



## State of the Club – April 15, 2018

About three years ago, my son, Trevor was convinced by friend who shared his love of soccer, to try out for competitive travel at Deltona Youth Soccer Club, hereafter to be known as the Club. While prior to that, Trevor played soccer and many other sports, it was soccer that truly grabbed his attention. We found, though, that while the YMCA was a positive experience, Trevor had reached a level where needed more coaching than the YMCA could give. However, we were pretty new to soccer and didn't understand what "U" levels were or understand the elusive definition of Off Sides. After much consideration, we hesitantly took Trevor to tryouts. Keep in mind, all this while concerned over the cost and commitment to regular travel out of our general area.

What we found was a friendly and helpful staff, well organized tryouts, and the ability to make a payment plan for the registration fees. This was a great start for our family's relationship with the Club. After the first season, our team was in desperate need of a team manager, and no one was jumping up to fill the position, so I volunteered. At that point, I was pointed in the direction of Merriann Frederick. Merriann was and had been for a long time, the team manager of her daughter's travel team. She also was and has been Secretary on the Board of Directors of the Club.

Merriann was kind, patient and extremely knowledgeable in training me for the team manager position, and she was my first, true introduction to the people that ran this Club. As I met the other members of the Board of Directors and the Director of Soccer Operations, I found a caring group of people, and I truly felt that the players, our children, were their main priority.

After attending some board meetings at the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017, I began to feel like I could be more involved with the Club, which lead to me running for President and being voted in, in March of 2017. The first thing I found is I would be working with some really great people who knew far more about the Club and soccer than I did. Thankfully. These same people have taught me a great deal, and I truly appreciate everything they have done. More on that to come.

This year I have the honor of presenting my first State of the Club address to the Board of Directors and club members after becoming the President of an outstanding non-profit organization, Deltona Youth Soccer Club. This is a club that is run by a fully volunteer Board of Directors and a few, key paid positions. The heart of this group is enormous, and I must insist that this Club would suffer greatly without this tremendous group of people.

This year saw the retirement of three key people to our organization: Vice President 1, Jim D'Errico, bookkeeper, Kelly D'Errico, and Registrar/Club Manager Tracy Kutsko. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge how much they have done for the Club over the years. In fact, they all worked to bring it back from very serious financial and organizational issues. Thank you to you all for leaving a legacy of commitment and success of which we are all proud.

Accompanying those changes, however, were some very positive effects. The club made a decision that the club needed a paid professional to handle the company's books, therefore, the Board removed the position of Treasurer, and a non-Board, paid position of Treasury was added. Tanya Georgiev then joined the Club in the Treasury position, and as Registrar for competitive travel. Tanya turned financial disarray into exemplary organization and has made multiple moves to save the Club money on operating costs. She also has done a fantastic job as travel Registrar, which can be a very stressful and demanding position.

With the removal of Treasurer as a Board position, the club needed an additional director on the Board, and the position of Vice President 3 was established. Billy Barry then stepped up, and the area of concentration of Vice President 3 became our Academy programs. While Billy Barry and his family have been very involved with the Club for many years and already was Director of Senior Academy, he agreed to take on even more responsibility, as his commitment to the club is undying. Billy's energy and commitment is an example to us all.

Then, in early 2018, Jim D'Errico resigned, and Jesse Phillips answered the call and was appointed to Vice President 1. Jesse had been a member of the club with his son, Jacob, for many years, and in Fall of 2017 volunteered for Team Manager for his son's team, a position he still holds while being Vice President 1. To say that Jesse jumped right in would be an understatement. Jesse demonstrates his commitment on a weekly basis. He makes an effort to meet parents and coaches to help with the approachability of Club leaders, he has helped a great deal with the Academy programs, and he is always looking for new ideas or ways to improve the Club. Jesse had been a fantastic addition to the Board of Directors, and we thank him for being here.

### **Academy Programs**

I'd like to start now where it all begins: Junior Academy. Our Junior Academy brings a great opportunity for the youngest of our members to learn and fall in love with soccer. In watching these kids at practice, you can feel the joy and exuberance of their age. That being said, it is the Club's responsibility to provide a safe, fun environment. I believe we are doing just that. Without a Director, Orlando De La Torre stepped up to temporarily run the Junior Academy, while maintaining the positions of Director of Soccer Operations and Coach. Orlando and a group of volunteer boys and girls from other, older teams, make soccer fun for these players while teaching them basic skills of the game. This is extremely imperative, as the importance of this program to the Club cannot be understated. It is here where we can gain new members and possibly keep them with the Club for many years.

For our Senior Academy, Billy Barry has once again done an outstanding job with the help of Vice President, John Thompson in improving the program and drawing new players. The program is well organized, and the feedback we receive on the program is very positive, as is the feedback on Junior Academy. Senior Academy is where players start to gain interest in learning more about the game and moving up to the Competitive Travel program, while others, naturally, are content at the recreational level. Our success at this level means doing our best to peak players' interest and motivate them, as well as to allow parents to understand the benefits of Travel for their children while helping to alleviate some of the concerns that accompany it.

Over the past few years, our membership is as follows:

Program	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Junior Academy	177	102	119
Senior Academy	142	178	217

Although the membership decreased in 2016-2017, we saw a strong rebound in 2017-2018. We believe this is directly related to our decrease in registration fees, as well as increased marketing efforts from John Thompson. We are very pleased with this trend and want to continue all efforts to see continued growth in both programs.

