



Report of the Technical Director Dean Foti

Each year the goal of the NYSWYSA Technical Staff is to provide high level programming and outstanding membership services to promote and grow the game of soccer. In 2018-19 programming continued to extend across all levels of play and into every corner of the Western New York footprint. The Olympic Development Program, NYW Player Development Academy, Coaching Education, Recreation Soccer services/support/events, Futsal, TOPSoccer and the vast and varied technical support provided to our many clubs and leagues, were but a few of the ways in which we served the NYSWYSA membership. New in 2018-19, NYSWYSA added Assistant Technical Director, Diana Groth, who oversees Membership Development and conducts “Introduction to Youth Soccer” events throughout the state for first time players. This enabled us to expand programming that now reaches into more inner city and rural areas in addition to our traditional player population centers. In 2018-19, we also added 19U ODP programming, a new branch of the NYW Academy in Jamestown and substantially increased Coaching Education offerings throughout Western NY. We continued to establish and develop valuable relationships with our members, while working together with them to identify, develop and create needed programming/services for both the present and the future. As always, we aspire to serve, engage and be a resource to all of our NYSWYSA members.



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Olympic Development Program

The NYW ODP program continues to be a leader in US Youth Soccer's East Region. While baseline participant numbers dipped slightly, NYW again sent 14 teams to the ODP Tournament (for the 10th straight year), players/teams continue to develop/excel and 21 NYW ODP players were identified as Regional Pool selections (validating the tremendous work that our member clubs do in developing some of the region's top players).

At the ODP Tournament this past year, where boys and girls teams in the three oldest age groups (i.e. U-15's, U-16's & U-17's) compete for an East Region Championship, NYW sent its 03G's team through to the East Region Final Four where they eventually lost in the championship final to EPA. Of the 21 players selected to regional pools (by comparison, there were 21 players selected in 2017 and 25 players in 2016), several were selected to compete on their respective age group East Region Teams which competed domestically in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Florida, as well as internationally in Costa Rica, England, Iceland, Germany and Spain. Inclusion on these teams provided our players invaluable high level soccer experiences and tremendous exposure to both college and youth national team scouts.

Traditional ODP (i.e. U13-U17) participant numbers declined by 13% in 2018/19. Participation in the U12 ODP developmental program declined by 33% from 2017/18 to 2018/19 but still operated at a healthy participant level. When viewed in isolation (a one year comparison), this represents a sizable decline in the number of U12's, but a broader perspective perhaps suggests a leveling off from the record 63% increase in U12's that took place the previous year (from 2016/17 to 2017/18). In total, the number of players participating in ODP in 2018/19 dipped below 700 players for the first time in five years.



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Two years ago USYS assembled an ODP Task Force that was charged with evaluating ODP and its place in the current youth soccer landscape. The task force identified several new ODP changes aimed at program revitalization. These changes, which will be implemented in the 2019/20 seasonal year, are summarized on the NYSWYSA website here: <http://nyswysa.org/new-us-youth-soccer-odp-structure-announced-for-2019-20-implementation>. We are already seeing an uptick in the number of participants in the early stages of this year's ODP cycle.

Each year I like to acknowledge and applaud the exceptional work that our member clubs and their fine coaching staffs do in continuing to develop talented youth soccer players. 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 youth players of NYSW with good soccer experiences that will help each one of them reach their potential. We have worked hard over the last ten years to mold an ODP schedule that will best compliment the many school and club calendars/competitions. While each year the changing youth soccer landscape presents its own set of challenges, we are committed to the constant communication required with players, parents and coaches to avoid conflicts. 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 the name on the front of their jersey says.



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NYW Player Development Academy

The NYW Player Development Academy, which takes place each fall and is open to all boys and girls ages 9 to 14, was conducted at six sites throughout the NYW footprint in 2018 (Binghamton, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Elmira and Jamestown). 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 2018, participant numbers showed an increase of 14% over those of 2017.

Coaching Education

Our NYSWYSA Coaching Education Department has had a busy 2018-19 year. This marks the first year of full integration of US Soccer's transition to Grassroots Licenses (GR) and the new D-License delivery/methodology. The Grassroots Licenses - both the online and the 4-hour in-person version - and the newly redesigned D-License, all came online during the 2017/18 cycle. During that year we conducted at full capacity a pilot GR course at the 2017 AGM and then conducted 12 more GR's (training 169 candidates).

Since then, several of our staff have attended US Soccer Coaching Education Department workshops as well as completed the US Soccer Instructor Certification Course required to conduct/teach/lead the licensing program. This set the stage for the 2018-19 season where all courses were up and running with certified instructors. During the 2018-19 season, 30 GR courses were conducted (attended by a total of 328 candidates). The most popular GR License was the 11 vs. 11, of which there were 13 courses conducted with a total attendance of 150 candidates. Additionally, a total



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of 4 D-Licenses were conducted with a total of 91 candidates in attendance. In total, 419 candidates attended 34 license courses conducted during the

2018-19 season. Reaching 419 candidates is nearly double the number from last year.

