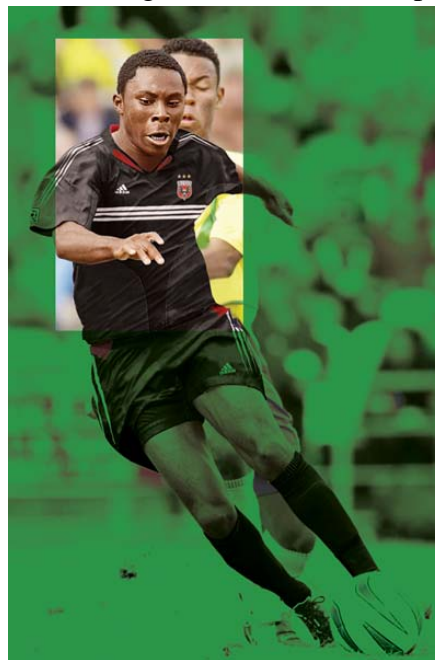
More and more professional clubs are focusing on the Super Y-League for competition. Clubs have now seen that there are options for them. I believe they will come together to build a new direction for the game. The next evolution will be the further involvement of professional teams



developing year-round youth academies. These players will ultimately feed into our U.S. National Team Programs.

How is the Super Y-League structured?

The Super Y-League is structured to play by FIFA's laws of the game. We also comply with other common rules across the board. We want to operate the league, free from restrictions on competition. This includes expanded rosters and no limits on recruiting. The open-market system makes no reservations on location or time fueling the combative spirit of the Super Y-League. The restrictive rules and regulations that are appropriate for rec-level soccer are detrimental to player development when applied for youth super leagues.



Over the course of the Super Y-League's growth in the last eight seasons, shifts in the structure were inevitable. We now feel comfortable. We are prepared for the foreseeable changes soccer brings in this country. One of the advantages of the Super Y-League is its flexibility and proficiency in adjustment.

What if a state currently has no USL teams? Could those states field teams in the Super Y-League?

Membership in the Super Y-League will not be restricted to USL-affiliated teams or teams in states where USL franchises are located. We look at the Super Y-League as a process for not only helping the youth game, but also helping our own efforts to boost playing opportunities for senior teams, both men and women, amateur and professional. The Super Y-League will reach out to all top-level teams in all states. It will be possible for a Super Y-League team to develop the same group of players until they are ready to enter the various USL amateur and professional leagues or MLS.

The Super Y-League is not a recreational league. We admit only top-level clubs with the competitive and administrative ability to compete at the Super Y-League level. The league contains established youth clubs and youth teams of senior USL and MLS teams. The Super Y-League is the stage for the top 60-80 clubs in North America.

Could you describe a typical competitive playing season for the Super Y-League?

This depends on the division of the Super Y-League. Ultimately, we see this as a six to nine month league. We are now in a six-month season, which would run from mid-spring to late fall. This season mirrors the current professional calendar in the U.S. This gives us enough time to get



in 20-30 games, allowing kids and teams one weekend in every month to play in tournaments. Time is allotted for the Super Y-League ODP National Camps, the US Club Soccer National Cup, and foreign travel competitions. We want to build in enough flexibility so that teams and divisions can work with their respective associations. The natural gaps built into the schedule allow local teams and divisions to coordinate scheduling.

Some divisions begin in January, while some will begin towards the end of April and early May. Each division is unique due to climate, various soccer activities, scholastic sports, and end of the school year. Each division collectively designs their own division. This includes the number of teams, games, start dates, and age groups. We leave it to the soccer people within these divisions to give us the best input on what they need to have for a successful season.



What will be the impact on the Olympic Development Program (ODP)?

The Super Y-League was granted ODP status in August of 2002 for two programs. These programs are: 1) The Super Y-League North American Finals as a National ODP event where players will be scouted by U.S. Soccer National Staff Coaches; and 2) The formation of the National ODP Camps where players will be scouted by U.S. Soccer National Staff Coaches.

The number one resource for talent identification in this country are the clubs themselves. At the end of the season, each Super Y-League division in each age group will have a Division ODP Team that will attend the National ODP Camp in January and February. At the camps, players are selected to an ODP Select Team. From there, players are identified for U.S. National Team Programs.

Please note that there is no connection with this system and the U.S. Youth Soccer ODP system. It is the belief of the Super Y-League and its membership that this will provide a better system and a better alternative for players to be identified for U.S. National Team Programs.

Our belief is that the identification of players is done best while the player is in a natural environment. Players who excel within their clubs should be identified through their performance in league play, just as it is done in soccer nations throughout the world.

The state system tolerates player loss through politicization. Some players are lost through sheer dollar amounts. Some of the best players cannot afford the State ODP programs. Some players do not try-out for various reasons. They play other sports, or their parents cannot afford the time to arrange travel to training sessions. By centralizing the scouting into one event the Super Y-League reduces player cost exponentially.

Essentially, we have put a lot of faith into the club system and we are confident that they will make this the best opportunity for players to be identified without pulling the players in different directions outside of their club environment.

