

Michael Winograd – Answers to Athlete Council Presidential Questionnaire

Campaign Information

How has your campaign been funded?

- My campaign has been and continues to be self-funded.

Who is your current employer? While campaigning, have you resigned or taken a leave of absence (if necessary)?

- My current employer is the international corporate law firm of Ropes & Gray LLP. I have not resigned or taken a leave of absence while campaigning.

Vision and Mission

The mission statement of the United States Soccer Federation is to make soccer the preeminent sport in the United States. What does that mission statement mean to you?

- To me, US Soccer's mission is clear. It is to grow the popularity and quality of soccer in the United States for both men and women, at all ages, from youth to adult, and at all levels, from recreational to competitive to our national teams. To achieve that goal, it is US Soccer's responsibility to, among other things, cultivate lifelong participants and supporters of the game beginning at the grassroots and continuing through the adult level, to clearly define player development paths and implement basic minimum development standards, to make the game more accessible for players and coaches, to maximize our National Teams' chances of success, and to create an integrated landscape that works together to promote the best interests of the game.

What is your vision for what success looks like in 5 -10 years for the USSF to be able to claim it is successfully living out its mission statement? What strategic initiatives will you implement to achieve that vision, both for the overall organization and per program?

- Good corporate governance is critical to the success of any organization, and that is particularly so in the case of a nonprofit with as many, varied constituents as US Soccer. To that end, I will implement a governance structure that is inclusive, merit-based and transparent, such that critical US Soccer decisions will reflect meaningful input from all parts of the US Soccer landscape that they affect. The selection of national team managers and technical directors; decisions on structures, policies and guidelines in youth soccer; negotiation of sponsorships and other key business transactions; and other fundamental decisions affecting the direction and success of US Soccer are too critical to be made without a deliberate, inclusive, and transparent process. I will form influential advisory committees that include current and/or former players, coaches, managers, administrators and executives from all levels. And qualifications will be based on merit — people with pertinent skills and achievements and the proven ability to exercise good and objective judgment — not on politics, favoritism or principles of entrenchment. As US Soccer enters its critical next phase of growth, responsible decision-making requires the type of standardized governance structure that is the hallmark of any serious organization.

- Women’s soccer must be treated equally. Full stop. Forcing the US Women’s National Team to play on substandard fields, travel under sub-standard conditions, or accept lower pay is inexcusable, unconscionable and contrary to the mission and spirit of US Soccer. Any inequalities will be resolved promptly. We will not wait until the expiration of the CBAs to work on this and resolve such issues.
- “Pay to play” in youth soccer and the high expense to obtain coaching licenses and education is an impediment to the development of talent in this country. The reduction of these cost barriers in youth soccer and coaching education must be addressed creatively, thoughtfully, and with a sense of urgency. I will work with business leaders to incentivize professional leagues and other private sector businesses to help finance youth and coaching development, in addition to tapping into US Soccer’s own surplus and available public grant funds. I will also ensure that youth clubs that get it right share in the successes of its players through “solidarity” payments to help incentivize and reward up-front investments. Access to development must hinge on desire and merit, not personal finances. Every year that passes with this issue unaddressed is another crop of potentially unrealized talent and lost opportunities for US Soccer.
- To help ensure that our National Teams are meeting on-field expectations, I will work openly and collaboratively to re-evaluate our system for developing elite young athletes. We must that place objectively identified youth players in front of objectively identified coaches at young ages. To do that, we will implement a player development model that identifies talent in a more objective, thorough and comprehensive way, and trains those players as part of a clearly defined path to the National Team. Reducing cost barriers in youth soccer and coaching education, one of my key strategic initiatives, will play a significant role in achieving this. In addition, however, we need to clearly define the path to our National Teams. That path should run primarily through a US Soccer State Training Center that we will build in each state (more than one for larger states). It will house at least one to two fields and a full time US Soccer State Director responsible for scouting and training players and assisting in the professional development of our coaches. Scouting will be objective and across all leagues, and we will add training windows to be hosted at the State Training Centers during pre-announced blackout days or weekends throughout the year. At the same time, the State Director will be charged with collaborating with the State Association, USS DA and other leagues to ensure that competition in that state is structured in an effective and integrated way that maximizes player development, including by giving due consideration to travel times, practice times and geographic and demographic realities within the state. The establishment of US Soccer State Training Centers and State Soccer Directors will help clearly define the path to the National Teams for elite athletes and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the player development process.
- I will work will all constituents affected to take a fresh look at youth soccer’s organizational structure on a state-by-state basis. This is critical to aid in player development, as well as serve other aspects of US Soccer’s mission. As I look at the youth soccer landscape now, it is, quite frankly, difficult to follow. It has become a conglomerate of so many competing and discrete businesses that the consumer no longer knows which product is for what. Different leagues within the same state overlap or even compete with one another, and they are not always governed by the same rules and requirements, which can create uneven playing fields. As part of a collaborative process, we will work together

