



Iowa Soccer Annual General Meeting: November 30, 2021

Executive Director Report

COVID-19

Fiscal year 2021 involved many of the challenges seen in 2020. The COVID 19 Pandemic continued to grip the country and the state causing a multitude of issues. Several protocols continued to be in place to make soccer the safest sport to play, whether indoors or out. We were encouraged by the return of so many kids and adults to the game as we resumed play last Fall. Many clubs did not know what to expect following a Spring and Summer of canceled activities. However, registrations were strong, in part because we had protocols in place, clubs followed them, and parents trusted the environment we were creating was safe. We were flexible with league schedules and adjusted our Cup formats to create the best opportunities for kids to play as much as possible. Our pledge was that no team would be stripped of the chance to compete for a state championship because of the pandemic and that held true as we adjusted the format and were flexible with the schedule to ensure teams that required quarantine due to positive players or exposure were able to complete their matches. Consequently, while games were moved, none were canceled, and no team had to forfeit their chance at a State or Presidents Cup championship. From the beginning of the pandemic and as we returned to play, our primary goal was not to be the reason kids missed school and we worked closely with experts to understand how to best accomplish that. As the year moved along, we learned more about how the virus works, vaccines became readily available, and we have continued to evolve protocols. As policies have changed in schools, we have adjusted ours as well. As we moved to the new fiscal year, while protocols are still in place and we are monitoring positive cases, we are certainly closer to normalcy than we were at last year's AGM.

BUDGET

The pandemic did have an impact on our budget. We had fewer players, smaller competitions, and decreased activity such as the cancelation of D Camp and a scaled down Symposium. However, a PPP loan allowed us to maintain the same level of service and staffing. Additionally, other expenses such as travel were significantly reduced. As the FY 21 financial report shows, Iowa Soccer ended the year with net revenues of \$47,000. This is the first year we have finished with a positive variance in three years. Our budget in FY 22 is shows net revenue of \$42,000 so if things go as planned, we will again have a positive net income. We will continue to manage expenses to the best of our ability without sacrificing the services we provide to our clubs.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

This past year produced many highlights for soccer in Iowa. We were privileged to host one of US Youth Soccer's signature events, the National Presidents Cup, which brought the four regional winners in each age bracket together in Des Moines in July to crown 12 national champions. It was an honor to host the event and the state showed well raising hopes that we will again get the opportunity to bring it back in the future.



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Additionally, also in July, we hosted the US Adult Soccer Region 2 Tournament of Champions in Bettendorf. This event brings together teams from 14 states in the Midwest to compete for championships and in some divisions to qualify for US Adult Soccer national championship events. The facility was fantastic, and all involved had a great experience. We also had an Iowa team compete in the event for the first time in many years, which we hope leads to more in the future.

LOOKING FORWARD

As our membership and the soccer landscape evolves, Iowa Soccer is looking hard at all aspects of our organization. We recognize the need to serve our clubs and provide services that are meaningful and beneficial. We are utilizing internal data, club surveys, and best practices from other states to understand how we can best serve our members. As we evaluate our services and our approach to supporting club development, we will refocus on the four stakeholders within clubs and our association: players, coaches, referees, and parents. We strive to provide the support and services that are critical to the growth of the sport in our state. We understand Iowa is about all levels of soccer from the grassroots kids just looking to have some fun with friends to the elite players competing on the national stage to the adult players wanting to continue their athletic careers. Our responsibility is to ensure everyone has a great experience every day, whether at training, a league game, or at a recreational or select event.

We are actively working with the referee committee to develop programs to support clubs to grow the referee pool. It is clear that the United States Soccer Federation is not always the answer for referee number growth and retention at the younger ages, and we are working to be a part of the solution on the local level. Additionally, growing our capacity to provide coach education to all levels of coaches is an important focus for us. To ensure everyone has a great experience, quality coaching from 6U through 19U is important.

Furthermore, it is important that our clubs have the support they need to develop. As we revisit our organizational priorities and structure, we are identifying resources and services that can help clubs develop and prioritizing them. This can mean growing the number of kids playing, improving their governance, helping with volunteer management, or providing coaching education or referee development programs to improve the experience of club members.

Finally, we are constantly looking at how to improve the game for adults in the state. We are identifying additional playing opportunities through small-sided leagues, creating events that are both social and competitive, and continuing the State Cup for the top-level players in the state to provide a pathway to compete beyond Iowa.

Iowa Soccer is in the process of a major evolution. Over the course of the year, you will see significant organizational changes as we adapt to better serve our members including clubs, players, coaches, referees, and parents. We look forward to serving you better as we move forward!