



Report of the Technical Director Dean Foti

The 2013/14 year saw NYSWYSA continue its unwavering commitment to grow the game of soccer throughout Western New York. In the area of player development - the popular NYW Academy, the traditional NYW ODP (U13-U17) program along with the upstart U12 ODP program reached nearly 1,000 players whom hailed from every corner of the NYW footprint. The Recreation Initiative, introduced two years ago, has blossomed into programming that now provides wide ranging services to advance the development of both players and coaches, while also assuring that all young players and new coaches have a positive introduction to our sport. Recreation Director, Chris Pacilio and new Assistant Technical Director, Scott Craig have both worked diligently to get out and meet our recreation community and learn how we can better assist them. Our Coaching Education Program continues to evolve in ways that will help us to better serve all of our vast and varied coaches. Coaching Education Director, Chris Hershey completed the first full year cycle of the revised E and D courses and also conducted a National Youth License, while Chris Pacilio and Scott Craig scoured the state conducting our popular Coaching 101 Course. Coupled with clinics, providing technical support to our many clubs and staging numerous Recreation Festivals (soon to be re-named Youth Development Days) we can confidently say that we have been able to interact with more of our membership this year than in any previous year during my tenure – a practice we intend to continue going forward.

Olympic Development Program

The U12 ODP program entered its second year of existence with the added feature of a parent education component. While the number of participants in 2013/14 (165 players) were down from last year's inaugural season, the program introduced a new parent education feature where hot button topics in youth soccer were discussed (IE. player development, playing time, playing up a year, evaluating your child's progress, etc.). The developmental program takes place in four NYW districts (Binghamton, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo). Each site hosted five indoor training dates throughout the winter. Each training date consisted of a 75 minute training session and a 30 minute lecture. Training sessions focused primarily on improving each player's technical ability and tactical awareness, via small sided games and activities. Lectures covered topics such as proper training habits, age appropriate tactics, team building and group dynamics/problem solving/socialization activities. The program concluded again with the hugely popular outdoor "Play Day" in Batavia, NY where the four district programs converged to play one another.



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The traditional branch of NYW ODP (U13-U17) experienced an unprecedented year in 2013/14. Program numbers remained strong, with numerous players progressing through to Region 1 player pools (including a record number of girls - 20) and three players breaking through to their respective national team pools. At the U15, U16 and U17 level, where teams compete for a regional and national championship, NYW sent three of its six teams to the regional final four for the second year in a row, and for the first time ever, a NYW ODP team was crowned a Region 1 champion. The NYW 99G's ODP team won the Region 1 ODP Tournament in NJ and will now advance to the ODP National Final Four in late February 2015. A program first, the 99G's will compete with the Region II (Midwest), Region III (South) and Region IV (West) ODP champions for the U16 ODP National Championship. This steady upward trend in recent years has grabbed the attention of the regional and national coaching staffs. The NYW ODP program has now earned its way into the upper echelon of Region 1 ODP programs.

Each year age group pools (U-13 through U-17) are selected in the fall. After completing an indoor training phase (winter) and then an outdoor training phase (spring) the NYW ODP boys and girls teams are selected. In 2014, the teams traveled to Trenton, NJ to participate in the Region I ODP Tournament on June 6-8. Fourteen NYW teams (seven girl's and seven boy's teams) competed with the other fourteen state associations that make up USYSA Region I at Rider College, Mercer County Park and Bordentown Friendship Fields. In the two youngest age groups (00's and 01's) NYW annually sends two teams per age group. Teams are placed in groups of four and play a round robin schedule. No standings are kept and there are no playoffs. In the older age groups (97's, 98's and 99's) NYW sends one team per age group. They are also placed in groups of four and also play a round robin schedule. In these age groups though, the winner of each group advances to the semis/final which were played on June 21/22, 2014 in Kirkwood, DE.

The NYW 97G's, 98G's and 99G's all finished unbeaten and atop their respective groups at the ODP Tournament in NJ. Each advanced to the Region I final four in Kirkwood, DE. Had the 99B's team defeated their opponent on the final day in their final group game in NJ (they fell to PAW), NYW would have achieved yet another unprecedented first (by sending four of our six teams through to the Region I semi-finals). Only EPA (6) and VA (4) sent more teams to the semi's than NYW (3). Our youngest age groups were highlighted by the 01G's (U13) A-Team who achieved a program first by completing their round robin play unbeaten and outscoring their opponents by a combined score of 12-2. The future looks bright for our youngest players as those entering the program



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each succeeding year seem to be more technical than those who came before them.

