

May, 2009

## “FROM STATE TO REGIONALS”

by  
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The **2009, FYSA State Cup—Final Four** tournament at Pierson Park in Wellington, barely escaped the heavy rainfall that moved into the area during the first part of the following week. As it turned out, the overcast skies, occasional light showers and steady breeze, actually helped keep things fairly cool, with no delays due to weather.

From the view of the referees, the tournament seemed to go pretty well. The games were competitive, with several of them requiring “kicks from the mark” to reach an outcome.

As has as been the trend for Florida State Referees (FSR) at FYSA tournaments in recent years, the group of referees who serve the major FYSA tournaments (President’s Cup and State Cup Final Four) is reflecting the results of FSR’s increasing success in the recruitment and development of young referees. This has proven to be good for the game; coaches and players; and, for the referees themselves.

To help accomplish this, FYSA and FSR’s Referee Academy have been working together to select the best, young refereeing talent in Florida, and to bring FSR administrators, assessor/mentors to the preliminary (“knockout”) rounds and major tournaments, to provide observation, feedback, and other on-site, tournament-specific training.

For the State Cup Finals that were held this past weekend, fourteen FSR staff/mentors worked with fifty-five (55) referees. In this group of referees were nine (9) females (16%); with forty-five (45) of the referees being less than age 30 (82%); and twenty-six (26) of the total group being 22 years of age, or lower (47%). Several years ago, it would have been unbelievable to think that almost half of the referees at FYSA’s premier tournament would be twenty-two years of age, or less.

To be invited to this tournament (and, it is “invitation-only”), the referees are selected on the basis of their performance over time, and at recent events. They must be currently certified and screened (background check); must have been observed at previous “knockout” rounds and tournaments; recommended by FYSA and the Referee Academy; reviewed by FSR’s Area Referee Administrators; and, approved by FSR’s SRA/SYRA.

This effort to develop quality referees is showing positive results. While none of the performances this past weekend were perfect (nor, ever will be!!), the games were officiated by referees who were fit; trained and experienced; highly motivated; and, on track to improve themselves. Some are already doing games at the professional level, and all the younger ones have the ambition to do that, as well.

In this particular referee group was one National Candidate; and twenty-two State-level referees. ***In the group that was age twenty-one (21) or under***, there were five (5) Grade 8s; nine (9) Grade 7s; two (2) Grade 6s; and one (1) Grade 5 referee.

At the conclusion of the tournament, using the feedback from the mentors, FYSA and FSR staff selected twelve referees to represent Florida at the Region III, Southern Regional Tournament, in Dallas, TX, next month (June). Those referees are:

**Kian Attai; Bill Chapman; Emmanuel Darriba; Marcos DeOliveira; Tori Hancock; Andres Lavin; Kyle Longville; Matt Miscannon; Mike Miscannon; Robby Saa; Kristen Schiereck; and Lance Vanhaisma.** Jonathan Weiner will not be going to Regionals, but was invited to go directly to Nationals this year.

So, ***best of luck*** to players, coaches, families (the real sponsors!), and referees, at next month's competition in Dallas. Let's hope that all of these folks make Florida proud!