

An Open Letter to the United States Soccer Federation from Paul Caligiuri

As the election draws near, new information continues to trickle out into the public domain regarding the opaque voting system employed by the United States Soccer Federation (“USSF”). The latest revelation comes courtesy of the North American Soccer League’s (“NASL”) letter to USSF regarding the proposed allocation of voting weight amongst the Professional Council in the upcoming Presidential Election.

Unequal Voting Between the Men and Women’s Top Professional Leagues

While the NASL letter focuses on the proposed fundamental disparity between NASL’s voting allocation (4.51%) and that of Major League Soccer (57.14%), what is of even greater concern to me is the proposed unequal disparity between the Professional Council’s decision of vote allocation between MLS and their direct, professional female analogue, the Nation Women’s Soccer League (“NWSL”). Assuming the NASL numbers are correct, the NWSL would receive 18.05% of the vote on the Professional Council. This, in effect, would make a woman’s vote equal to **one-third** of a man’s vote and is in direct conflict with Bylaw 302 Section 2(a)(3) which reads:

In the Professional Council, the number of delegates for each Professional League shall be based on the level of competitive division among the Professional Leagues.

That the highest competitive division in U.S. Men’s Soccer would be entitled to three times the amount of votes as the highest competitive division in U.S. Women’s Soccer defies both logic, fairness and, per the clear wording of the Bylaws, the law itself. Therefore, I call upon the USSF Board of Directors, as well as all Presidential Candidates, to declare that this proposed structure is fundamentally unfair and must, in advance of the February 10th election, be rectified.

The Right of Self-Governance

Yet, even assuming that the Board of Directors decides to denounce inequality and restructure the Professional Council’s voting allocation in a fair and lawful manner prior to the election, the inequality faced by NWSL remains to be fully addressed. Since the resignation of Jeff Plush in March of 2017, the League has been without a full-time Commissioner and all primary decision making has, effectively, been dictated to NWSL by USSF. And while Amanda Duffy, as the Managing Director of Operations, has done an exemplary job of keeping the League’s day-to-day operations running with little or no support staff assistance, she lacks the true authority of a Commissioner to guide the League towards its ultimate goals of growth and success¹.

¹ Why an entire playing season for the NWSL has passed without a Commissioner being appointed by USSF remains a mystery. I have addressed this issue with the leadership of

I believe it is the USSF Board of Directors' responsibility to not only fix this pressing matter of voting inequality, but they should also insure that Amanda Duffy, as Managing Director of Operations, be given free hand to caucus with her constituents to self-determine who the voting delegates will be that represent the NWSL at the Annual General Meeting and Presidential Election.

On August 18, 1920, American women were given the right to vote via the 19th Amendment. Almost a century later, we as leaders, constituents, candidates and fans of U.S. Soccer need to continue that tradition and give our women players an equal voice in determining who will lead them in the years ahead.

I am confident that Board of Directors will choose to be on the right side of history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Caligiuri', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Paul Caligiuri
December 29th, 2017

NWSL immediately after announcing my candidacy in early November and will continue in my efforts to bring gender parity to all aspects of U.S. Soccer.