



Board of Directors Elections – 2022 Biography and Candidacy Statement

For Regional Board Director | South Region (III) *Chris Williams*

BIOGRAPHY:

Having now been coaching for over 20 years, from grassroots to college, I have been extremely fortunate to work with and for some amazing people. All of which, have influenced how I lead, see the game of soccer, and ultimately lead my life. Growing up in Wales I was very fortunate to have been brought up in a footballing family. Football was part of our lives since I can remember. In my formative years, I grew up playing for Oldham Athletic who were in the Premier League at the time. When I got released at 16, I went on to play for a semi-professional team called Colwyn Bay and then moved to Connah's Quay Nomads who played in the Welsh Premier league for 6 years before moving to California on a Soccer Scholarship. During my time at Connah's Quay, I began my coaching journey through the Welsh FA, gaining grass roots certification and then going on to get my certification in Strength and Conditioning. I continued my coaching education here in the US by completing my National, Advance, and Premier Diploma's with the NSCAA to then move onto the USSF Licenses, where I gained my B and A Licenses.

During my freshman year in college here in the USA, I studied at Holy Names University in Oakland, California. After my first year, I made the decision to transfer to another school that would meet my soccer and academic needs, therefore, I moved to Columbia, Kentucky to study at Lindsey Wilson College. As a team, we were fortunate enough to win 2 National Championships, and also received the MVP award for the National Tournament. During my time at Lindsey Wilson, I was a 3 time All-American, and very fortunate to have played with some wonderful players and better people. Upon graduation from Lindsey Wilson College, I accepted an Assistant Coach position at the University of Northwestern Ohio where I also coached in the ODP program for Ohio. After 2 years at UNOH, I got a job offer to be the Head Coach at Coker College which is an NCAA Division 2 school in Hartsville, SC. During my 5 years at Coker, I was also the Technical Director for Florence Soccer Association – it was here that I developed a curriculum, standards and culture for the club. During my time at Coker, I was also studying for my Master's Degree from the university of Wales, where I was studying Sports Coaching. After my time at Coker, I took a coaching position at NC Fusion (where I am currently) where I coached the DA U17 and USL2 Program. In addition to coaching, I was also the college recruitment advisor for the boy's side. When the DA dissolved, our club then went into the ECNL Platform, and I took the responsibility of coaching the U17+U19's National League Teams – In addition, I was also promoted to the Head of Soccer which oversees all of our soccer programming for the entire club. Currently, I now oversee the entire soccer programming along with coaching our USL2 Program (NC Fusion u23's) in the summer months. This program has been a great success with our U23 team making it to the National Final last season. Not only was this great for our club, it was great for our academy players as they saw a true pathway as 30% of the team was made up of NC Fusion current players and graduates.

I am excited that I am the Head of Soccer for our club as it gives me an opportunity to collaborate and mentor coaches who are on the coaching journey. Being able to oversee and mentor coaches, staff and players is something that excites me greatly. Right now, as a club, we are embarking on a 10-year strategic plan that will change the landscape and environment of youth sports in America. As clubs and coaches, we have a responsibility to educate, provide guidance and develop young girls and boys not only as footballers, but people as well.

On a personal note, I am a father and a husband. My two amazing kids Rowan (11) and Cerys (8), are my world, and they too are navigating through the youth sports landscape. Rowan loves Soccer and his passion is to be a goalkeeper! Among other things, he also loves basketball and baseball! Cerys has tried all of the sports, however, right now, she is loving Softball! If she is like her mother, she will be an exceptional athlete. My Wife Caitlin, is my biggest fan! She has supported me through the up's and down's, always there to lend an ear, and provide me with another (often right) perspective! I am blessed to have such an amazing family and support system, without them, I would not be able to do what I love to do. As a person I am an avid learner, humble and hard working. My ultimate goal is to make Soccer better in the US. From player development, to systems and



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strategies, I want our clubs to be environments that have standards and drive positive culture for both players, parents and all stakeholders.

Education

- Bsc in Communication – Minor in Coaching Behavior – Lindsey Wilson College - 2011
- Msc in Sports Coaching – University of Wales – 2016

Certifications

- USC National Diploma
- USC Advance Diploma
- USC Premier Diploma
- USSF B-License
- USSF A-License
- First Aid Certified
- Strength and Conditioning Certification - 2008

CANDIDACY STATEMENT:

I think it is important to understand WHY behind my reasoning to apply to be a part of the board of Directors at US Club Soccer. My love for the game of Soccer started as a young boy growing up in Wales. As a child, we lived in a neighborhood surrounded by attached houses and street lamps. In half a square mile, you could round up 30 friends all of the same age and begin playing on the local park or in the streets. As you can imagine, the boy who had the best ball was the captain, and always had first pick of the players he wanted! As you can also imagine, the boy with the good ball would always win! Ultimately, this was where I learned the game, had fun with my friends all within a non-pressured, flexible environment. This is part of my Why! Coming to the US on a soccer scholarship at the age of 22 was an opportunity of a lifetime! However, it wasn't until I started working in the club environment and understanding the US culture, many children didn't have the same luxuries in the way I grew up. I look around even within my own club and I often wonder how much better our players, at all levels, could be without the pressure, and fixed training environment. As we know, structure is great for our young athletes, however, so is unstructured environment. I say all of this as we are in a position to educate, collaborate and create environments that promote player and club development. This for me is a small, yet fundamental aspect of the training environment that will allow our players to thrive. I have seen this first hand at our club. Creating environments that are unstructured, free of pressure and FUN are fundamental to the development of young players. We as a leading organization within the US can have a great impact on how we can manufacture these types of environments to better help our players of all different ages and abilities become better soccer players.

In our club, we are currently implementing our 10-year strategic plan. As a leader within the club, it was my responsibility to create and deliver on a vision to make our athletes better people and Soccer players. At the club, we have been heavily influenced by data and analytics in the way in which our teams play, and how we run our organization. By combining the human touch, with data and evidenced based practices, we feel this is the best way to educate and develop our players. After months of meetings and many hours of collaboration, we felt strongly that we wanted to develop the 'whole player' therefore, our mission is to 'Develop Players Holistically Using Evidence Based Practices' - This is something we have taken very seriously and feel that if we create better human beings first, we will also create better footballers. I have seen first-hand that we as coaches and clubs, show a bias towards the technical, tactical and physical components of the game, with the psychological



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aspect often overlooked. With a worldwide pandemic, and young athletes experiencing more mental health challenges than ever, we as coaches and clubs have a responsibility to help aid our young athletes. Because of this, our club has made a commitment to help our young athletes build habits and strategies to tackle the ongoing psychological effects of our game. I say all of this, as I would love to be able to collaborate, and implement strategies to help US Club Soccer Members become a leader within the psychological component of development. For me, I have seen the benefits of such a program that I feel needs to be shared with other US Club Members.

I can promise you that if I am a successful candidate, I will work relentlessly in order to help all young athletes within US Club Soccer. I understand the responsibility, commitment and drive one must have in order to make meaningful change in the US Soccer Landscape. My goal ultimately is to develop, create and sustain first class environments for young athletes in order for them to reach their full potential.

Best Wishes,

Chris Williams