



MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER PLAYERS UNION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C., November 11, 2004: The Major League Soccer Players Union is pleased to announce that it has reached an agreement with Major League Soccer on a five-year collective bargaining agreement that will, among other things, raise the league minimum salary by more than 40% over the term of the agreement and implement the first retirement plan for players in league history. The agreement, which was approved by the Union's bargaining committee, will be submitted to the players for a ratification vote. Voting is expected to take several weeks to complete.

The agreement, which is believed to be the first full collective bargaining agreement to cover players in a U.S. professional soccer league, will raise the current \$24,000 minimum salary to \$28,000 in 2005 and 2006, \$30,000 in 2007, \$33,000 in 2008, and \$34,000 in 2009. Beginning next season, the minimum salary for developmental players will also increase significantly, and developmental players will receive fully-paid medical benefits for the first time in league history. A 401(k) plan will be established, which will provide for a mandatory league contribution of 2% of each player's base salary in 2005, 2.25% in 2006, 2.5% in 2007, 2.75% in 2008 and 3% in 2009. Health care benefits will be guaranteed and fully-paid by MLS, and life insurance benefits will increase five-fold.

The agreement also provides a neutral grievance and arbitration system to hear all contract disputes, including disputes concerning a player's medical condition. In addition, the Union and MLS will enter into a five-year group license revenue sharing agreement which will increase by over 300% the amount paid by the league for the use of the players' group images.

The Union and MLS have been actively negotiating the collective bargaining agreement for well over a year. "The negotiations have been long and at times have been difficult, but we are happy that we have finally been able to reach an agreement that makes real gains for players," said Ben Olsen of D.C. United, one of the members of the Union's Executive Board. "More importantly," said Olsen, "this agreement will serve as a foundation on which to build gains in the future."

"Since the beginning of Major League Soccer the players have been without a unified voice," said Chris Klein of the Kansas City Wizards, another member of the Executive Board. "With a collective bargaining agreement we now have that voice. The benefit of this agreement will have an immediate and positive impact on all players and the future of our league."

Bob Foose, a Bethesda, Maryland based attorney, serves as the Union's Executive Director, and Jon Newman, a partner in the law firm of Sherman, Dunn, Cohen, Leifer & Yellig, P.C., Washington D.C., is the Union's General Counsel.

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