

President's Report for AGM November 13, 2010

Thank you to all of the past and present volunteers who have made our state a leader within Region 1 and US Youth Soccer. Your tireless efforts have made a world of difference for the children throughout western/central New York.

I'd like to thank our corporate partners for their support of NYSW and our membership: Demosphere, Pullen Insurance, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Score, The American Soccer Company our exclusive apparel provider of NYW.

In addition, we are indeed pleased to have Mr. Bob Gansler with us this weekend, as he is sharing his time and talent with our members as featured Clinician at this weekend's Coaches Workshop. Gansler was Head Coach of the United States National Team from 1989 – 1991 and guided our country to the 1990 World Cup, the first appearance in 40 years.

I would like to recognize Mike Radecke for his faithful service over the past 4 years as the President of NY West. He stepped down from that responsibility earlier this year for personal reasons, but while leading the organization he used his professional talents to position NY West well, putting us in sound financial health, bolstering our organizational strength and board membership, and improving the value of the programs we offer our membership. As an organization we want to give special thanks to Mike for his untiring efforts on behalf of NY West.

Board Membership Changes

With the resignation of Mike Radecke from the President position, the succession plan of 1st VP to President took effect, and Rich Wagner assumed this role in July, 2010. As a result the position of 1st VP was open, and the board appointed Curt Regruit in this role to assure a continuing succession plan for President. The 1st VP office is up for re-election at this AGM, and Curt has graciously agreed to be a candidate and continue his service on the board. That appointment left the position of Secretary vacant, and the board recruited Hugh Goodrich from Baldwinsville to fill the position, and appointed him to that post in August as well. So the transition to a new Executive Committee was completed smoothly and in a timely way. Since Rich, Curt, and Hugh have each been actively involved with NY West for several years, they are each aware of the responsibilities involved and have already taken active roles on the board.

This year we welcome a new board member Nikki Dye as Twin Tier Commissioner. Many clubs in the Twin Tier district already know Nikki, and hopefully many other folks in the district are getting to know her as well. We want to thank John Carroll, as outgoing Commissioner, for his participation and leadership in that district for the past two years.

Another district commissioner change is the resignation of Brian Lang as Buffalo Commissioner, who had to step down due to his work location, which has him living in Texas for the majority of his time. Thanks to Brian for his service as Commissioner for the past year, and previously as Treasurer for four years. The board is seeking to appoint a replacement for Brian to fulfill the remainder of his two-year term as Commissioner.

Roger Best was re-elected for another two-year term as Rochester Commissioner. Congratulations to Roger, and a hearty thank you for his many years of service in that role.

Kevin Arnold was re-elected for another two-year term as Binghamton Commissioner. Congratulations to Kevin, and thanks for multiple years of service in that role.

Observations and Progress

During the four years that Mike Radecke served as President of the board, he led the organization to embark on a multiyear review of our organization and processes to ensure that we are fulfilling our stewardship responsibilities to the fullest extent. I want to thank him, the board members, and you the members of the organization, for your steadfast partnership in these efforts, and to share with you the progress.

Our core objectives continue to be to strive for efficiency, simplicity, and support for you, "our members". We will continue to guide the NY West State Association decisions with an emphasis on, "Kids First." We are committed to being a financially sound and sustainable organization that delivers high quality services, with the utmost integrity for the benefit of all kids.

As we have reported over the past three years, we embarked on a three phase process:

Phase I: Study our business processes, member services, and delivery mechanisms. We hired an independent firm in 2007 to make this assessment. This produced an action plan that has contributed to our recent successes. The effort was completed in the 2007-2008 seasonal year.

Phase II: Implement the major planks in the action plan, which included hiring Amy Gush as Executive director, revamping our coach education plan by adding six Associate Directors of Coaching to focus on each district, and improving our member benefits. These aspects of the action plan were completed in the 2008-2009 seasonal year.

Phase III: Improve our financial health through alternative revenue methods, such as Sponsorships, Grants, Programming, and at the same time lower our costs. We added sponsorship of Dick's Sporting Goods, lowered our marketing and advertising expenditure by bringing them in-house instead of using an external supplier, and eliminated office rental fees by purchasing an office just East of Corning. These efforts have contributed significantly to our financial health, and despite the nationwide

economic stress allow us to begin reinvesting some of the resulting savings in member benefits. These improvements were made during this 2009-2010 year.

A major initiative this year was to retain the services of a Technical Director to lead the coach education and ODP programs. This position was announced late in 2009 and took about six months to fill. This was a very deliberate process that included interviewing candidates from around the country.

