



Report of the Technical Director Dean Foti

Growing the game of soccer and enriching the experience of all those whom participate in it, remains the top priority for the NYSWYSA Technical Staff. Programming continues to primarily target full spectrum player and coach development – from the beginner straight through to the most advanced within our membership, and also inclusive of those with disabilities. In 2015/16, NYSWYSA programming reached unprecedented numbers of players and coaches via our the NYW ODP program, the NYW Player Development Academy, Coaching Education offerings, Recreation Initiatives (IE. festivals, youth days and clinics), TopSoccer programming and the various technical support services provided to our many leagues and member clubs. We take great pride in serving our members, helping them grow while applauding their successes and accomplishments along the way.

Olympic Development Program:

NYW ODP players/teams had an unprecedented year. At the ODP Tournament this past year in NJ, where boys and girls teams in the three oldest age groups (i.e. U-15's, U-16's & U-17's) compete for a Region I Championship, five (of a possible six) NYW ODP teams advanced to the Region 1 ODP Final Four after competing in the group stage. The 01G's, 00G's, 99G's, 00B's and 99B's all advanced to the Region 1 Final Four in Kirkwood, DE on June 25/26th. A record four of those teams won their semifinal games and advanced to play for the Region 1 ODP Championship. Two teams (01G's and 99G's) walked away as Region 1 Champions after winning convincingly, while two others (00G's and 00B's), battled to identical 3-3 ties in the championship final, then played two overtime periods before losing heart-breakers in penalty kicks. NYW is the first state association to send five teams in the same year to the Region 1 Final Four and also the first state to have four teams competing in the championship game.

The 99G's are the first NYW ODP team to win two Region 1 Championships. US Youth Soccer does not have a national tournament in this oldest age group (U17), so this marks the end of the road for this trailblazing NYW group as they age out. The 99G's were also the first NYW team to attend the National ODP Final Four in Phoenix in 2015, placing third. The tradition of excellence will continue though as the torch has now been passed on to the Region 1 Champion NYW 01G's (U15) team who became the second NYW ODP team to advance to National ODP Final Four which will again take place in Phoenix, AZ in March, 2017.

Additionally, we saw the Region I coaching staff identify 33 NYW boys and girls for inclusion into their regional pools (following 22 players in 2013, 27 players in 2014, 36



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players in 2015). These players will now compete for spots on their respective age group regional teams, which travel and compete both domestically and internationally. Inclusion on these teams provides invaluable soccer experiences and tremendous exposure to both college and youth national team coaches. With these consistent individual and team accomplishments NYW has firmly established itself as one of the elite Region 1 ODP programs.

Traditional ODP (U13-U17) participant numbers remain consistent and strong. The developmental U12 ODP program in only in its fourth year of existence experienced a sizable increase (31%) in participants in 2015, drawing 236 players, while ODP Camp participant numbers remained consistent, drawing 122 participants in the summer of 2016. All told, the ODP program has served in excess of 700 players in the 2015/16 cycle, up (17%) from 2014/15.

Each year, I take this opportunity to acknowledge and applaud the exceptional work that our member clubs and their exceptional coaching staffs do in continuing to develop talented players within the NYW footprint. Your committed efforts in the area of player development are reflected in the myriad of accomplishments of your players, whether they are playing for your respective clubs, NYW or Region 1. Each year, as I observe U11, U12, U13 and U14 players coming up through the ranks, I am encouraged by the rising level of technical proficiency that they exhibit. This is a tremendous credit to the youth soccer coaching community within NYW for instilling the primary building block needed for success, and most importantly, increased enjoyment of the game as the players get older.

NYW Player Development Academy:

The NYW Player Development Academy, which takes place each fall and is open to all boys and girls ages 10 to 14, was conducted at six sites throughout the NYW footprint (Binghamton, Buffalo, Elmira, Rochester, Syracuse and Watertown). In an effort to foster our region's young talent, the Academy is designed to expose young players to focused training sessions provided by nationally certified coaches. The Academy stresses 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. In 2015, participant numbers dropped (18%) to 202 participants. This marks the second year in a row where there has been a sizable decrease in participant numbers. The drop can be largely attributed to the increase of playing opportunities that now exist for this age group (IE. the creation/expansion of fall



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leagues and fall tournaments). The fact that participant numbers are decreasing is mitigated by the fact that these children are not leaving the game of soccer, but are merely selecting to participate in a different soccer activity. As long as these activities provide a good soccer experience and don't disrupt the recommended best practices "training to game ratios" needed for proper player development, then positive growth will take place (IE. the hope is that they are not replacing all training session opportunities with games). Using academics as an analogy; soccer games are like a periodic exam and soccer training sessions can be equated with the daily lessons that are taught in the classroom. Learning occurs in the classroom and progress is measured periodically when taking a test. Likewise, in soccer, learning occurs in training sessions and progress is measured periodically when playing in games. Maintaining a proper balance with "training to game ratios" is the key to achieving healthy and maximal growth.

