**FINAL: MLS RE-ENTRY DRAFT – TOP PROSPECTS**

**Analysis & Written Summary - Due by Tuesday, December 10, 2024 | 11:59 pm ET**

**GROUP FINAL (3-4 students per group)**

Background:

The MLS Re-Entry Draft is an annual event in which Major League Soccer teams select players who are out-of-contract or have had their options declined by their current teams. While the single-entity league does not have true free agency, the re-entry draft was created to provide an outlet of internal movement for veteran players. The re-entry draft has proven to be an important method of acquiring players that can provide valuable minutes in a long MLS season. For example, in the 2015 Re-entry draft, Toronto FC acquired Drew Moor, an experienced player who then played a key role in his team's success in winning the Supporters Shield in 2017.

Assignment:

For **each** of the following three positions - Forward, Central Midfielder, Central Defender, you will analyze available players in two steps/tiers to **identify 3** (i.e. 9 total players) that you perceive to be most superior to others listed. Then, you will compare those 3 players to 1-2 under contract with D.C. United as well as 2 players under contract with other MLS clubs.

\* Steps 1-2: Identifying a Top 3 list for each of the 3 positions.

\* Use the file titled: “2018 Re-entry draft player pool & comparison list “

\* Step 1: From the Tier 1 player pool, identify 3 players for each of the three positions that D.C. United should most consider selecting in the re-entry draft.

\* Step 2: For each position, compare the 3 players that you selected from Tier 1 against those listed in Tier 2 to either confirm your Tier 1 list or replace any with those judged to be superior from Tier 2.

\* Step 3: Analyze how your top 3 players per position from the previous steps stack up against the current D.C. United player(s) listed.

\* Step 4: Analyze how your top 3 players per position compare to the players listed from other MLS clubs? Is there enough of a gap that D.C. United should consider trading for any of them?

Requirements – Create a Player Index:

For each position, create an index using a minimum of seven different stats to evaluate players and as the basis for your recommendations as you progress from Step 1-4 above.

For each position, you must also create a second index, using at least 3 different stat categories from your original index, and then demonstrate why you believe one index is more effective in analyzing players than the other one. In applying weightings, you must show logic and thought behind the creation of your index.

\*\* Note: You must present the reasoning behind the stats and weightings used in your index. (i.e. selecting 10 random stats and assigning them all the same equal weighting is not an example of valid index, unless you have a strong/logical reason(s) for that decision) \*\*

Your analysis must be driven by the Opta performance data provided for this assignment. Start with the 2018 PLAYER file which contains 250+ data categories. The separate “Stat categories” file has pre-organized key stats for each of the three positions. The data contains both attacking and defensive metrics – you may use as many of both areas as desired. All data has been normalized across 90 minutes.

Your analysis must also cover PLAYER data from the 2017 season, unless the selected player was a rookie in 2018.

Thirdly, your analysis should look at the player’s contribution in 2017 and 2018 to their overall team, using the TEAM data contained in the Team Stat files for each season.

Opta Data Definitions: For definitions, consult the provided OPTA Definitions file.

Submit the following: 1 team member should upload the following to blackboard by11:59pm ET on Tuesday, December 10th.

\* Written analysis in Word or PDF: Up to 20 pages (TOTAL) to clearly present you player recommendations, summarize your findings and process used. Include data results/exhibits/visualizations to demonstrate your analysis and make sure to integrate/reference them in your written analysis

\* Excel/R models, Tableau visualizations and any other files used to either run your model/analysis/visualizations. **All Tableau files should be submitted as .TWBX file.**

\* For all files submitted, name them “FINAL” **followed by the last names of all team members in the file name.**