

## **President's Report for AGM, November 13, 2009**

Thank you to all of the past and present volunteers who have made our state a leader within Region 1 and US Youth Soccer. It is your tireless efforts that 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, and Score, The American Soccer Company our exclusive apparel provider of NYW. In addition, special thanks to Midwest Soccer Academy for their sponsorship of Mr. Simon Davey's visit over the AGM weekend. Of course we appreciate Mr. Davey's time and talent he is sharing with our members.

I like to recognize Oystein "Sandy" Ostebo for his continued service this year as our Public Relations officer, and for ever being a wealth of information to the board on procedures and bylaw review. While he is stepping back from some of the PR day to day I hope Sandy will continue to be a mainstay in our volunteer network. Also, I would recognize Millie Blaakman for her outstanding service last year as our ODP coordinator.

### **Board Membership Changes**

This year we welcome new board members: we have a new Twin Tier Commissioner, John Carroll. Hopefully, folks in his district are getting to know him. John, thank you for your leadership in that region.

Also, we have a change at the treasurer position. For the last three years Brian Lang has diligently performed this role and enhanced the oversight and financial policies. Matthew Quinlan, a Rochester CPA, sought the position and the state board appointed Matt to fill the remaining year of the term. Thank you Brian for all of your leadership and welcome Matt.

Other district commissioner changes include the retirement of Mike Russ as Buffalo District Commissioner. Mike decided to not run for reelection as he will be spending more time with his family and the Lancaster Depew Soccer Club. Mike, thank you. Brian Lang was elected to the district commissioner's position. Thank you Brian for continuing on with NYSW.

On a sad note the soccer community lost a dear friend, Dan Watson. Dan died on Sunday, January 18, 2009, at the age of 56. Dan served the New York State West Youth Soccer Association as operations manager for 14 years and was a soccer coach in Schuyler County for 16 years. Our thoughts and prayers are with Dan and his family.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to our state office staff, coaching staff, program leaders, and our board of directors. They do a terrific job for all of us!

## **Observations and Progress**

I have had the privilege of serving on the state board five years. During that time the board embarked 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 you for your steadfast partnership in our 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 NYW 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 many of you have heard before 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 has contributed to our recent successes. (completed)

**Phase II:** Implement - which is where we are now

**Phase III:** Grow revenues through alternative methods: Sponsorships, Grants, Programming, Etc.

As discussed over the last two AGM meetings, Phase I began with an independent study of our association performed in 2007. This study provided us action items to implement to improve efficiencies while maintaining our member services. As a result some of our staff adopted new and different roles. This process is continually evolving.

We are in phase II, now. This year’s major initiative was to retain the services of an executive director to lead the business. This position was announced last year and took about nine months to complete. This was a very deliberate process that included interviewing candidates from around the country.

We were very fortunate to find and retain Amy Gush, a successful and seasoned executive director. Amy brings a variety of talents to the position, which range from marketing expertise and fund raising background, to strong management skills. We are delighted to have her with us and have seen great progress in a short period of time.

Other phase II initiatives that we are examining:

- (1) **Technology:** How can we better utilize software to simplify everyone's work flow? This ranges from enhancements to the roster/registration processes, to streamlining the risk management pass approval processes.
- (2) **Club Pass:** this has been discussed at various state board meetings as well as various league meetings. The State Association supports the fundamental concept, but like many, we have concerns regarding implementation, and of how it potentially could impact the children if not properly used as intended.. *We are attempting to develop a turnkey "prototype" process that league's could chose to use if they deemed it would be beneficial.* Our hope is that this "prototype" would be completed by next year's AGM.
- (3) **Consolidation of programming.** A few NYSW business activities have been run outside of the state office. These range from ODP administration to subcontracting the marketing and communication activities. While we have been very pleased with the results we saw some opportunities for improvement. Our goal is to centralize our management, share common resources, improve continuity of communications, benefit from cost containment, and solidify positions and programming that have had to historically deal with volunteer and agency turnover.
- (4) **Risk Management:** We are reviewing some of our core policies to ensure that is the continued policy stance that we all want to endorse or are there area's for improvement. Curt Regruit, chairs this committee.

An area of concern goes well beyond our policies though. Through the diligent work of Amy, we are finding an alarming number of clubs that don't have their current officers "registered" with us. We believe that this is often simply an oversight at the club level. The inherent problem is that the "missing" club officials are then NOT covered by directors and officers insurance.

This year we have witnessed parents suing club's (and as such those officials) for breach of fiduciary responsibilities. We have seen and addressed well-intended actions on the part of clubs which were violations of the volunteer/coach risk management screening and registration policy.

The good news is these problems were identified and resolved with no incident to children. Understandably, the clubs' response to the intervention was "We didn't think we really needed to bother with the risk management process for all, or our season was short, etc."

Had a problem occurred, we all would be gravely concerned for the impact on children. 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.

Again, the good news is we headed off major potential problems. The scary thought: how many other risks are out there because some of these policies are not being adhered to?

