

PRESIDENT'S 2022 AGM REPORT

2021 Challenges: Remnants from Covid linger, however, the membership of Indiana Soccer has managed through the pandemic remarkably well. Registration numbers are approaching pre-pandemic numbers and the associations programs have returned to nearly normal levels. The biggest issue facing Indiana Soccer is the diminishing number of available referees. This issue is a national one and impacts all sports that track their referee numbers. The fact that this is a national issue does not allow us to be apathetic about this significant problem. ISA and the Indiana Referee Committee are working diligently and collaboratively to develop and implement a multi-pronged approach to mitigate the erosion of our referee pool, and to increase the number of licensed referees in the pool.

Our mitigation efforts include these long-term initiatives:

- 1) Indiana Soccer engaged Dr. Jerry F, Reynolds, an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Ball State University to research sideline behavior and its impact on the overall environment and in particular, its impact on referees. Dr. Reynolds's research will focus on, but not be limited to, four major areas.
 - What behaviors are being observed and personally practiced by parents and spectators?
 - How frequently are these activities happening (what percentage of parents and spectators are behaving in a way the negatively effects the playing environment)?
 - What are the circumstances or contributing factors to both positive and negative spectator behaviors?
 - What can both parents and soccer organizations do to promote a more positive experience?

- 2) Develop an algorithm that considers the level of play, referee's role (center, AR, fourth), age of play, that will guide referees and assignors as to the appropriate number of minutes a referee should be actively engaged each day.

Short-term initiatives include the following:

- Developing referee training and licensure that aligns with the level of play to which referees will be assigned. Indiana will offer a small-sided referee course and license. This will be available in the first quarter of 2022.
- Encourage each member club to host referee training courses; small-sided, and full-sided courses with the goal of developing an average of 1.5 to 2 new referees per team.
- Develop a club assistant referee training and test (Guardians of the Game) and secure a minimum of two people over the age of 12 per team who complete training and testing, to be available to assist a center referee should a full crew not be available to staff a game. This will be available in the first quarter of 2022.
- Engage with assignors to develop safeguards that will ensure that new referees are given appropriate assignments.
- Expand current mentoring and training programs.

Success with these initiatives will require commitment and cooperation from our member clubs.

Soccer Landscape: The soccer landscape remains fractured. The MLS, USL, and a host of other acronyms are looking to expand into the youth market. The upcoming presidential race (pitting Cindy Parlow Cone, US Soccer's current president against Carlos Cordeiro, her predecessor) will determine if the United States Soccer Federation continues its current path or if a new, more grassroots-friendly direction will be our future.

Five Star Program: Indiana Soccer's Five Star Program continues to be an important initiative to strengthen our member clubs. The goal of the program is to lead our clubs to adopt and follow best administrative and corporate practices. There are many facets to building a strong not-for-profit organization that is fiscally responsible, well governed and administered, values the interests of its constituents, and delivers value to all its stakeholders. The Five Star Program identifies five essentials to achieving these objectives and encourages our member clubs to focus on those components. The components of the Five Star Program are:

- Governance: The way an organization manages its affairs, stewardship
- Alignment: Shared purpose, mission, and visions
- Marketing & Communication: Creating demand and exchanging information
- Risk Management: The identification and mitigation of threats
- Education: The transfer of knowledge

Since the inception of the Five Star Program, over 30 stars have been awarded. We urge all member clubs to invest in your club's stability and future success by joining the Five Star Program. If you have not started this process, we urge you to contact Angel Hall (angel@soccerindiana.org) who will be delighted to start your club on its Five Star journey.

Registration update. Member clubs' registration numbers indicate that players are ready to return to play and new players are joining the game, most notably, those playing travel soccer as shown in the chart that follows. Recreation registration numbers returned to within 19% of pre-covid registration numbers. Rec+ registration numbers returned to within 28% of pre-covid numbers. Travel registrations returned to within 2% of pre-covid registration numbers. Considering the obstacles to participation caused by the pandemic, registration numbers indicate that we are getting closer to the old norms of participation.

	TVL	REC+	REC	ADULTS	TOTALS
2020-21	17,167	4,519	27,993	2,308	51,987
2019-20	15,447	3,765	19,134	1,764	40,110
2018-19	17,478	6,310	34,376	3,043	61, 207
2017-18	17,872	5,870	33,571	2,680	59,993
2016-17	18,456	4,448	34,553	2,729	60,186

ODP: The expansion of services offered by the ODP staff resulted in significant program growth under the leadership of Todd Sheely. ODP is serving more players than it did a year ago. The main reason for this growth is the increase in participating clubs that are encouraging their players to supplement club training with ODP training. This collaboration is good for our players as they pursue their playing goals and objectives. ODP is investigating more ways to provide the players in Indiana with a competitive advantage.

ISA’s Continued Commitment: The following statements are used to guide board decisions and the day-to-day actions of the staff:

- Purpose statement – “Indiana Soccer’s purpose is to improve lives through soccer.”
- Mission Statement – “Indiana Soccer’s mission is to remain a premier service organization by providing leadership, organizing play, educating community stakeholders and developing youth and adults through soccer.”
- Vision Statement – “Indiana Soccer’s vision is to make soccer accessible to all.”
- Core Values
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Integrity and respect
 - Fair and safe play
 - Leadership and Service

We will continue to govern and direct Indiana Soccer based on these beliefs and principles.

Outreach Program: Two years ago, we announced an Outreach Program as the signature initiative of Indiana Soccer for the near future. The objective of the initiative is to bring the game to underserved communities throughout the State. Planned program elements included bringing futsal to schools and institutions, converting unused park facilities to futsal courts, and training physical education teachers to incorporate soccer and futsal into class and after-school curricula. A longer-term goal is to find an outdoor facility to provide organized training and games to those who currently lack access to organized play. The program enjoyed a rigorous start but was stalled for pandemic-driven reasons. As schools have relaxed restrictions, this initiative is beginning to gain traction. However,

The success of his initiative is dependent upon the Indiana Soccer membership. There are 300 school corporations in Indiana, and within our 140 member clubs, there are folks who know the superintendent, curriculum director or other decision maker in these school corporations. I am extending a sincere request of the membership to ask your members to find that person who can put us in contact with that decision maker, and encourage them to reach out to Dave Guthrie, Indiana Soccer's executive director. Dave can be reached at dave@soccerindiana.org.

Afghan Initiative: ISA is extremely proud of its success bringing the game to thousands of Afghan refugees (about 60% of whom were children) who were housed at to Camp Atterbury (near Columbus) in the fourth quarter of 2021. ISA's members provided hundreds of necessary items to our Afghan guests, including shoes, balls, clothing, and outerwear, which while important, was secondary to the joy provided through soccer activities. Our efforts culminated in a game between the Afghans and Camp Atterbury soldiers before a large crowd

of passionate supporters. The Afghans won, their fans rushed the field, and lifted their victorious players on their shoulders. It was a moment our staff will never forget, a true reminder that soccer truly is a unifying world force. My heartfelt thanks to the ISA staff for their over-and-above efforts to organize this initiative on short notice, with special recognition to George Perry and Steve Franklin, who committed countless hours to bringing the beautiful game to our Afghan friends.

And finally, my sincere thanks to all of you in the Indiana Soccer community for your commitment to the game and our players. All the best as we move forward into a better 2022!

Respectfully submitted,



Alan Brown, President

Indiana Soccer Association, Inc.