

STEVE GANS

FOR U.S. SOCCER PRESIDENT

Soccer has run in my family for generations. My father came to America from Germany, and he instilled his passion for soccer in me at a very young age, and I have in turn passed that passion down to my sons. My love for and dedication to the success of soccer in this country has been woven through my educational journey, family life, and professional pursuits, and I am as committed as ever to reforming the game for all.

I have done everything I possibly could in this sport, at every turn. I played from youth, through to professional. I've coached, and cheered on as a proud parent on the sidelines. I've been a pro executive, Development Academy Board member, a World Cup organizer and attorney, and an advisor and consultant to players and clubs, from youth to the Premier League. I know how much U.S. Soccer can do.

I understand what every constituency of U.S. Soccer wants and needs, because I am of and from each constituency. I have been in your shoes.

I respect those who felt compelled to run for President of U.S. Soccer after seeing the U.S. Men's National Team failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, but change is needed far more deeply throughout our sport.

I have long pointed out that there are critical issues in U.S. Soccer that have to be addressed. I have been speaking out about these challenges, and how "The Beautiful Game" is not accessible to all. And even when it appeared that the incumbent had a clear path to re-election, I was the first to call for and commit to change, and to throw my hat in the ring.

I have dedicated much of my life to the success of American soccer and I have the business and organizational experience to truly set us on the right path.

I know how to implement a fair, transparent, diverse and open environment within U.S. Soccer. I am the only candidate who combines a deep and consistent soccer background with substantial business and organizational leadership experience.

I know that I can take my varied, well-rounded background, and with the input from so many passionate stakeholders, create positive change at all levels of the game.

Please join me as we try to effect change, fairness, transparency and increased competency. There is so much potential for soccer in America, and with your help, we can, and will improve the fortunes of the sport that we each love so much.



LEADERSHIP

- ⚽ I will conduct a Soccer Summit within the first 60 days after I take office. This Summit will be inclusive and will include representatives from the entire U.S. Soccer community so that everyone has an opportunity to discuss key issues that impact their organizations.
- ⚽ I will ensure that U.S. Soccer employees in Chicago will be responsive to and treat all council members respectfully. There will be a top-to-bottom review of the entire Soccer House administration and its programming. We will make a determination as to where additional support or changes are needed to make the Federation a better service partner to membership and to improve programming.
- ⚽ I will immediately halt and institute a moratorium on the current U.S. Soccer plan to centralize the State Referee Administrator responsibilities. An open, transparent and inclusive summit will then be held – with participation by all state associations – to jointly discuss any issues in the SRA program, and to consider any possible related improvements.
- ⚽ I pledge to demonstrate effective leadership and judgment. The buck will stop with the President, and I will be accountable for my decisions. I will draw on my substantial soccer, business and organizational leadership experience to lead U.S. Soccer in a transparent, ethical and highly competent manner, for the advancement of soccer at all levels in this country.
- ⚽ I will meet with the youth state associations in the first 60 days of my administration to explore the relationship and bridge the gap between the state associations, on the one hand, and U.S. Soccer and USYS, on the other hand.
- ⚽ The Athletes Council will play a critical leadership role regarding strategy for the youth and adult national teams, including as to youth development, competition initiatives and training conditions.
- ⚽ I will institute an atmosphere on the Youth Council Technical Working Group that welcomes and encourages feedback, wherein national team staff listens and is more interactive and transparent in establishing player development initiatives.
- ⚽ A soccer nation cannot be great and fully successful if it does not have a robust professional league and professional landscape. I will throw great support behind our professional soccer leagues. I will meet individually with each of the pro leagues, including MLS, NASL, and USL, in an effort to find common ground, and areas of mutual cooperation. I commit to the elevation and support of the U.S. Open Cup, which encompasses and has value for each of the leagues.
- ⚽ Through my work in international soccer, I am acutely aware that we are not a respected soccer nation internationally in the ways that matter. We will improve the youth development system and the performance and results of national teams at every level such that we will become a highly respected soccer nation around the world. To this end, we will develop clearly defined and firm objectives, metrics and timelines, to which our coaches, scouts and administrators will be made accountable.
- ⚽ We appear to be the favorite to be awarded the 2026 World Cup, and as a great nation with robust fan support and advanced infrastructure, this makes all the sense in the world. While I have substantial World Cup experience (having helped lead the turnaround of the successful Boston bid effort to be a host site of World Cup '94), it is my hope and expectation that such expertise will not be necessary given the advanced nature of the bid process. As President, I will pledge full attention and resources of U.S. Soccer to ensure that we are awarded the 2026 World Cup, and that it is the most successful World Cup in history.