I share these brief comments to make you aware. PLEASE make every effort to keep all of your data current. You may need the insurance protection. If you aren't in the system, you aren't insured! Also, PLEASE, PLEASE make sure every volunteer that has any potential contact with children 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 the delayed hire of the executive director. Thus, we had some "one-time" payroll savings that contributed to our surplus. You will see a detailed analysis of the fiscal results in Brain Lang's Treasurer's report.

As you will see in Tim Mellander's Registrar report our player registrations were down marginally for the year. We attribute this to the weak economy. However, when studying longer term demographic trends in our state, we see a gradual decline of families and thus a likely gradual decline in players. We all must be ever vigilant in managing our resources in a likely declining 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 2009-2010 player registrations, hosting ODP tryouts across the state, are busy promoting and conducting coach's education programs, and building platforms for more player development opportunities. You will hear more about the Elite Youth Coaching Development Program for young coaches from 17 to 25 in Glen Buckley's State Director of Coaching Report.

## **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 three major shifts here:

- (1) ODP Management & Publications have been brought into the office. This shifts resources into the office to manage 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. The plan, which Amy Gush will discuss later, is to provide some co-op advertising dollars to leverage “all of our communication” efforts.
  
- (2) Office Expense: the NYSW Corning office lease has cost the state association Approximately \$250,000 over the years. Our lease is due in 2010. The board has studied the critical factors of what we need in an office, where it should be located, and whether or not to “lease” or “own”. Barring some unexpected spectacular lease opportunity, we expect to buy a property (pay cash so there is no debt service) and still reduce the line item of annual office expense. We will maintain a “replacement and maintenance” reserve in our future budgets. We believe that the State Association will maintain or build its financial position better with this ownership approach. We are reviewing properties now.
  
- (3) Workers Compensation: this year we were challenged that our affiliated coach’s were considered “employees”. We had viewed them as “independent contractors”. As this has been pointed out, we have now have reclassified all state hired coaches which has a marginally higher cost to the state association. This had a negative financial impact to us for the year; and will impact us permanently as the coaching staff now have inherently a higher cost structure.

We encourage each club to review your labor practices with qualified council to ensure that you are adhering to the appropriate labor laws. It is our opinion that we all will see more attention in this area.

## **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, weekend jamborees blossom, and awareness grow. This year Scot, Chris Hershey, and Glen Buckley participated in advanced training to help educate new

TOPSoccer Coaches. We see TOPSoccer as one of the greatest growth opportunities and would like to help all 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

Another special recognition goes to the Doug Miller Soccer Academy. The Doug Miller Soccer Academy has gone above and beyond to help support the TOPSoccer programs. This is the second 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 and raised over \$3000 dollars 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 2010 golf tournament!!

The Penfield Rangers Soccer Club hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Kicks for Kids Benefit tournament and made a donation of \$5000 to the TOPSoccer program. On behalf of the TOPSoccer program I share a great big thank you to Penfield for their continued support.

## **State Cup**

The 2009 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, 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. 2010's Championship will again be held at SUNY Cortland and this will continue to be a three day tournament planned for June 4, 5 and 6 of 2010. 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](http://www.nyswysa.org)

Under the guidance of First Vice President Rich Wagner, the Board has adopted a new improved seeding process for the play down games leading up to the final four championship. Additionally, NYW has approved the use of 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 reviewed and will be supported by the State Cup committee; this is the FIFA rule of the "Red Card Earned in a Competition, Stays in the Competition" will be adhered to. Rich will provide more details of this modification in his report.

## **Olympic Development Program**

The Olympic Development Program, ODP, 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!

A number of our players have traveled abroad to represent the United States, Region 1, and NYW. This year our players have traveled to Italy, France, England, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Holland, and the Ukraine. Thank you and Congratulations to all the dedicated ODP coaches, the parents, and the kids. NYW is proud of all your accomplishments.

## **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. Several clubs have already applied for the accreditation.

## **Officiating**

In 2007 NYSW was alerted from US Soccer legal council that matches were being played with non-registered referees. Allegedly some members are not complying with this policy of the US Soccer's compliance regulations (USSF 531.8). We have seen some improvement, yet we still have area's that are not in full compliance. We must all work together to reach compliance.

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.

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.

### NYSW's 2009-2010 Objectives

- Consolidate Program Management
- Technology Review
- Develop sponsorship partnerships
- Increase communication and awareness of youth soccer playing opportunities
- Continue parent education & Promote fair play
- Club Pass Prototype
- Initiate Elite Youth Coaching Program
- Risk Management Review

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,

*Michael Radecke*

Michael S. Radecke, President  
New York State West Youth Soccer Association  
41 Riverside Dr.  
P.O. Box 1247  
Corning, NY 14830  
president@nyswysa.org  
[www.nyswysa.org](http://www.nyswysa.org)

P. S. We always need more volunteers to help us help 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 committee, marketing, President's Cup Chairperson, then please email our state Executive Director, Amy Gush with your interest. Amy can be emailed at [agush@nyswysa.org](mailto:agush@nyswysa.org)