We were very fortunate to find and retain Dean Foti, a successful and seasoned coach and soccer administrator from Syracuse, as Technical Director. Dean brings a variety of expertise to the position, which range from coaching experience at the college level, to administrative skills, and include familiarity with the NY state college environment. We are delighted to have Dean with us and have seen great progress in a short period of time, especially the new engagement with NY college soccer programs and coaches.

In the meantime, Amy Gush, our Executive Director, devoted considerable efforts to manage the ODP and Coach Development Initiative, until Dean came on board in July to handle these. As a consequence, these programs maintained their momentum as strong programs and Dean has kept them moving forward without missing a step.

In mid-year we hired Tim Mellander on a part-time basis, as Associate Director, to handle a variety of office efforts involving technology, and these include administration of State Cup, website management, preparation of the Striker West eNewsletter, electronic mailing, internet server maintenance, and other technology related projects. We are fortunate to have his services, as Tim is a very seasoned soccer professional with knowledge of every administrative aspect of the NY West operation.

Leagues

We are fortunate to have many leagues that serve our member clubs, including one league in each district that serves as a State Cup qualifying league. The Thruway League Cup, now in its third year, serves Premier teams from upstate New York as well as serving as a State Cup qualifying league.

Beginning next year, NY West will take an active role in the Thruway League Cup by taking on the administration responsibilities of the league and by placing members on the Board of the league. This arrangement will benefit both the participating teams as well as continue to advance the competitive quality of teams in the NY West area. Under consideration is the possibility of using the Thruway League Cup standings to select potential President's Cup participants in the future, for premier teams that don't plan to enter State Cup.

Risk Management

During the year, we embarked on an activity to review our core policies for Risk Management, to ensure that we have a strong policy stance that we all want to

endorse. Curt Regruit chaired this committee and as a result of their recommendations, we have made several improvements to our procedures. We instituted an electronic means to initiate the Risk Management process, easing and speeding the process for members. We implemented a Risk Management process for youth under the age of 18, to insure that we have adequate protection for an increasing number of youth that are serving as coaches, assistant coaches and referees. The youth Risk Management involves endorsement by a parent or guardian of the minor, with responsibility placed on the individual endorsing the minor. In addition, we affirmed and enforced our long-standing policy not to sanction or insure indoor tournament activities. We believe these actions place the organization and members in a secure position related to volunteer and staff risk.

An area of concern goes well beyond our policies though. It remains the responsibility of member clubs to assure that their current officers are “registered” with us in RosterPro, and to be diligent in initiating the Risk Management process for their volunteers and staff. We see many examples of clubs failing to do this, which often may be an oversight at the club level due to shifting board and volunteer positions. The inherent problem is that the “missing” club officials are then NOT covered by directors and officers insurance, or the club is not adequately protected from volunteer risk possibilities.

The good news is these problems have not resulted in significant legal liabilities during the year. Had a problem occurred as a result of failure of a club to maintain Risk Management procedures, we all would be gravely concerned for the impact on the children involved. Besides the gravity of the situation, the club board of directors would have been exposed to massive liability as they did not adhere to policy. Further, without club officials being registered properly, each officer would have had personal financial liability under NYS laws.

I share these brief comments to make you aware of the potential liabilities. PLEASE make every effort to keep all of your officer data current. You may need the insurance protection. If you aren't in the system, you aren't insured! Also, PLEASE initiate the Risk Management process for every new volunteer that has any potential contact with children, and assure that each of your staff and volunteers has a valid risk management pass.

Organization Vitality

The last few years have been challenging ones for many individuals and businesses throughout New York State West. Despite a difficult economic backdrop, NYSW had a good year financially managing to garner a surplus. While our revenues were relatively flat, NYSW realized significant savings in reduced office rental due to the purchase of an office building, and in reduced advertising and marketing expenditure by bringing these activities in house. You will see a detailed analysis of the fiscal results in Matt Quinlan's Treasurer's report.

As you will see in Tim Mellander's Registrar report our player registrations were up by 1% for the year despite the weak economy, after significant declines in the prior two years. However, when studying longer term demographic trends in our state, we see a gradual decline of families and thus we could expect a gradual decline in players. We all must be ever vigilant in managing our resources in such a participant environment. The state association is therefore looking at strategies to help promote play and retention of existing players within the clubs. Look for ideas to be offered in the next year.

From a NYW calendar perspective this is a very exciting time for us. We are ramping up for the 2010-2011 player registrations, hosting ODP tryouts across the state, are busy promoting and conducting coach's education programs, planning the Coaching Development Initiative, organizing Academies, and building platforms for more player development opportunities.

Budget

We recently completed the proposed budget for the year ahead. The emphasis continues to be on expense containment, identifying revenue opportunities, and new programming. Each area is a significant task in and of itself.