to structure the youth landscape in any given state in a way that makes the most sense for that state, taking into account existing entities, geography, demographics and other key factors. And we will clearly define that structure and its individual components to the consumer. We will also implement uniform basic minimum standards and ensure fairness across youth soccer in all states. All of this begins with listening to and involving those with their boots on the ground. And it requires strong and collaborative leadership to get all entities, whether independent or not, rowing in the same direction in an integrated, clearly defined structure. I have successfully done just that throughout my entire professional career at the highest levels, and I will bring those very same skills and experience to US Soccer.

Role of the President

If elected, how do you envision your role as President moving forward?

- At its core, the job of the President is to take a leading role in collaborating with the Federation's Members and Board and others within the US Soccer landscape to determine and execute the vision, direction and processes that will best serve the mission of US Soccer and all of its constituents. As President, I will play an active role in reaching critical decisions affecting US Soccer through inclusive, merit-based and transparent processes. I will represent and advocate for the Federation and its interests in FIFA, CONCACAF and other international organizations. I will work faithfully to serve the best interests of the Federation and of all of its constituents.

What should your key roles and responsibilities be for the position and how do you describe success for the President for US Soccer?

- The President must work collaboratively to determine and execute the vision, direction and processes that will best serve the mission of US Soccer, to ensure that US Soccer serves all of its constituents fairly, effectively and in a manner that furthers US Soccer's mission. Given the number of constituents with significant and varied interests in US Soccer, and the wealth of human resources those constituents bring, it will be imperative as a first step to implement an inclusive, merit-based and transparent form of governance.

Do you feel that this should be a paid position? Please explain your reasoning.

- As President, I will not accept pay for the position. But given the importance of the position and US Soccer, I would advocate to make it a paid position for the next President so that we can attract the best qualified candidates commensurate with the stature and gravity of the position.

Governance

Many people have been calling for more transparency from US Soccer, what specific ways do you see in providing this?

- Transparency is critical, both to ensure integrity and engender confidence and trust. I will ensure we maintain transparency through (i) independent oversight and procedural checks, and (ii) maintaining an open, inclusive and transparent form of governance and dialogue with the US Soccer community.

The USMNT's CBA will be renegotiated in 2018 and the USWNT's CBA will be renegotiated in 2021. What will be your philosophy and approach to the negotiations? What experience do you have that would help you in CBA negotiations?

- First, as I mentioned above, any inequalities will be eliminated promptly and will not wait until the expiration of the CBAs to be resolved. Second, negotiating the CBAs will require preparedness, intelligence and fairness. It will require earning the trust of all sides, and the ability to articulate in real time why proposals as to key issues are in all sides' best interests. I have successfully negotiated complex, high stakes contracts throughout my legal career for some of the largest companies, and will be uniquely positioned to leverage this skillset in the position of President of US Soccer.

What specific actions will you take to improve gender representation and pay disparity at US Soccer? Please address the difference in salaries of the USWNT and USMNT teams.

- As noted above, there will be no inequality as between the men's and women's program. Full stop. That is true from fields, to travel conditions and accommodations, to technology, to pay and so on. As to pay specifically, if the MNT and WNT want the same pay structures, there will be equality. If they want different pay structures, there will be equivalence. In addition, I will work to increase post-playing career opportunities for women, including, for example, within the Federation, in media and in front office and management.

What is the relationship between US Soccer and Soccer United Marketing and how does it affect the players?