### **Competitive Travel**

Since joining our organization, Orlando De La Torre has made a dramatic difference on the program. This includes hiring skilled coaches, with a higher percentage of them being professionally licensed, as well as fostering teams to play at a higher competitive level. Included are the U18 girls team and the U17 boys team. Both teams act as example for other travel teams and can give younger players incentive to progress further. Furthermore, multiple players from both teams volunteer at Summer and Winter Camps and with the Academy programs, which exemplifies what we like to see from our older players.

Orlando and Director of Coaching, Rolando Rivero have established training programs for their coaches and are holding them to a higher standard than in the past. They have also laid out a plan for development and continue to look for coaches to bring on board that can be developed and licensed with the intent to improve coaching in general, as well as can act to improve the reputation of the Club as a whole.

Competitive Travel membership is as follows:

Program	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Travel	338	390	413

I find these results exciting, as the Club saw the departure of the GOSA teams from under the DYSC umbrella starting in the Fall of 2017. While their departure was mostly in the best interest of the Club, it did have an impact on revenue in a significant way.

### **Summer and Winter Camps**

I feel we made a true step forward with the success of the 2018 Winter Camp. Orlando, Rolando, and our coaches did a great job of making this a positive, fun experience for the kids and parents, as evidenced by the overwhelming positive feedback received by board members. It was also clear that we gained quite a few new players in the Academy programs because of the program's success. We hope to carry this momentum and excitement into this year's Summer Camp.

### **Financial Status**

Our Bookkeepers and Treasury will report on the actual numbers, but I would like to provide a general overview. This year we will record a loss, however, thanks to the reserve that was built up over prior years, the financial health of the Club is very solid. We trace the loss to a few factors. First, I do not believe we planned properly for the departure of GOSA. While we technically did not know of their departure until after the 2017-2018 budget was in place, we certainly saw the "writing on the walls," and should have taken this into account when we lowered our registration fees for 2017-2018.

Next, we did not budget properly for the 2017 donation to Heritage Middle School. To explain, in 2017 for the second year in a row, the Club donated \$5,000 to a program at Heritage that helps families in need during the holidays. The response from the families that we helped and from the

administration at Heritage was heartwarming and overwhelming. It was a fantastic act of good will, and I am proud of the Club for this act. I would like to see the Club continue to donate to our community, but to, perhaps, help multiple organizations throughout the area. Most importantly, we must budget for such good deeds.

Lastly, sometimes our hearts are bigger than our heads when it comes to helping as many members as possible meet the financial requirements to play club soccer. We see many kids in financial need who want to play soccer, for which we grant full or partial scholarships. Historically, though, we have done a poor job of making a realistic budget for scholarships, then keeping to the budget. Our goal will always be to help as many kids play soccer as possible, but we must do so with adherence to our own budget. We must stay healthy financially in order to help youth soccer players for years to come.

### **City Partnership**

One of our most important assets is the relationship we have with the City of Deltona. They provide us with fields that are second to none and are always there to support our organization in all our endeavors. Thanks to Mayor John Masiarczyk, the Commissioners, and the entire Parks & Recreation Department. Special thanks to Assistant Director Mark Manning for his ongoing support and patience.

### **Our Vision**

I believe our Club truly has vision, but we do lack a Vision Statement; a true written statement that clearly outlines the Club goals and aspirations. I feel one of the first steps we should take is to establish such a statement to be a guiding force for the direction of the Club. Of course, it must prioritize the safety and experience of our players, but there are other factors to consider.

One part of our Vision should be to continually work to establish and foster community relationships. Whether they be with schools, clubs, churches, the City or any other organization, we must establish contact and look for partnerships that can be mutually beneficial to both parties. If our reputation in the community is that of a partner, we are much more likely to attract the interest of families throughout our area.

Another factor should always be our focus on the Academy programs. We must continue our efforts to keep the program affordable and have an outstanding reputation. In order to do this, it is a priority to obtain a Director of Junior Academy, so we are able to handle the growth that we anticipate. Doing so, will allow Orlando to concentrate his efforts in the development of players and coaches.

A new program that Orlando developed along with Rolando is the player ID program. The goal is to identify players with potential in Senior Academy, pull them aside at scheduled times, and to begin exposing them to Competitive Travel. In conjunction, Orlando is communicating with Academy coaches and the parents of identified players to assuage their concerns about the jump to travel. I believe this program is one of the keys to the future success of the Club. We must take advantage of the success of Senior Academy by increasing the players that convert to Travel players, and the ID program could be the way to bolster our conversion rate. I have confidence in this program, and feel it takes us in the right direction. If we can better transition players from Junior Academy to Senior Academy to Travel, we can secure the future of the Club.

Orlando and some members of the Board have also started discussing the possibility of a small recreational tournament to be held on our home fields with another club. The prospect of a tournament has always seemed daunting because of the lack of knowledge and time commitment

involved in preparing for such an event, as well as the difficulty we experience obtaining volunteers. A small, recreational tournament may be the answer to breaking down the imaginary wall that separates us from having a tournament on our own beautiful fields.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would like to thank the entire extended Board of Directors, Directors, staff and the members of Deltona Youth Soccer Club for having me as your President for the last year. You are all underappreciated but know that you are making a difference. I have learned tremendously from you all, and I hope to continue to do so. I would also like to challenge you and myself to reach beyond the norm that has been established over the years. We are lucky enough to be part of an organization that has been bringing joy to the youth of our community through the shared love of soccer for many years. Our own children have benefited from this great Club, and as my father always told me to always leave a campsite in better shape than you found it, I challenge us to leave Deltona Youth Soccer Club better than we found it.

Sincerely,

John P. Robinson  
President  
Deltona Youth Soccer Club