Coaching Education:

At the urging of US Soccer, the trend continues toward minimum coaching standards and mandatory licensing at national, regional and local levels. Current and aspiring coaches are encouraged to start and/or continue along the US Soccer Coaching Education pathway. Member coaches who are coaching in the Eastern Regional League, the NYSW Thruway League, the Olympic Development Program, the US Development Academy and the Elite Club National have all experienced established minimum coaching standards that are in some cases progressive (IE. the minimum standard is being elevated over time). While US Soccer initiated the push for coaches to obtain proper certification, this trend is expected to continue and become more prominent at local levels because the consumer (IE. the players and parents) are now demanding it. Smarter consumers are recognizing that the best chances for a positive player experience lie with coaches that have some level of formal training.

In keeping up with demand, in 2015/16, NYSWYSA Coaching Education Program, directed by Chris Hershey, offered nine E-License Courses (123 candidates) and three D-License Courses (62 candidates). Total candidate numbers were up significantly in 2014/15 (265) and while they dropped off in 2015/16 (185) to more traditional levels, they reflect our member coach's initial push to meet the NYW Thruway League's minimum coaching standards being implemented during this time period (E-License required for all coaches in 2015 and D-License required for coaches in Division 1 in 2016). Please visit our website periodically for the latest E and D License Courses scheduled for the 2016/17 season.



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Our popular grass root coach development offerings (Coaching 100 Series) were initiated two years ago as part of our Recreation Initiative. In 2015/16, the free Coaching 101 Course continued to be the most wide reaching course that we conduct. The informative icebreaker course, designed for coaches who are just starting out, gives candidates an improved sense of what a training session should look like (IE. structure) and sends them away with numerous samples of age appropriate training topics/exercises. These course offerings are implemented by Assistant Technical Director, Scott Craig and are outlined in more detail in his Assistant Technical Director's Report.

Connecting Kids to Colleges

Helping youth players explore opportunities to continue playing soccer in college remains a top priority for NYSWYSA. With that in mind, college coaches are heavily represented on our ODP Coaching Staff, they are incorporated into our Player Development Academy Staff and Coaching Education Staff, and they are also included on interactive panels that sit in at our college recruiting seminars. The annual State Cup Final Four at SUNY Cortland (National Championship Series) has become an important event on the recruiting trail for local and regional college coaches, as has the Region 1 ODP Tournament.

In recent years and particularly this year, we have started to move away from offering state wide recruiting seminars as requests/attendance at these events has recently declined (as vast amounts of college recruiting material can conveniently be obtained via sources found on the internet). Instead, upon request, we have made our staff available to counsel individual player/families who seek advice on navigating the college recruiting process. New York State has more Division III schools than any state in the country (except California) along with numerous Division I and II programs and also a vast number of Junior Colleges. As advocates of local collegiate soccer we have encouraged players and parents to explore the great opportunities that exist in their own back yard. Tapping into our staff's knowledge of the college recruiting process as well as their network of college connections can be a valuable resource. If you want to play collegiate soccer, we want to help you find the place that's right for you.

Recreation Soccer:

In 2015/16, the NYSWYSA's Board of Directors named Tom Darpino the Director of Recreation Soccer. Tom is a welcome addition and steps into the



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shoes of former director Chris Pacilio - Chris will not be far away though, as he has now moved onto the NYSWYSA Executive Board as the association's Secretary.

Assistant Technical Director, Scott Craig completed another year of extraordinary service that saw him beat a path to the far corners of the NYW footprint (and everywhere in between) providing member recreation programs with coaching education (Coaching 100 Series courses), youth development days and NYSWYSA's popular flagship recreation festivals. Originally tasked nearly two years ago with making direct contact with or recreation community, Scott has become the face of the association as he travels the state touching thousands of players, coaches and parents. Scott has also taken the lead in directing and overseeing the NYSWYSA TopSoccer programming. A more detailed report in these areas can be found in Scott's Assistant technical Director's Report.

US Soccer Mandates:

In 2015/16, we have worked diligently to provide the most up to date information to help our membership with the transition and implementation of the US Soccer Mandates. Information regarding US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives, which include the move to a calendar year age matrix, Small Sided Games revisions (IE. "Modified Laws of the Game" for players at the 6U, 8U, 10U and 12U - including restrictions on heading), and the Recognize to Recover program (US Soccer's Player Health and Safety Program) have all been prominently chronicled and displayed on our website since their introduction on September 1, 2015. While change is never easy, and the rollout of these mandates took some twists and turns and tweaking before arriving at their current state, the entire NYSWYSA staff has been at the forefront answering questions, clarifying information and providing tips on how to best transition into compliance with the mandates. We are happy to be a reliable resource to our members. Please don't hesitate to call on us with any questions. These mandates affect every player, parent, coach, referee and club to one degree or another, and NYSWYSA intends to be your primary source for accurate information during this upcoming year of transition.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dean Foti
NYSWYSA
Technical Director