

Seamus Op Ed December 2016

The year 2016 has certainly been a tumultuous one in youth soccer. The switchover to birth year is complete, and the new PDIs (Player Development Initiatives) are in place in regards to heading and encouraging teams to build from the back. The birth year vs school year changeover was hard for everyone, especially our older teams I feel, but now is the time to look forward instead of back, and to concentrate on the positives, of which there are many.

First off, the year 2017 marks the club's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday! Formed originally as Hempfield Soccer Club, the change was made a number of years ago to Penn Legacy. The new name was chosen with an eye to the future, of letting people know where we come from (Penn), and also as a nod to those who went before us, those who had the vision and the wherewithal to set up a youth soccer club in 1977 when the popularity of the sport was unrecognizable to what it is today. In doing so, they created the legacy that our players continue today.

Speaking of 2017, I have decided to officially designate this "The Year of Individual Technique Improvement for All Penn Legacy Players". It might not be the catchiest of titles, but I think it is the single most important part of player development that can be improved upon. We plan on providing all sorts of new and exciting programs and opportunities for our players to participate in, both in person with our coaches, and also at home on their own. We will be bringing back our PL Juggling Club (with a twist), we will introduce a new program called The Zidane Sessions, we will be adding lots of cool new content to the PL YouTube channel, and even adding a Technical Playground to our East Pete venue this summer. More information on all these ventures (and more) will be coming in the New Year.

Speaking of YouTube, I want to say a few words about Lionel Messi. When I first came to America I often heard people speaking of Michael Jordan and of never taking for granted that we were able to watch the greatest basketball player of all time. The same can now be said of Messi. I know not everyone has access to BEIN Sports Channel, but please try to take the time to watch some footage of the little genius in action with your young footballers. He is simply sensational and inspirational on so many levels. If you get a chance, try to watch his dribbling skills from yesterday's game against Espanyol.

Lastly, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. This club is a special one; in many ways it is an extended family, and as it turns 40 I can only promise you we will continue to expand upon opportunities to provide the best possible learning and playing environment for your children to play this wonderful sport.

Seamus.