The current 2019-20 GR's and D-License course schedule is posted on our website. Please be sure to check the website regularly for scheduling updates as courses are routinely added throughout the year. Questions regarding upcoming course offerings and/or opportunities to host a course should be directed to Assistant Technical Director and Director of Coaching Education, Scott Craig (scraig@nyswysa.org).

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. Nearly half of the NYW ODP coaching staff is made up of current head or assistant college coaches. We continue to promote to college coaches the annual State Cup Final Four weekend (National Championship Series) staged at SUNY Cortland as a premier recruiting event. For the second consecutive year over 50 college coaches were provided participant team rosters at the event. Also, in 2018-19, the New York West Olympic Development Program added a new college prep training program for boys and girls players in the 19U age group ('01 and '02 born players). Traditional ODP at the state and regional level tops out at the 17U age group nationwide. NYW independently made the decision to expand its programming to include this new 19U training program to serve the serious and committed player looking for high level training to supplement their club and/or high school



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training. The program is open to all age eligible players and provides competitive training for players who have an eye toward playing soccer in college. The training program is highlighted by “freindlies” scheduled in the spring against local college programs so players get a real taste for college level competition.

Staffing:

In mid-April of 2019, we welcomed Diana Groth to our technical staff, to fill the position of Assistant Technical Director for Membership Development. Diana hit the ground running by conducting signature NYWYSA “Intro to Youth Soccer Days” for first time soccer players. By staging these free events in the suburbs, inner city and rural areas, she introduced new youth players to the game while simultaneously promoting the local recreation and “starter” youth soccer programs as entry points for them to continue playing the game. Diana works closely with elementary schools and youth organizations (i.e. YMCA, scouts, daycare centers, etc.) to find first time players (primarily ages 11 and under). By exposing new players/parents to the game and connecting them to our member clubs our objective is to help replenish entry level soccer programs throughout the state. Board member Chris Pacilio was instrumental in staging the initial event. A pilot was conducted drawing nearly 250 players to the Watertown YMCA during February winter break. That blueprint was then utilized to stage subsequent events to date in Brockport, Arcade, Webster, and most recently in inner city Buffalo.

Additionally, Diana is authoring a monthly newsletter for youth/parent coaches, revitalizing the NYW Coaching 101 Series for parent coaches, conducting NYWYSA website reviews and she is currently drawing up plans for running an after school program for elementary schools in the



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Rochester City School District. Diana also provides statistical analysis, which among other things, will help us track players who participate in the “Intro to Youth Soccer” events and aid us in determining the effectiveness of that initiative.

Recreation Soccer

In 2018/19, NYSWYSA provided a vast array services to the recreation soccer community. Recreation Festivals/Youth Development Days, Jamborees, Indoor Soccer/Futsal events, Grassroots courses, Intro to Youth Soccer Days, coaching clinics and numerous consulting ventures have enriched player, coach and parent experiences far and wide. Many thanks to Assistant Technical Directors, Scott Craig and Diana Groth, Recreation Soccer Director, Tom Darpino, Executive Director, Alex Brame and Director of Operations, Charley Marshall for their commitment to NYSWYSA recreation initiatives and for the integral role they play in delivering extraordinary service and programming.

TOPSoccer:

TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer) is a New York State West and US Youth Soccer official program. This program is designed for children with disabilities, ages 5 to 21 and accommodates all disabilities whether mental or physical. This is an exciting program that brings the joy of playing soccer to players who have not traditionally had a place in the youth soccer system. In 2018-19, TOPSoccer programs were conducted in Binghamton, Syracuse, Rochester, Canandaigua, Olean and Buffalo. Assistant Technical Director, Scott Craig coordinates this important program. If you know of someone who might enjoy participating in this program or someone who might like to volunteer (i.e. start/host a program,



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become a session leader or participate as a “TOPSoccer Buddy”, etc.) please contact Scott directly (scraig@nyswysa.org).

US Soccer Mandates:

The US Soccer Mandates were first published back in 2015. There were several edits and revisions along the way that fine tuned them into the version that we see today. Our entire NYSWYSA staff, including Executive Director, Alex Brame, Director of Operations, Charley Marshall and our entire Technical Staff (Dean Foti, Scott Craig, Diana Groth), have strived to continually be a reliable resource to our member leagues, clubs, players, coaches, referees, administrators, volunteers and the entire youth soccer community as it relates to moving toward alignment with these mandates. We have worked hard to provide accurate interpretations, timely assistance (i.e. holding town hall meetings and attending league meetings) and where appropriate, provided financial assistance (i.e. for goals, via the member grant program) in an effort to help our members transition smoothly into alignment with US Soccer’s best practice recommendations.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire NYSWYSA membership for working diligently through their respective individual circumstances/challenges to bring themselves into compliance with the US Soccer Mandates. Your efforts are not taken for granted. On behalf of the NYSWYSA Board of Directors and our entire staff, thank you for your commitment to the incorporation of best practices for youth soccer players in NYSWYSA.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dean Foti
NYSWYSA
Technical Director