



# Western New York State Referee Association

Report to New York State West Youth Soccer Association - 2019

*William A. Campbell, State Youth Referee Administrator*

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## **REGISTRATION REPORT:**

The referee population decreased slightly once again from 1741 referees in 2018 to 1696 referees in 2019. Our number of state level referees (who focus primarily on higher level matches) increased to 36 in 2019. Due to new requirements being made of those that are currently “state” referees changing them to “regional” referees, we believe that number will likely decrease in future years. Our number of Grade 7 referees (able to do adult matches) increased from 90 to 78 in 2019.

## **REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMPETITIONS:**

Because of changes enacted at the regional level which drastically reduced the amount being paid to officials attending regional competitions (in essence losing their dinners, reducing their training and removing their travel expenses,) the SRC did finally step in and approve a budget of funding to send referees to these events. Unfortunately, by the time this was approved, we were only able to send 3 referees to the ODP regional event in New Jersey and 3 referees to the Regional Championships in West Virginia. Other referees from our state did attend but were not eligible for funding from the SRC therefore our numbers were drastically reduced at both of these events. It is our hope to send 4 referees to the ODP regional event(s) and 6 referees to the Regional Championships next year (in comparison to 10 (ODP) and 15 (Championship) referees to these events in 2017.) It was reported by the referees that attended these events that the organization of the events was compromised so we are hoping that will be resolved in next year’s competitions. It should also be noted that of the 6 appointments we made last year, only one referee reported being evaluated and given constructive criticism on a full match by anyone which is also disheartening.

## **REGIONAL LEAGUES:**

In 2019 the regional leagues were a ball of confusion. With teams in our state entering both a number of EDP leagues as well as the Great Lakes Conference, there was no longer one reliable source of information on these leagues. On top of that, at the league meetings, the coaches were told that when they scheduled a match, that they should go out and find their own referees. I pointed out that was an issue because the coaches do not necessarily know how to go about hiring an assignor nor do they know who is even qualified to be an assignor. This meant that there was a possibility that the referees assigned may or may not be certified, may or may not have done risk management and may or may not know the rules of competition. In addition, there was significant confusion from a few coaches about what league they were even in with the greatest confusion being between the Great Lakes Conference of USYSA and the Great Lakes Alliance of USClub Soccer (with each league having different rules and reporting requirements.) A few teams actually entered both and were using individual games to suffice the requirements of both leagues. About a month into the season, the person in charge of the Great Lakes Conference started to realize some of these issues and decided to cooperate with the SYRA on assignment of officials for these matches and in general, we were able to successfully get those games assigned to appropriate officials. No such agreement has been obtained from EDP and with the sheer number of leagues that are being sponsored by EDP and general lack of knowledge of the coaches as to what division or league they are in and multiple coaches reporting the same game to different assignors at different times on different days in different places, there have been and I suspect will continue to be number of issues with said matches.

## **2018 YOUNG REFEREES OF THE YEAR:**

Adam Brzozowiec was awarded the USYSA National Award for Young Male Referee of the Year.

## **2019 YOUNG REFEREES OF THE YEAR:**

This year the NYSWYSA Young Male Referee of the Year is Andrew Kennedy and the NYSWYSA Female Young Referee of the Year is Gabriella D'Ambrosio. Andrew Kennedy has already been named the Eastern Region winner of the award and I, once again suspect, that he has an excellent chance of winning the national award.

## **THE FUTURE:**

The future of the referee program, particularly with respect to USYSA regional events remains unclear. Even though the game fees paid were somewhat higher than in years past, they fees did not always equal the stipend that the referees were paid in the past. The loss of the travel reimbursements and dinners means that the referee group as a whole has lost more than half of the funding that was previously provided. The Championships have been extended to 7 days making it difficult for a referee to commit to the entire tournament but we have managed to alleviate that to a degree by allowing our referees to choose whether or not they wish to attend the first 4 days, the last 4 days or the entire tournament. Unfortunately, about a quarter of the referees that would have been considered for appointment cannot be considered any longer since the removal of the head of delegates slot and all chances for adult supervision of the referees attending means that we must limit our choices to referees who are 18 years of age or older. Those are also the referees that will have issues committing to a longer time-frame. Additionally, the disorganization of the events last year was troubling and hopefully will be corrected in 2020.

## ***2020 will be a year that will be challenging due to a number of factors:***

- FIFA has made the most massive changes to the laws of the game in my 30 year memory.
- The USSF instructional program will now require that the referees do an on-line course and a local one day training that is supposed to be on "a field. We face multiple challenges with this. The first being that the training window for referees is between December and April, not exactly good times to do field training in our area. We are also concerned about how effective the on line module will be.
- USSF also announced major changes to the referee grades, in essence, eliminating virtually all of them which will make assignment of referees more complex than it has ever been. The Grade 9 recreational youth referee, Grade 8 full youth referee and Grade 7 Adult referee now all fall into the same "grassroots" license level. The Grade 6 and 5 state referees are now regional referees and are mainly under the direct control of USSF although we must still administer a far more complicated fitness test (males and females now have different requirements) and provide the advanced training as well as the assessments required. This has been challenging as over the last few years we have lost a number of our trained assessors, instructors and referee coaches and we currently have no way to increase those numbers as we are waiting for training programs to be released and approved by USSF.
- To make matters more complicated, USSF did not brief all of their technology providers of these changes until last April which has left most of the providers and State Referee Committees, including ours, scrambling to find suitable alternatives to the approach being used now by USSF which, along with other issues, cannot differentiate referees' state affiliations accurately. As an example, all of our current instructors were asked by our State Director of Instruction to log into the USSF Learning Center to take the Grassroots referee class to give him feedback on what we need to cover in-person. Since we did that, New York East has contacted all of us through email to ask when we plan to take one of their in-person clinics. We hope that does not continue once we are set up with our entry level referee classes as a new referee will not know what that is all about and will add to the confusion.

We have no clue how all of this will affect the quality or quantity of referees being provided but we are doing everything within our power to assure that we can continue to provide quality officials to all of our leagues.

Respectfully submitted,

***William A. Campbell***

*State Youth Referee Administrator*

*New York State Youth Soccer Association and the Western New York State Referees' Association*