It bears repeating each year, but I would again like to acknowledge and applaud the exceptional work that our member clubs and their fine coaching staffs do, in continuing to develop talented players within the NYW footprint. I am committed to continuing to build relationships and, meet, interact and collaborate with as many club coaches as I possibly can. As always, my goal is to make the ODP program a valuable and viable supplement to the outstanding work that the club coaches do in developing their players. Our goals are the same - to provide the players of NYSW with good soccer experiences that will help each one of them reach their potential. By working together and being flexible we can optimize the number of these experiences that we provide to them (without overloading them). I welcome and value the input that I have received from many coaches and I am always willing to work together to create a compatible calendar for our NYW players. It is important that we all recognize that this is an ongoing process and that each year presents its own set of challenges. I admire the fine work that our NYW clubs do in developing players – your outstanding work shines through every time your players take the field, no matter what shirt they are wearing.

NYW had 151 players (95 girls and 56 boys) participate in Region I ODP camp in 2014. This number is down slightly from 2013 (179 players). At the conclusion of the age group camps, 28 players (20 girls and 8 boys) were selected to their respective regional pools, call back camps and national development camps. This number is up from 23 players in 2013. In the past year, many of these players have been chosen compete for Region I at domestic events in Arizona, Florida, Texas and California, as well as international events in Croatia, Germany, Turkey, Costa Rica and Russia. Several of these ODP players have also been called into U.S. Soccer Training Centers throughout the northeast, where they are trained and looked at by the respective age group U.S. National Team Coaching Staffs.

The Academy

The 2013 NYSWYSA Academy, which takes place each fall, was held at seven sites throughout NYW (Elmira, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Olean, Binghamton and Watertown). Each year the Academy is open to any age eligible player (i.e. he/she does not have to be in the ODP program)



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which in 2013, included players born in '99, '00, '01 and '02. The Academy is staffed by nationally certified coaches and incorporates a curriculum focused on improving fundamentals via a heavy emphasis on technical work and small sided games. The program stresses fun and progress in a positive learning environment.

Connecting Kids to Colleges

NYSWYSA remains committed to bridging the gap between youth players who aspire to play at the collegiate level and the college coaches who scour the landscape looking for talented players to add to their rosters. To this end, many of our programs are conducted with this notion in mind. Over fifty percent of our Academy and ODP coaching staffs consists of current and former local college coaches. We sent an unprecedented seven ODP teams to the ENY Showcase in 2013 at the Golden Goal Sports Complex near Saratoga, NY in preparation for the ODP Tournament. In addition to playing in front of college coaches at this showcase, the event also included a college recruiting seminar for the players which included a college coach's panel. Additional opportunities for exposure are provided via our participation in the annual ODP Tournament and ODP summer camps. The annual National Championship Series (IE. State Cup Final Four at SUNY Cortland) drew nearly 60 college coaches from all collegiate levels (Division 1, 2, 3, NAIA and Junior College), all of whom were looking for talented players that might fit into their respective programs. While we have moved away from our state run College Recruiting Seminars we continue to offer and conduct them when clubs request them. In the end, if you want to play collegiate soccer, we want to help you find the place that's right for you – chances are you don't have to leave New York State to find that place.

Personnel

In March of 2014, NYSWYSA hired Scott Craig as an Assistant Technical Director. Scott will spend the lion's share of his time as our point person for recreation soccer programming and also assist with our coaching education efforts. Scott brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and



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energy to our staff. In the short time he has been on board, he has already had a broad and substantial impact on much of our programming. Scott is a creative thinker and adds another layer of fresh perspective – moving forward, you will be seeing his growing influence on present and future initiatives. An example of this is that you will begin to see a change in terminology as we (and others around the country) start to move away from the term “Recreation Soccer” or “Rec-Soccer” and replace it with the term “Youth Development.”

Coaching Education

If you’ve visited our website, and more specifically the “Coaches” tab, you will see that the page has a “new look”. After progressing through the 2013/14 cycle, this is also an accurate characterization of our Coaching Education Program as we continue to shape our coach development offerings. Website Manager, Tim Mellander and Director of Coaching Education, Chris Hershey worked together to redesign the web page and transition the coaching course registration process from Demosphere to the more efficient CVENT platform. The modifications provide a cleaner presentation of pertinent course information and also make it easier for our users to navigate.

Likewise, you will find that some of our courses have taken on a “new look”. Course descriptions were modified to reflect the revised E and D Courses, both of which were delivered in their revised format throughout 2013/14. The year ended with a heavy run on E Courses – a trend we project will continue as the Thruway League will initiate its minimum E License requirement for all coaches for the 2015 season. (Please Note: The 2016 season will usher in a D License requirement for those coaching in the league’s first division. Also, as a matter of reference, discussions have begun on initiating minimum coaching requirements for all three divisions of the new Region 1 Champions League).