We have seen two major shifts during the 2009-2010 seasonal year that resulted in significant savings, and which will continue in the 2010-2011 seasonal year:

- (1) ODP Management & Publications, as well as advertising and marketing activities have been brought into the office. This shifts resources into the office to manage these activities and eliminates spending on outside suppliers for these activities. This decision is to streamline and centralize these activities. The secondary benefit is that a portion of the dollars saved will be reinvested in membership benefits. This has resulted in a significant savings in 2009-2010, and will continue to be so in the 2010-2011 budget.

- (2) Office Expense: the NYSW Corning office lease has cost the state association approximately \$250,000 over the years. Prior to our lease termination in April of 2010, the board approved the purchase of an office building East of Corning, using cash from our reserve funds. This eliminates the cost of the lease, and the associated savings pay for the office building in less than four years. We have placed a "replacement and maintenance" reserve in our 2010-2011 budget, and will do so in future budgets. This decision has already generated considerable savings and will continue to save office expenses for many years into the future.

TOPSoccer and Club Philanthropy

TOPSoccer has enjoyed another year of success under the leadership of Scot Boniface. Thank you Scot for your dedication and leadership! Across the state we have seen new programs start in Watertown and Elmira, weekend jamborees blossom, and awareness

grow. NY West is presently running five TOPSoccer programs within our region, located in Amherst, Buffalo, Elmira, Rochester and Watertown. These programs involve over 100 players and a similar number of volunteers. We see TOPSoccer as a great opportunity for these players and would like to help all districts provide more playing opportunities. If your club or league would like assistance in building or maintaining a program, please contact Scot at: TOPSoccer@nyswysa.org

As a special note, TOPSoccer Buffalo made a connection, through Sahlen's Sports Park, with the W-league women's professional soccer team. Their coaching staff ran one of the TOPSoccer practices this spring and everyone had a great experience. We would also like to thank Sahlen's for the use of their facility for the Buffalo TOPSoccer indoor programs.

Additional thanks go to Dean Foti, NY West Technical Director, for bringing in a Paralympics soccer player to the Rochester TOPSoccer program to talk with the kids about his experiences at the national team level.

Special recognition goes to the Doug Miller Soccer Academy, as they have gone above and beyond to help support the TOPSoccer programs. Doug provided use of his facility to host the Rochester TOPSoccer indoor programs. In addition, this is the third year the Doug Miller Soccer Club hosted a golf tournament to benefit TOPSoccer. This was held at the beautiful Midvale Country Club in Penfield NY to benefit the children. Thank you to Doug and his terrific staff who made this day a great event and huge success. More details are coming on the 2011 golf tournament!!

The West Seneca Soccer Complex graciously provided the use of its facilities for the Buffalo TOPS outdoor programs and we thank you for your generous support.

State Cup

The 2010 US Youth National Championship Series, the country's most prestigious National Youth Soccer Tournament (also known as State Cup) was very successful. Last year's tournament was led by volunteer, Hugh Goodrich and NYW First Vice President, Rich Wagner. Hugh, along with Rich, Tim Mellander, Bill Campbell and Amy Gush helped plan and deliver another exciting State Cup Championship.

When one event ends, the planning for next year's State Cup Championship begins. 2011's Championship will again be held at SUNY Cortland and this will continue to be a three day tournament planned for June 3, 4 and 5 of 2011. This is an SAT test date. Please ensure that your players are aware of this conflict and plan accordingly. More details will be coming and posted on the NYW website: www.nyswysa.org

The Board has adopted in 2010 a number of changes that will be retained again in 2011. These include an improved seeding process for the play down games leading up to the final four championship. Additionally, NYW has adopted the same rules as National for

the play down games that end in ties after regulation time ends. Equally important is the Red Card Ruling Position has been adopted by NY West; this is the FIFA rule of the "Red Card Earned in a Competition, Stays in the Competition" will be adhered to.

We recently conducted an extensive survey of the State Cup venue. The results of that survey indicate that most participants are very satisfied with the Cortland facilities, and would like to see the event stay in Cortland for some time. There were also a number of items for improvement mentioned. One of the most frequent complaints is associated with difficulties making housing arrangements. As a result, for 2011 there will be changes to the State Cup housing arrangements, as we have terminated the services of Certified Travel Associates. So please be patient with us as we establish new and better housing procedures; we are convinced these changes will improve the tournament experience. We will communicate the new housing arrangements with state cup teams in the near future.

Coach Education

This year Chris Hershey has taken on the title of Director of Coaching Education and will oversee the administration of our coaching education program, which has four highly trained coaches serving as instructors. This is a vital service that NY West provides to our member clubs, and we urge each club to take advantage of coaching education opportunities to enrich and refresh their coaching staff experience. The heart of player development starts with qualified coaches, and we offer courses at all levels, including the Youth Module, E License, Intermediate License, D License, C License, and Keeper instruction. For the first time this year we are offering collegiate symposiums. The first of these, at the Princeton/Cornell Men's and Women's games in Ithaca, NY in October, drew 48 participants; it was intended to guide high school players and their parents through the college selection process.

