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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Washington Youth Soccer Announces Campaign To Raise Funds and Help One Of Its Own**

*FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON* (Thursday, November 20) – In response to the recent news that Kent-born soccer superstar and Olympian Michelle French was recently diagnosed with a rare form of non-Hodgkins lymphoma, Washington Youth Soccer has launched an immediate state-wide fundraiser to help her combat rising medical bills. Thanks to a donation by AIG/Pullen Insurance, Washington Youth Soccer is raffling off a once-in-a-lifetime trip for two to watch Manchester United play at Old Trafford Stadium, the team's historic home field, with all proceeds going to French's fight against cancer.

As part of the fundraiser, raffle tickets can be purchased through Washington Youth Soccer for \$50 each. Each ticket holder will be entered into a contest to win the ultimate soccer fan experience: a trip for two to England to watch ManU take on Blackburn on February 21, 2009. The winner and a companion will receive air transportation to England (departing on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> and returning on Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>), food, lodging and tickets to the match. The deadline to purchase tickets is January 22 and the drawing will be held on January 23.

During her young career Michelle French made a huge impact on the sport both in Washington Youth Soccer and at John F. Kennedy High School (Burien) where she was an NSCAA All-American, a two-time Parade High School All-American and considered a USA Today Top-25 Recruit. After winning two Washington high school state championships, Michelle took her talent to the University of Portland. True to form, Michelle continued her dominance on the pitch and received multiple awards/recognitions, including the title of Soccer America Freshman All-American, WCC Freshman of the Year, NSCAA ALL-American, All Far West Region All-American and was a finalist for the Hermann Award, Honda Award and MAC Awards. Michelle was instrumental in taking her team to three NCAA Final Fours during that time, advancing to the championship final in 1995. With an already impressive soccer resume to build from, Michelle parleyed her skills to the highest levels, playing for the WUSA Professional League, the US National Team and the 2000 Olympic Team that won the silver medal.

While Michelle's distinguished career has made her a world-famous soccer star, it is her generosity and love of the game that has provided the most special gift to the young players that she now coaches at Eastside FC in Washington. A member of the Seattle Sounders Women's Team, a life-long role model and a coach of many youth soccer teams here at home, Michelle represents the best things about this great game.

Raffle tickets for the Washington Youth Soccer fundraiser are now available for purchase. It is our hope that this fundraiser will not only provide someone with the chance to experience the world's game, but also help one of Washington Youth Soccer's most decorated alumni in the fight for her life.

For additional information about Michelle and the Washington Youth Soccer fundraiser, please visit [www.wsysa.com](http://www.wsysa.com).

**How to purchase tickets:**

- Call the Washington Youth Soccer office at 253-476-2237 to pay by credit card.
- Send a check to the Washington Youth Soccer office. Please make the check out to WSYSA. Include your name and phone number for the raffle ticket.
- Come by the Washington Youth Soccer office to purchase tickets.
- Email Tiffany Stark at [Tiffany@wsysa.com](mailto:Tiffany@wsysa.com) with your payment information.

**About Washington Youth Soccer**

Washington Youth Soccer is the largest youth soccer organization in Washington. Washington Youth Soccer is the state's affiliate for US Youth Soccer, which is the largest sports organization in the United States and the most populous member of the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body for soccer in the United States. The Washington Youth Soccer is the sixth largest membership in the nation; our organization represents over 128,000 players (ages 4-19) and their families, 15,000 coaches on 12,000 teams and 6,500 referees in the state of Washington. Washington Youth Soccer's mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of the State of Washington's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition.

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