It is vitally important that our coaching community recognize that coaching certification has taken on a renewed importance and that US National Team Coach, Jürgen Klinsmann is leading the campaign from the top down. Klinsmann, as you may know, also now holds the title of US Soccer’s Technical Director. He recently remarked, “I think it’s the highest priority for every coach to get his licenses upgraded, one step at a time but as quickly as possible, because it’s the



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highest sign of credibility. If you do not have your coaching license you do not have credibility. If parents send their boy or their girl to school, and the teacher doesn't have the highest teaching license, they would question the school. They would probably change schools and take action right away. It's the same with soccer."

If you have yet to begin down the road to obtaining the entry level E license I would strongly advise enrolling at your next available opportunity. An added motivation for starting this process as soon as possible is that the US Soccer Coaching Department will soon unveil an F license which may possibly add another layer to this process. The time to act is now so you are not left behind – the train is leaving the station....will you be on it?

The popular Coaching 101 Course was introduced by Chris Hershey and Chris Pacilio in early 2013 as an introductory 90 minute course designed for the parent coach. A concerted effort to provide the course to our recreation community, coupled with the addition of Assistant Technical Director, Scott Craig, enabled us to deliver this offering to clubs in every corner of the state and to an audience of over 600 youth coaches (see Recreation Director's report for more details). We will continue to focus our efforts on bringing the Coaching 101 Course to interested clubs (there is no charge for a club's initial Coaching 101 Course) while also encouraging clubs that have already taken the Coaching 101 Course, to continue to provide development opportunities for their coaches. Consider investing in your coaches by underwriting the cost to provide them with one of our Coaching 100 Series Courses - IE. 90 minute on-field sessions designed specifically as an appropriate progression and "next step" option after taking the Coaching 101 Course (Please Note: This course is being showcased at the [NYSWYSA Workshop](#) taking place at 10:45am on Saturday – 11/8/14 at the Doug Miller Family Sports Park). Other options include the Youth Module, Intermediate or E Course. Please visit our website to find information on all of our [Coach Education offerings](#).

I would like to recognize our outstanding NYSWYSA staff, Chris Hershey, Chris Pacilio and Scott Craig for their continuous efforts in shaping, managing and administrating our Coach Education Program. We are here to serve you and our door is always open. We encourage you to contact us directly with any questions, concerns or suggestions – your direct input is valuable to us and is what has helped us shape the program to where it is today.



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Dean Foti

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Player Development

I have taken the liberty to reprint this item which appeared in my Technical Director's Report last year. I believe strongly that to continue to elevate and grow the game in the US, everyone who is steward of the game must take on the responsibility of continuing to learn more about the sport. There are pundits who say that this last World Cup in Brazil marked a watershed moment for soccer in the US – they are saying that it was the summer that mainstream America “bought in” and embraced the sport of soccer. We will see.....only time will tell.

In the ongoing effort to positively influence age appropriate player development on the largest of scales, I would like to make an appeal to each and every ADULT (IE. parents, coaches, administrators, referees, etc.) associated with youth soccer. I respectfully ask that you partake in one, some, or all of the items listed below in the year ahead, to insure that we are all up to speed on how to create a positive soccer environment where every child, at every level has the best possible chance to reach their playing potential, and just as importantly, that each child has the best chance to become a lifetime fan of the sport of soccer:

1. When time permits, read any of the following:

-US Youth Soccer Player Development Model

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/assets/1/3/US_Youth_Soccer_Player_Development_Model.pdf

-US Youth Soccer State Technical Director's Position Statements

<http://www.nyswysa.org/smallsidedgames/766760.html>

-US Soccer Federation Player Development Guidelines, Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the US

<http://www.ussoccer.com/coaching-education/resources>



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-Coaching Outside the Box:

<http://www.amazon.com/Coaching-Outside-Box-Changing-Mindset/dp/0615700128>

2. Familiarize, advocate and subscribe to the virtues of Small Sided Games.

-US Youth Soccer Small Sided Games Manual

http://www.nyswysa.org/smallsidedgames/index_E.html

3. Use your influence to emphasize the importance of player development and also deemphasize the focus placed on winning and losing with our youngest players.

http://www.nyswysa.org/scripts/runisa.dll?M2.65756:gp:305666.7743:72051+L3/Display+E+103+61877+98229#_ftn3

4. Take a coaching course....any coaching course....and demand it of the folks who coach your kids.

http://www.nyswysa.org/coaching/index_E.html

5. Take your kids/players to high level soccer games (IE. local high school, college or pro games – we have many to choose from) and encourage them to watch the game on TV (IE. MLS, NWSL, EPL, Champions League, World Cup Qualifying, US Men’s and Women’s National Team games).

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Foti

NYSWYSA

Technical Director