The Coaching Development Initiative (CDI), headed up by Associate Director of Coaching Jim Hewlett, will see its first class of young coaches complete the yearlong program that combines internet distance learning with field training to obtain a Youth Module and a State E Certificate. The program is aimed at aspiring young coaches, ages 17-25, looking to springboard into the coaching profession and gain the necessary foundation needed to start a successful coaching career. Applications are being accepted until November 30th for the next class, which begins December 17-19, at the NY Chiropractic College. This program is an outstanding way to develop young coaches that are needed to advance the game of soccer for your youth.

Olympic Development Program

The Olympic Development Program, headed by our Technical Director Dean Foti, continues to make major strides as the NYW program had a record number of players trying out at the State level, a record number making the Regional Pool; and a few making the national pool! We sent 14 teams to the ODP Tournament in Trenton, NJ.

There were 176 players at ODP camps, and 24 of these were selected for regional and national pools. To make the program more accessible to our top players, we are consolidating the Spring outdoor training sessions for all age groups to take place Wednesday nights only, at various sites along the NYS Thruway.

The ODP Academy, for U11, U12, and U13 players, just concluded its six week session, and this year was expanded to include five sites across the State: Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Elmira and Olean. Next year, we expect to expand this program to include even more sites to make it more accessible to players.

Quality Soccer Club Accreditation, the Karl Krech Award

To support the good of the game we implemented a club accreditation program, and a zero tolerance code of conduct policy. The principles behind each policy are to promote fair and safe play, while emphasizing the principles of the game. These policies are for you to adopt in your clubs and leagues. During the year, we have had seven clubs recognized as Karl Krech Award Recipients. We encourage each club to look into this Accreditation and make plans to meet the requirements for the benefit of your players.

Officiating

Pat Tata, the State Referee Administrator and Bill Campbell, the State Youth Referee Administrator, are working diligently with us to help create more certification opportunities for referees. They will continue to offer referee certification clinics in your area. Please refer to the Western New York Referee Association website for details on certification clinics. Their web address is: <http://www.wnyreferee.org>. Please help us stay in compliance by using certified referees in all of your matches.

Additionally with the rapid growth of games is the need for more referees. If you or someone you know would like to become a referee, please visit <http://www.wnyreferee.org>. The Western New York Referee Association is always looking for more candidates.

We are fortunate to have Bill Campbell as a dedicated SYRA, and you will see from his report that the number of certified referees has been increasing over the past three years, due to his efforts. This year alone the State Referee Committee certified a record number of more than 2000 new referees, while at the same time increasing significantly the number of referees achieving advancement in grade as well as improved retention of referees. We are sending more and more highly qualified referees to regional events, including the Regional Championship Series, President's Cup, Director's League, and ODP tournaments. Of particular note was the fact that three of our referees were invited to the National Championship Series this year, either as referees or alternates.

Initiatives for the 2010-2011 seasonal year

- ✓ Implement benefits to return value to members, up to a total of \$45,000 in funding:
 - Coaching education: proactively schedule coaching education courses around the state and underwrite the fixed costs for them
 - Parent Education: create programming to reach the youngest parent group, utilizing web-based tools as well as field sessions
 - Grant Program: fund grants for extraordinary expenditures to help further club operations, for clubs that apply and are approved
 - Health and Safety Education: prepare a safety video to inform coaches and players, and make it available to clubs in DVD format
 - Karl Krech Quality Program: provide funding toward coach education or consulting from NY West Coaching Staff, for clubs that apply and can verify compliance
- ✓ Establish a solid relationship with state universities and colleges for player benefit
- ✓ Administer the Thruway League, and use it as a feeder for President's Cup
- ✓ Focus attention on support for recreational programs of member clubs
- ✓ Develop new sponsorship partnerships to supplement revenue
- ✓ Maintain strong Coach Education, Academy, and ODP programs
- ✓ Maintain a vital State Cup tournament with improvements to address feedback
- ✓ Continue parent education & promote fair play

NYW welcomes your input, your support, and your volunteer efforts. We will continue to promote leadership, integrity, fair play and sportsmanship for all. Thank you for your support.

Respectfully Submitted,



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P. S. We always need more volunteers to help us serve you. If you have interest in volunteering in the areas of: Adjudication committee volunteers, public relations, State Cup volunteers, TOPSoccer, sponsorship development, grant writing, legal and compliance, Risk Management policy, marketing, President's Cup, then please email our state Executive Director, Amy Gush with your interest. Amy can be emailed at agush@nyswysa.org