How big do you see the Super Y-League becoming?



At its most sophisticated stage, the Super Y-League could include 25,000 players. The top 60-80 teams in each age division will compete in the Super Y-League. While these are not significant numbers, I have to emphasize that the number represents the absolute elite portion of the six million or so registered players in the United States and Canada.

With this many players taking part, we believe that the Super Y-League can significantly augment – and in some cases accelerate - the process of identifying players and helping U.S. Soccer reach its Project 2010 goals. With the Super Y-League teams playing up to 26 games a year in the future, it will lessen the chance of failing to identify top players who are ready to move into the collegiate, professional, and international ranks.

How does a club apply to the 2007 season?

All of the applications are located on the web site. Once a club applies to the league, we will arrange an application phone call with the contact of the club to review club competition, administration, facilities, coaching staff, and club structure. After the interview, the league will notify the club of the acceptance or non-acceptance into the league.



Who can compete in the Super-Y League?

Any player can compete in the Super-Y League. There will be no restriction on who can participate. The league will have a 26-player roster. Teams wanting to restrict themselves to an 18-player roster may do so. There is also the possibility that teams could carry their regular 18 players, plus another eight "floaters" who would be available for Super Y-League play.

We encourage all athletes, regardless of race, origin, or financial background, to compete in the Super Y-League. This is symbolic of the types of teams not only free to come into the league, but also recruited by the Super Y-League. As long as the standard of play and the club administration is consistent with Super Y-League requirements, we welcome all club teams.

How are clubs selected to join the Super Y-League?

We are very selective about teams we allow into the Super Y-League. We look to our current clubs to provide the best guidance in selecting teams we give Super Y-League status. Once a club is in, it must annually prove its value to the league. If a club competes well and is well organized, it will be back the following year. This includes meeting all minimum standards developed by the league, including playing facilities, qualifications of coaches and other common denominators.

What is the league's preference in recruiting potential Super Y-League clubs?

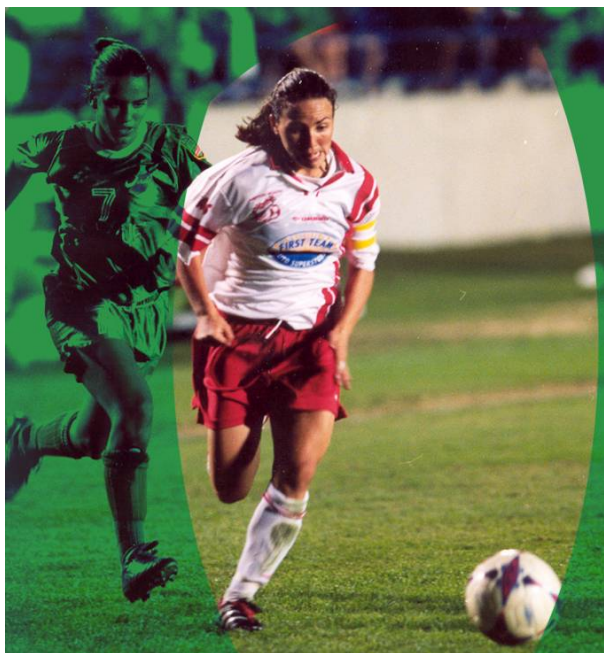
Membership will be open to any USL or non-USL organization, with some preference in principle to USL-affiliated teams. The doors are also open to the top established youth clubs in the United States and Canada.



The evolution of soccer clubs over the last decade has changed dramatically. More and more elite level clubs have developed over the last five years. This has also triggered an increase in the number of clubs in the United States. Many geographical areas are over-saturated with clubs. Within some areas, there might be 12-20 clubs, virtually on top one another. People have realized this has a negative effect on competitive development. It is becoming more common to hear of two or more clubs consolidating into one. The Super Y-League is looking to have the best players on a team in each age group. We will recruit and accept applications from clubs that have demonstrated they have top-level players, teams, coaches, and facilities.

What does a team get for its \$1000 administrative fee?

The following management services are provided for each Super Y-League team: league administration, scheduling, referee assignment, web site management, press and public relations including providing regular standings and statistics, player discipline, and the staging of championship events in each age group.



Although these costs may seem higher than other leagues, there is a greater overhead cost for operating a North American youth league. Tournaments these days run from \$400-1000 for a minimum of three to four games. Our cost is very reasonable for a six-month season with the added services provided to clubs.

There are many financial factors clubs need to consider when providing a competitive player development environment. They must consider the cost it takes to compete in tournaments and rationalize expanded divisional league play within the Super Y-League. The Super Y-League is a cost efficient league. Clubs must consider that playing in several high cost tournaments per year far surpasses to our annual league fee. These tournaments promote overplay rather than quality play while the Super Y-League schedule allows teams to compete in both. Clubs must also figure the cost players pay for State ODP programs. This money could be saved. Super Y-League's ODP system allows players to be scouted while in their natural club environment thereby eliminating the State ODP costs. Our system does not require any money outside of the one divisional identification weekend.

