



NY State West Youth Soccer Assoc.
P.O. Box 1247
Corning, NY 14830
Phone: (800) 789-4806

I would like to state my sincere thanks to all of our NYSWYSA member clubs, leagues, and programs for all that you do to support youth soccer. It's a big job and one that I know all of you take seriously.

As stated in my 2021 President's report, my current term as NYSWYSA President will be my last. The term ends in November 2023. Overall, I am grateful for, and have enjoyed my tenure serving our members as part of the NYSWYSA Board of Directors, but it is certainly time for a change in leadership. For the benefit of youth soccer, it is important that we foster fresh perspective, broader diversity of ideas and perspectives, and broader diversity of individuals' background. To achieve that, we need qualified, enthusiastic, altruistically motivated individuals to be willing to step forward. Via the role of State Association President, there is opportunity to impact the future of youth soccer and the sport of soccer at both a local and national level. It is a worthwhile endeavor that offers a tremendous growth opportunity for any individual willing to volunteer and commit to the cause of growing youth soccer.

The rest of this report, I want to address what I think are the three most important issues for the future of youth soccer within NYSWYSA, and what I believe needs to be the overall strategic focus. This is my perspective, which I hope may be useful for those who follow me.

Growth

- This means
 - o Increased opportunities for children to participate without social or economic barriers.
 - o Increased number of children participating at all levels of soccer.
 - o Significant growth in the diversity of participants, both players and adults.
 - o Increasing the number of and opportunity for qualified soccer coaches.
 - o Fostering the growth and diversity of qualified soccer administrators.
 - o Increasing the number of qualified referees.
- To achieve these growth objectives, it will mean finding ways to commit more resources (human and financial) in support of grassroots, rural, and urban areas because that is where the growth opportunity resides.
 - o Approximately two thirds of youth players participate in non-competitive soccer. The top one third of the soccer pyramid, which comprises the competitive programs, is already well established.
 - o A paradigm shift is needed whereby more support is directed toward the grassroots, urban, and rural programming. Feeding the base of the pyramid is really what will grow the sport. Achieving this paradigm shift will require passionate volunteer leaders to actively participate in advocating locally and nationally to effect change. Success will be measured by not just an increase in the number of children able to participate, but as importantly in creating an environment in which any child feels comfort and a sense of belonging when they choose to participate, be it as a player, referee, coach, or other type of volunteer.
 - o If you are an individual who has experience and passion for non-profit program advocacy, please consider becoming involved. More volunteer leaders are needed.
- 2021/2022 player registrations within NYSWYSA grew from 45,000 last year to over 48,000. While still below our pre-pandemic numbers of 54,000, player registrations have risen each year since the pandemic.



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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

- Hugh Goodridge, our NYSWYSA 1st Vice-president, has served as the chair of the US Youth Soccer DEI committee for the past 1 ½-2 years. In that role he has guided the committee in pursuit of a comprehensive DEI policy. It's been a slow, worthwhile, labor-intensive, endeavor, but progress has been made. Hugh has done a terrific job guiding that committee. Rather than define our own policy, NYSWYSA's intent is that once completed, we will look to mirror the US Youth Soccer policy. Hugh will be reporting on that progress during our 2022 Annual General Meeting.

The Role of the State Association

- NYSWYSA is one of 54 youth soccer state associations authorized by the bylaws of the US Soccer Federation. Our defined role is to act as US Soccer's local representative for all of youth soccer programming and related youth soccer activity.
- There are multiple national youth soccer entities that US Soccer recognizes and who conduct youth soccer activity across the US. They include US Youth Soccer (USYS), US Club Soccer, American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), and SAY Soccer.
- Historically, most/all of the youth state associations, including NYSWYSA, have been aligned solely or predominantly with USYS. However, if we are truly to represent all of youth soccer programming, then a reasonable question some might ask is why is there not more active, visible, state association cooperation with the other national youth soccer organizations' programming. That is a reasonable question, and one that NYSWYSA is beginning to act on. Currently there is some level of ambiguity in the bylaws of US Soccer and US Youth Soccer regarding state associations and their alignment with the national entities. However, the US Soccer bylaws are clear that state associations are their designated representatives. Taking that into consideration, going forward NYSWYSA should adopt a more active engagement with the other national youth soccer organizations to ensure we are supporting of all of youth soccer, not just US Youth Soccer. This strategy is consistent with our true mission as designated by US Soccer. Mostly it is important because our focus should not be driven based on what national youth organization a club or league is aligned with. Rather we should embrace them all because they all serve youth soccer. I have begun working with our Board of Directors on how we can accomplish this mission. It is an important one as it would better align us with our true mission to serve youth soccer. We intend to continue to advocate for this at the national level as well as locally.

Thank you all again for serving youth soccer.

Respectfully submitted,
Curtis R. Regruit
President, New York State West youth Soccer Association