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## **Bob Foose Remarks on CBA Agreement**

**March 20, 2010**

- Good afternoon, I'm Bob Foose, the Executive Director of the Major League Soccer Players Union. I'm joined here by the Union's General Counsel, Jon Newman, of the Sherman Dunn law firm, as well as by Eddie Pope, our Director of Player Relations, to each of whom I'd like to give my deepest thanks for his efforts during these negotiations.
- We are very pleased to announce today that we have reached an agreement with the league on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement that will allow the 2010 season to open as scheduled. It is a solid agreement that ensures that our fans will enjoy the start of this season and a great product on the field for years to come. Ultimately, this is about the fans, and on behalf of the Union and all the players I'd like to thank all the fans who stood by us in this process.
- As we've said all along, no one wanted a work stoppage that could have postponed opening day, but the players were unified in their commitment to making some fundamental changes to the CBA to bring players' rights in MLS more in line with leagues from around the world.



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Soccer is a global game and we were adamant that these changes were necessary to make MLS as competitive as possible. So, let me say that my hat is off to all the players in this league, led by our Executive Board and Bargaining Committee, who stuck together through this process. I think it is a testament to their character and their professionalism that we're sitting here this afternoon.

- Let me reiterate the point that from our perspective these negotiations were always about players' rights. While, of course, the players did want to see a reasonable increase in compensation, which thanks to the commitment of the owners they will see, rights were our central theme all along.
- We have always respected the owners' investment in, and commitment to, this league and their desire to move forward and grow it in a fiscally responsible manner. And, I think this agreement accomplishes our joint goal of increasing player rights and compensation while still keeping a sharp eye on the bottom line. Without the deep commitment of the owners to do this none of us would be sitting here today and for that we are grateful.
- Without getting into too much detail, this agreement will do the following for players:



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- A majority of players in MLS will for the first time in history have guaranteed contracts;
  - A player's ability to move freely within the league will be greatly improved;
  - Player compensation will be increased substantially, which is obviously significant in these difficult economic times; and
  - Lastly, the agreement will create opportunities for the league and Union to work together cooperatively as partners moving forward.
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- Throughout this process, Don Garber, Mark Abbott, Todd Durbin and their team were tireless in their pursuit of a fair and balanced agreement, so I want to express my deep thanks to all of them and everyone else who worked so hard on the league's behalf.
  
  - I'd also like to especially thank George Cohen and Scot Beckenbaugh from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, who served as mediators during the final days and hours of these discussions. On more than one occasion they were here with us until the wee hours. Their participation was invaluable and we are truly grateful. Thank you, George and Scot, and everyone else here at the FMCS. This agreement is a true testament to the mediation process.



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- Let me conclude by once again thanking the players who serve on our Executive Board – Jimmy Conrad, Landon Donovan, Chris Klein and Pat Onstad – and our 42 player Bargaining Committee, and all of the players in MLS. The leadership shown by these players during this process was nothing short of extraordinary.
- Our players were and remain completely unified in their desire to make MLS one of the top leagues in the world. We look forward to seeing this same commitment, desire and drive on the field this season, starting tonight at the opening of an incredible new soccer specific facility in Harrison, New Jersey.
- Thank you.