



Confidential Instructions for Terri Fields' Agent

You are a Senior Talent Agent at a firm that manages and represents actors, writers, and musicians. For the last seven years, you've represented a variety of budding stars and made a name for yourself as a great agent with a keen eye for talent and business development. When your firm expressed an interest in expanding their management expertise to the world of sports, you jumped at the opportunity to help the company grow in this lucrative industry.

Your networking and research led you to Terri Fields, a player in the U.S. Women's Soccer League (UWSL). After a series of meetings getting to know her history and goals for the future, Fields chose you to represent her in an upcoming contract negotiation with her former team, the St. Louis Storm.

Ten years ago, Fields was drafted in the first round by the Storm. She rose to fame in her second season with them when she scored a goal from mid-field in the last minute of play in the division title game, clinching the title for the Storm. Over the next four years, Fields led the team to two UWSL National Championships and won back-to-back UWSL MVP titles.

Beyond her incredible talent as a player, Fields was also known for her larger-than-life personality and showboating antics. She was a fan favorite in the league, and many people in the stands were there just to see what Fields would do next. Her jersey was the top-selling piece of merchandise not only for the Storm but for the entire league. She scored endorsement deals with major companies. Fields not only became the face of the UWSL, but she also became one of the best paid players at \$120,000 a season.

Unfortunately, in the first game of the season four years ago, Fields suffered a debilitating injury to her knee and was unable to play with the Storm for the remainder of the year. Before the next season, the Storm traded her to the Miami Waves. Fields started a few games with the Waves, but her injury made her slow and cautious. After riding the bench with the Waves for the rest of the season, Fields struggled to find a team willing to sign her. The Kentucky Colonels, a new expansion team looking to bring in well-known yet affordable players, offered her \$70,000 for one season. With no other options, Fields signed with the Colonels as a backup forward to the Colonel's starter, Maria Pelotas.

In Fields' first season with the Colonels, she saw some playing time and started showing signs that her knee was improving. Last season, the Colonels re-signed her for \$75,000, and her off-the-bench energy and grandiose playing style helped the new team make the playoffs, and the Colonels increased their ticket sales by 40%. Fields' jersey was also the top-selling jersey for any reserve player in the league. While her stats still weren't what they used to be, Fields' personality proved to be a lasting fan favorite.

However, Fields was not satisfied playing second-string to Pelotas, and her frustration was evident among the Colonels. When they offered her another \$75,000 contract for this season, she declined. Fields told you quite seriously that she would rather take a deal for zero dollars a season if it meant she could be a starting forward again. She wants to be a star player with devoted fans, and she sees St. Louis as the best place to do this.

When rumors surfaced that the Storm's starting forward would not be returning this season, a contingent of Storm fans started an online campaign for Fields to return to St. Louis, using the hashtag *#ComeHomeFields*. Fields envisions a hero's welcome in St. Louis with abundant playing time,

interviews, endorsement deals, highlight reels on SportsStation, and a coveted spot in the UWSL Hall of Fame. She's unwaveringly confident that she will be one of the best forwards in the league this season and will return the Storm to their former glory as UWSL champions. In fact, she told you that she'd be willing to forgo her salary if the Storm agreed to give her a portion of the \$500,000 bonus awarded to teams that make the playoffs.

The Storm have been embarking on a long-term rebuilding strategy focused on bringing in fresh, young talent. Fields, a ten-year veteran with a history of injury, does not fit well with that strategy. The rebuilding years have been tough for the Storm, though. They failed to make the playoffs for the last three years, and your research shows that their tickets sales are on the decline. Five years ago, during their glory days, the Storm sold 90% of the seats in their stadium. Last season, they only sold 60% of the seats. After several of the Storm's up-and-coming players signed more lucrative deals with other teams, the jerseys donning their names wasted away in warehouses, certainly resulting in losses in merchandise sales as well.

When you called to set up a meeting with the Storm last week, you were surprised to find out that they replaced their General Manager. The new General Manager was a member of the famous 1987 gold medal-winning U.S. Olympic Soccer Team, which only added to Fields' desire to play for the Storm again. This new General Manager could be continuing the Storm's rebuilding strategy or taking the team in a new strategic direction, so it's difficult to know how well Fields fits with the team's new management.

Even if the Storm are interested in Fields, you are concerned that they won't have the capital to negotiate a lucrative contract given their financial constraints. Fields doesn't have many other options, though. She could crawl back to the Kentucky Colonels as a reserve forward for another season. You also know that there is a starting forward position for a team in the Canadian Women's Soccer Association, which would pay around \$80,000 a season. However, Fields doesn't have name recognition or devoted fans in Canada. She considers St. Louis home, and it's where she wants to be.

Despite this, Fields still feels jaded that the Storm traded her so quickly after her knee injury. She needs to know that she won't be traded or dropped at the first sign of trouble, especially since her knee has a risk of re-injury. Her doctors advised her to be careful, but she has no intentions of playing carefully. If her knee does give out again, she still wants a long-term relationship with the Storm as a coach or commentator – anything that allows her to remain in the spotlight.

Knowing that Fields values media attention and endorsement deals, you contacted some regional companies in the St. Louis area to see if any would be interested in partnering with you. You heard back from a couple mid-size companies looking for opportunities to market their products to young women. These companies highlighted that if the *#ComeHomeFields* online campaign continues to build in popularity and Fields comes back to St. Louis, they would be very interested in an endorsement deal.

If you can negotiate a contract that makes Fields happy and sign her as your firm's first major sports client, you'll be regarded as a hero at your agency. You're aware that the Storm might not be able to offer Fields a high-paying contract, which means less commission money for you. However, you also recognize that this negotiation is one piece of a much bigger strategy to expand your firm into the sports industry. You'll be in a perfect position to be the Head of the emerging Sports Department, with a hefty salary to match. You just need to make Terri Fields feel like a star.

Prepare for your meeting with the St. Louis Storm's General Manager.