



President Curtis R. Regruit

To all of our NYSWYSA members, thank you for being part of our soccer family and for your commitment to growing the sport of soccer.

New York State West Youth Soccer Association (NYSWYSA) and our membership benefit from the corporate sponsorships and cooperative partnerships that support the programs we administer. On behalf of NYSWYSA, thank you for your continued support.

- Admiral, apparel provider for NYSWYSA
- Dick's Sporting Goods
- Pullen Insurance
- Demosphere
- Sports Logic
- Rochester Rhinos
- NY 529 College Savings

The 2016/2017 year was a year of significant change within NYWSYSA, and it is continuing into the start of the 2017/2018 year. In September, 2016 we began the search for a new Executive Director. As we wanted to be confident that we found the right person for the job, we were patient with our efforts. Our patience was rewarded 8 months later with the hire of Alex Brame. In his short time on our staff, he has quickly assimilated into our NYSWYSA culture by travelling across our footprint to all of our districts. Tim Mellander announced last year that he will retire at the end of 2017. For approximately 30 years he has served our soccer community in stellar fashion. His experience, passion, and knowledge have been very valuable to us and we wish him well in the adventures that await him in the future. Recently, Charley Marshall was hired as Tim's replacement. Fortunately, he will have 3 months transition with Tim to learn from Tim's experience. Please welcome Charley to our family. Throughout the transition of staff this past year our NYSWYSA staff performed with exemplary fashion to ensure all programming and membership services continued without interruption.

On the Regional and National fronts there was much happening.

- US Soccer increased its commitment to supporting youth soccer via strategic initiatives (Player Development Initiatives, new coach education programming). Additionally, in 2017 the Federation committed 3 million dollars specifically for youth soccer member grants. The grants will help facilitate not just increased and improved opportunities for youth players, but also for development of qualified youth coaches and referees.
- In July, at the US Youth Soccer (USYS) AGM, bylaw changes that will restructure US Youth Soccer regional governance and operational management were passed overwhelmingly by the 55 state associations.
 - o Along with numerous other state association representatives across the country, NYSWYSA played a significant contributory role in getting the bylaws amendment passed. The steadfast dedication and networking of our board and staff within our region, within US Youth Soccer, and within the US Soccer Federation, enabled us to positively influence key decision makers across the country to support the bylaw changes.
 - o The decision represents a monumental progression for US Youth Soccer as it paves the way for USYS operational management to be led by full time, USYS staff. As a result, we anticipate more efficient, consistent, and nimble decision-making across regions that will ultimately result in improved program and event quality for our members. USYS has already hired someone to manage our Region 1 operations. The hired individuals will replace our elected Regional Chairs and Vice Chairs and will reside within their



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respective regions. Overall, the bylaws changes represent a big step in the right direction. Just as we states have evolved over the years to employ Executive Directors, Technical Directors, etc., USYS will be evolving similarly.

The primary mission of NYSWYSA is to “Promote the game of soccer by providing superior, value-added, youth soccer programs and services for our members.” Throughout the past year the NYSWYSA Board of Directors and Staff continued work to effect change on those issues that you, our members, told us were most important to you. The common themes continue to be

- 1) Managing the competitive recruitment of youth players by clubs by agreeing to and adopting best practice guidelines amongst clubs.
- 2) Facilitating league play to ensure it is open to all teams/clubs while also aligning the appropriate competitive balance within league division assignments.
- 3) Enabling modest flexibility within State Cup play down game scheduling.
- 4) Parent education to help them understand the landscape of youth soccer programs and how to identify the best fit for their children.
- 5) Managing the escalating cost of participation in youth soccer.
- 6) Optimizing coach education to meet the diverse needs of soccer programs (i.e. recreational and competitive).

While we have made progress on some of these themes, being short-staffed for 8 months while searching for a new Executive Director did limit our ability to make progress. That said, we have made some progress that will be discussed during our 2017 Annual General Meeting.

As of the end of 2016/2017, NYSWYSA membership stands at 56,000 players. NYSWYSA has decided to take on a challenge to increase our membership to 70,000 players within 5 years. It is a significant challenge, but one we feel is worthy to promote the game of soccer. Most of this growth will need to come from increasing youth participation at the grass roots level. By continuing to work with all of our member clubs and leagues we believe it is possible and look forward to your help in being successful.

On behalf of NYSWYSA, thank you all for a terrific year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Curtis R. Regruit
President, NYSWYSA