Robin Russell joined the Rush Executive Board of Directors in May 2012. Russell, who resides in Twickenham, United Kingdom, helps provide an international perspective to the board. In addition to his involvement in Rush, Russell is currently Chairman and CEO of Sports Path International and a Football Development Consultant for the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). As one of the board's newest member, Russell has a few observations after his first months with Rush.

Q: After your first summer on the Rush Board, what's your impression of Rush soccer?

Russell: It's quite unique isn't it? With the number of registered players (nearly 35,000 in the United States) and its international partnerships, Rush compares to a small country and yet it also covers most of the world.

It's said that at the end of the 19th Century, Queen Victoria in England remarked that the sun never sets on the British Empire – as Britain had colonies all over the globe. The same could be said for Rush Soccer – as I imagine in any 24-hour period the sun would always be shining at some point on a Rush Soccer club.

Q: What are some differences between club soccer in the United States and in Europe?

Russell: Youth soccer in the United States – clubs and camps – is a much bigger business than in Europe. Whilst there are grassroots non-professional clubs in Europe, very few of these have fulltime technical and administrative staff. I think this is happening more now in Western Europe as parents demand better services.

The soccer community in the United States should not forget that in some aspects they are world leaders; the soccer camp industry in the United States started earlier than in Europe and now is massively greater. Player registration systems and club websites are much more advanced in the Unites States than in Europe. Youth soccer clubs in the United States have many more teams per

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club than in Europe so much so that many U.S. youth soccer clubs exist as a club only on the club website. The players and parents identify with the team much more in the Unites States; in Europe there are a lot more physical hubs of the club – at the club house.

Q: What compelled you to start your e-learning business, Sports Path? The parent training seems especially unique – what sparked that program?

Russell: I left fulltime employment at the English Football Association seven years ago so that I could start my own business in e-learning (www.sportspath.com) and I also became UEFA's first Football Education Consultant. I was – and still am – fascinated by how the internet can assist all sorts of learning across the world. I have developed a number of projects with UEFA. I had the opportunity to conduct a lot of case-study visits of leading European youth soccer academies and also visit more than 30 European countries to see their grassroots programs. It became increasingly obvious to me that too many coaches and associations were looking at parents as a problem and not as an opportunity. Too much parent education does not recognize the value of parents nor is it interactive. Parents are told increasingly what not to do without attempting to outline where they can help best – and not just a taxi drivers!

By and large soccer parents in the United States are courted whilst in Europe they are merely tolerated. I appreciate that in the United States parents are seen much more as the customer than in Europe and they are certainly respected more – there is even an election demographic named after soccer moms in the United States.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish on the Rush Board?

Listen and learn at the moment – I am just pleased to see how this organization works. Rush members span the globe, and the organizational challenges are met more effectively than I have seen with other traditional youth soccer clubs.

Q. Anything else the Rush soccer community should know about you?

My father was a soccer coach and player. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Russell_(footballer) I tried (and failed) to become a fulltime professional but played part time professional and qualified as Physical Education Teacher. I then spent 26 years at the English FA as Regional Coach, Assistant Director of Coaching, and started up FA Learning. I am married to Adrienne Maguire. She is a film producer and collaborated with her sister, Sharon Maguire (director of "Bridget Jones Diary"), as a director on a few films.

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