- SUM is the commercialization arm of MLS, and is owned by MLS team owners. US Soccer, along with the Mexican federation and others, grants SUM the right, for example, to negotiate its television and other marketing deals. How those deals are negotiated affects players directly and indirectly because it affects US Soccer revenue and, for example, when and on which channels the various US Soccer national teams' games are broadcast and how the different national teams are otherwise marketed. I will ensure that we are diligent and careful to work with our partners in a way that ensures that the best interests of US Soccer are firmly and fairly represented, and to make sure that decisions as to with whom we partner are made pursuant to an appropriate, transparent and merit-based process.

What experience do you have that has adequately prepared you to lead an organization of this size (more than 150 employees) and a budget in excess of 100 million dollars? Where specifically would the budget surplus be best spent and how will you measure the success of those investments?

- I want to be your next President of US Soccer. And I am the best candidate to do this job. *First*, I have no hidden agenda, no sponsors to whom I am beholden, no special ties to any constituents — my only interest is in making the whole of US Soccer better, in giving back to the game for which we all share a common love and passion. *Second*, on the soccer side, I have played soccer at the youth, collegiate and professional levels, coached at the youth and collegiate levels, and managed at the youth and professional levels. *Third*, on the business side, in addition to successfully having co-started up a second division professional A-League franchise from scratch, for the last seventeen years, I have been a corporate attorney in New York City at some of the most prominent law firms in the world. I have represented some of the largest banks and companies, domestic and foreign — with annual revenues tens or hundreds times that of US Soccer — in their high stakes cases and negotiations. I have successfully advised and counseled CEOs and boards of directors, devised and implemented strategies, managed teams, drafted briefs, argued before state and federal judges, and negotiated settlements. There is no magic talisman to effect the necessary changes in US Soccer. To succeed at this job will take intelligence, fairness and candor, as well as a deep understanding of the game from all perspectives. And it will not be easy. It will take preparedness, diligence, and perseverance, and the ability to bring parties together and articulate persuasively a common path forward. I am in the unique position of having the experience, independence, and skillset necessary to bridge the soccer and business sides, bring parties together, and lead US Soccer into its critical next phase of growth.
- There is no reason for a non-profit like US Soccer to have such a significant surplus. In the first instance, I will use it primarily to help reduce the cost barriers in youth soccer and coaching, as well as to build US Soccer State Training Centers in each state and fund a full time US Soccer State Director, as discussed above. I will also use it as a case study to determine with others where we can achieve better efficiencies. For example, a surplus that size might suggest that there is little basis to continue to charge State Associations the nominal registration fees that US Soccer continues to take from them each year. The success of our investments will be measured by their impact in serving US Soccer's mission, from local soccer fields in our communities to our National Teams competing on the world stage.

Player and Program Development

What should US Soccer's role be in player development? What governance structure(s) would you create to improve player development across all programs?

- As noted above, to aid in player development, as well as serve other aspects of US Soccer's mission, US Soccer must clearly define player development paths and implement minimum standards across all platforms. These clearly defined paths must become simpler

and user friendly for all families and all parties involved. I will work with all constituents affected to take a fresh look at youth soccer's organizational structure on a state-by-state basis. As part of a collaborative process, we will work together to structure the youth landscape in any given state in a way that makes the most sense for that state, taking into account existing entities, geography, demographics and other key factors. And we will clearly define that structure and its individual components to the consumer. We will also implement uniform basic minimum standards and ensure fairness across youth soccer in all states. All of this begins with listening to and involving those with their boots on the ground. And it requires strong and collaborative leadership to get all entities, whether independent or not, rowing in the same direction in an integrated, clearly defined structure. I have successfully done just that throughout my professional career at the highest levels, and I will bring those very same skills and experience to US Soccer.