FAIRNESS

- ⚽ I will ensure that U.S. Soccer is a non-profit organization which operates with improved corporate governance. Policies ensuring greater transparency and accountability, clear and decisive Conflict of Interest policies, and improved ethical guidelines will be quickly instituted.
- ⚽ Part of the U.S. Soccer \$130-\$140 million surplus will be used to support additional programming at the youth and adult levels (including field development), to provide scholarships for youth players who otherwise cannot afford to participate in pay-to-play, and to increase diversity and inclusion.
- ⚽ I will create and participate in a task force of youth state associations and national affiliates to address and solve the counterproductive competition amongst sanctioning organizations which occurs beneath the topline of U.S. Soccer youth registration numbers. Such zero-sum competition is destructive to youth soccer and the youth development system, and these issues will be addressed and solved for the good of the game.
- ⚽ Any player who puts on a national team jersey and who represents this country as a player (whether, WNT, MNT, Paralympic, futsal, beach, deaf, amputee or power) shall enjoy appropriate respect and support from U.S. Soccer. I will promptly and respectfully address issues raised by members of the Athletes Council and its constituents.
- ⚽ I will meet with national youth affiliates (especially those that have a history of successful programming with recreational players who simply want to play to have fun) to evaluate whether or not to rescind the player development initiative that prevents school age children from playing with their classmates (the birth year issue).
- ⚽ In order to partially defray the pay-to-play system, to encourage clubs to focus on player development, and for fairness' sake, I will encourage all interested parties to meet and design a system that will be similar to the training compensation and solidarity payment system used throughout the world.

REFORM

- ⚽ I will immediately make even the working conditions for Women's National Team players. The WNT will thereafter play on artificial turf only as rarely as does the Men's National Team, and will in all other ways enjoy equal working conditions. A task force made up of key personnel in the soccer community will be formed to address the disparities in the women's game. This would include: WNT training and facility needs, compensation review and recommendations at the WNT level, Director of Coaching and other coaching opportunities at the national youth team level and competitive club level, issues specific to the girls (youth) and women's game, and the funding of the NWSL and how U.S. Soccer can better support it. There will be specific NWSL focus on how we can increase the chance for girls to aspire to an actual career as a soccer player or coach.
- ⚽ I will form a search committee comprised of some of the most experienced soccer minds for the express purpose of developing a USMNT Manager profile, criteria for potential candidates, a potential compensation package, a hiring process approach and strategy. Such committee will be actively involved in all aspects of the selection process, including interviews of prospective candidates, and will advise on the final decision of the next MNT Manager.
- ⚽ I will give a voice back to the Youth Council and the Adult Council in matters that impact their ability to administer effective programming and services to their membership. The Youth Council and Adult Council members will have meaningful input regarding how their programs and mission contribute to the success of U.S. Soccer.
- ⚽ The U.S. Development Academy will be revamped. A top-to-bottom review of the Development Academy program will be conducted, in order to assess what is working and what is not. The uninformed dysfunctional edicts from 30,000 feet above which contribute to the creation of joyless players shall be eliminated. We will preserve what is working right about the DA, and eliminate the naïve and senseless rules which are counterproductive to successful player development. Liberalization of the high school participation restrictions will be explored.
- ⚽ As someone who has no obligating ties to FIFA, I will be a true FIFA reformer. I will always advocate 100% for U.S. Soccer when dealing with FIFA, free from any conflicts. Such independence will allow my allegiance to be at all times advancing America's interests in the soccer world.