Player registration to U.S. Club Soccer will remain separate from the administrative fees, just as it did this season. Teams can participate in any other USSF competition year round with their USCS/SYL player cards.

What about the common problem associated with youth soccer, where a young player is clearly good enough to play, but his family cannot afford the associated fees?

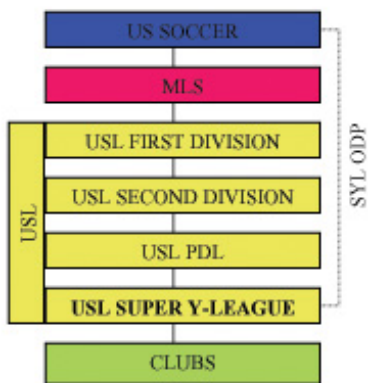
We are looking for clubs to join the Super Y-League who have a system in place to take care of such players. We want clubs who have the financial wherewithal to welcome all players,



regardless of their financial position. This includes kids who cannot afford pay for play. The object of the Super Y-League is to eliminate restrictions on players. If there is a club that might not include a player because the player cannot meet certain financial obligations, then we do not want that club in the Super Y-League. The club must find a way to professionalize its operation so that if a player who is unable to pay is good enough to play, he or she will not be left out.

Why was it necessary to form the Super Y-League when we have such youth programs as those in U.S. Youth Soccer?

Player Development Structure (Men's)



Player Development Structure (Women's)



The Super Y-League is much more than a league. It is a system for competitive soccer. We provide extreme competition and sound structural resources for clubs to grow and develop. As the need for clubs to take the next step in their plans for development increases, the Super Y-League adapts and allows them to do so.

The difference between the Super Y-League and U.S. Youth Soccer is that the Super Y-League is an intensive, week-in and week-out league within a professionalized environment. U.S. Youth Soccer is a national governing organization. They focus their resources on the majority of its membership at the recreational level. An organization of their size has difficulty catering to the elite level player.

Elite-level league play is seldom available at the local level because of the so-called super leagues. Although they attract the best players, competition is usually limited to divisional play. Usually, one or two teams consistently dominate. With the Super Y-League, we are seeking to attract teams that are at the elite level in their particular geographical location, and match them against the best from around North America.

What is the official relationship between the Super Y-League and U.S. Soccer?

The Super Y-League has "national affiliate" status with U.S. Soccer. This means that the Super Y-League falls into a category that includes organizations with teams in competition from 26 or more states.

What are some of the changes within the Super Y-League 2007 season?

There are minimal structural changes to the league. The largest change involves the league again increasing the competitive level of clubs. This needs to be done in order to keep the standards of the league top-level. Those clubs that have not met the minimum standard or competitive



requirements may not be included in the upcoming season. We must maintain our mission of hardcore, week-in – week-out competition in a professionalized environment.

In certain divisions, USL will be expanding to a 20+ match season schedule. As local leagues and tournaments become less important for some clubs, an expanded schedule can be completed within certain divisions. USL is also currently working on four cross-divisional events that will take place in each U.S. Soccer Region. This will provide additional league matches with teams in other divisions. These inter-regional tournaments will provide a high-level two-three day event during the summer months for teams to have valuable competition outside of their division.

Can you elaborate on the geographic expansion of the league in 2007 and beyond?

The league is aggressively pursuing divisions in the Southwest. The Texas and Rocky Mountain areas are of the utmost importance for the 2007 season. This will complete the geographic scope of the league across the United States.

In relation to international boundaries, we are also having success expanding in Canada, where we have a number of senior USL teams. We are also going to explore divisional possibilities in Mexico and the Caribbean at some stage of the league. These discussions should begin later this year. This will only enhance the continuity of the league and further develop other international playing opportunities for players and clubs.

USL Super Y-League History

1999 – League was created with 12 teams in partnership with USYS as the final piece to the USL structure. USYS partnership ends shortly and SYL becomes USSF Member.

2000 – League increases attention and begins growth. At the end of 2001, more USL teams develop youth academies and league nears 350 teams from U14-U19 boys and girls.

2001 – League gains more recognition when D.C. United announced their youth plans and involvement in the SYL. Later MLS’s MetroStars join the SYL ranks.

2002 – League granted ODP programs from U.S. Soccer for National Team identification. League partners with U.S. Club Soccer.

2003 – League maintains growth and expands into Canada.

2004 – League expands season to more games and championships in November to model more of the professional schedule. Nearly 650 teams compete for the league title in most successful season to date.

2005 – Nearly 780 teams compete for league title. League now becomes a major force for competition in the U.S. and Canada. The SYL ODP system becomes a focal point for clubs, coaches, and players.

2006 – USL partners with the Coast Soccer League to become the Southern California Division of the Super Y-League.



Application Information

Please visit www.superyleague.com for 2007 season application information.

Contact Information

Matt Weibe
matt.weibe@uslsoccer.com
813.963.3909