- Also as noted above, to help ensure that our National Teams are meeting on-field expectations, I will work openly and collaboratively to re-evaluate our system for developing elite young athletes. We must place objectively identified youth players in front of objectively identified coaches at young ages. To do that, we will implement a player development model that identifies talent in a more objective, thorough and comprehensive way, and trains those players as part of a clearly defined path to the National Team. Reducing cost barriers in youth soccer and coaching education, one of my key strategic initiatives, will play a significant role in achieving this. In addition, however, we need to clearly define the path to our National Teams. That path should run primarily through a US Soccer State Training Center that we will build in each state (more than one for larger states). It will house at least one to two fields and a full time US Soccer State Director responsible for scouting and training players and assisting in the professional development of our coaches. Scouting will be objective and across all leagues, and we will add training windows to be hosted at the State Training Centers during pre-announced blackout days or weekends throughout the year. At the same time, the State Director will be charged with collaborating with the State Association, USS DA and other leagues to ensure that competition in that state is structured in an effective and integrated way that maximizes player development, including by giving due consideration to travel times, practice times and geographic and demographic realities within the state. The establishment of US Soccer State Training Centers and State Soccer Directors will help clearly define the path to the National Teams for elite athletes and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the player development process.

What are your plans to lead all of the various youth soccer organizations so player development is the priority?

- See answer to previous question (What should US Soccer's role be in player development? What governance structure(s) would you create to improve player development across all programs.)

What other Federations have you researched that we can we learn from in terms of creating the best environments possible for the players to develop?

- It is helpful to research countries that have been successful at player development — I have looked at and discussed models from Brazil, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany and England — but while elements of those models could work here, the size of the United States and its geographic, demographic and other diversity make the solution that will work here unique. Any future model we create must not simply attempt to copy another Federation’s model, but rather must adapt any other models to the unique circumstances of this country and its sports environment.

What are your specific plans for the Beach Soccer, Futsal, and Paralympic National Teams?

- All of the principles of inclusive governance, player development and the like discussed in response to other questions apply with equal force to the Beach Soccer, Futsal and Paralympic national teams. They are equally a part of US Soccer as any other National Team. I will ensure they receive the same respect, attention, and voice as any other US National Team. In addition, their promotion will be ramped up, and due attention will be given to the significant benefits they provide to the entire US Soccer community.

For decades, due to Title IX and pioneers of the game, the Women’s National Team has had an abundance of success. What are concrete ways that you would look to advance the women’s game in the United States so the success continues for years to come? Also, please address the state of the NWSL.

- I will work to ensure that the USWNT remains the best national team in the world. That starts with promptly treating the Women’s program equally. It also requires implementing the player development ideas discussed above so that, as other countries continue to grow their own women’s programs, we continue to produce the best women soccer players in the world. US Soccer must also focus on doing what it can to increasing the stability, profitability and growth of the NWSL, as well as creating a tier 2 professional women’s league to provide more and better professional playing opportunities for women here in the U.S.

How do you address the problem of soccer being a “pay to play “ type of system that we now have? What specific plans do you have to increase participation and make soccer less expensive and more inclusive?

- We will reduce cost barriers in youth soccer and coaching education. “Pay to play” in youth soccer and the high expense to obtain coaching licenses and education is an impediment to the development of talent in this country. The reduction of these cost barriers in youth soccer and coaching education must be addressed creatively, thoughtfully, and with a sense of urgency. I will work with business leaders to incentivize professional leagues and other private sector businesses to help finance youth and coaching development, in addition to tapping into US Soccer’s own surplus and available

public grant funds. I will also ensure that youth clubs that get it right share in the successes of its players through “solidarity” payments to help incentivize and reward up-front investments. Access to development must hinge on desire and merit, not personal finances. Every year that passes with this issue unaddressed is another crop of potentially unrealized talent and lost opportunities for US Soccer.

Support Of National Teams

During 2017, how many MNT games did you attend?

- I (with my family) attended one MNT game in 2017.

During 2017, how many men's professional league games did you attend?

- I (with my family) attended approximately six men’s professional league games in 2017.

During 2017, how many WNT games did you attend?

- I (with my family) attended one WNT game in 2017.

During 2017, how many NWSL games did you attend?

- I (with my family) attended one NWSL game in 2016 (I did not attend one in 2017).

During 2017, how many streaming broadcasts of the Paralympic National Team World Championships in Argentina did you watch?

- Since entering this election, I have watched several PNT highlight clips from the World Championships in Argentina available at ussoccer.com.

During 2017, how many streaming broadcasts of the Beach National Team did you watch (CONCACAF Championship or other)?

- I (with my children) watched portions of approximately three streaming broadcasts of the Beach National Team in 2017.