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Recreational Coaches of the Year Regional Winners Announced  
January 22, 2009

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**US Youth Soccer honors regional Recreational Coaches of the Year  
National winners to be named at US Youth Soccer Awards Gala**

**FRISCO, Texas (January 22, 2009)** - US Youth Soccer announces the regional winners of the US Youth Soccer Boys and Girls Recreational Coach of the Year Awards. The Recreational Coach of the Year is awarded to a recreational coach for both a boys team and a girls team for his or her coaching activities, sportsmanship, player development, personal coaching development and citizenship.

The national Boys and Girls Recreational Coach of the Year Award winners will be announced at the US Youth Soccer Awards Gala on Friday, March 6, at 7:30 p.m., as part of the US Youth Soccer adidas Workshop in San Jose, Calif.

Brief bios of the regional winners are below based on the submitted nomination forms.

**Girls Recreational Coach of the Year Regional Award Winners:**

**Region I – Tom Garbowski, Wilmington, Del.**

Tom Garbowski, of Wilmington, Del., promotes sportsmanship within the Hockessin Soccer League. His ability to motivate and encourage each child to their fullest potential helps players develop. Garbowski's ability to personally connect with his Under-9 players eases their nervousness on the field. The players are coached to improve their soccer skills and be competitive. They have participated in the Kohl's US Youth Soccer American Cup for two years to expand their playing experiences and have fun. Garbowski has coached girls soccer for over six years. In addition to regularly scheduled practices and games, he holds extra practices and a kicking workshop for players.

**Region II – Scott Howard, Topeka, Kan.**

Scott Howard, of Topeka, Kan., coaches Under-7 and Under-8 Girls in the Sunflower Soccer Association. He believes the real winner is the one who tried their hardest, persevered and enjoyed the sport. Howard's innate optimism makes you want to be a better person after spending time with him. He is

diplomatic, easygoing, sociable and peaceable. To inspire his players, he organizes a night to watch a local university soccer team play. The team gets to the field early to get first row seats and watch the team warm up and interact with the older players. Howard also serves as treasurer on the board of trustees.

### **Region III – Ken Hays, Cary, N.C.**

Ken Hays, of Cary, N.C., began a Captain of the Week program for young recreational players. The designated player wears the captain's arm band, assists with practice drills and meets the opponent's head coach before a game to introduce themselves and shake hands. His goal is to continue to provide a positive environment for children on and off the soccer field. Hays has been coaching for five years at CASL and has moved into the role of vice chair of the recreational division. To improve his coaching, Hays participates in CASL's ongoing, informal coaching education and player development clinics.

### **Region IV – Kurt Grevstad, Seattle, Wash.**

Kurt Grevstad, of Seattle, Wash., has been coaching within the Magnolia Soccer Club for 10 years. Last year, Grevstad coached three teams (one Under-14 and two Under-12 Girls teams) which led him to hold a two team, 31 girl practice that resembled soccer camp twice a week. He measures success as a coach by how many players return each year, and by this standard he has been very successful. Grevstad has 40 years of playing experience and regularly attends coaching training courses. Through his leadership, his club has sponsored USSF "E" and "D" License clinics each year. Grevstad holds a USSF "C" License.

## **Boys Recreational Coach of the Year Regional Award Winners:**

### **Region I – Kristen Saccomano, Edgewater Park, N.J.**

Kristen Saccomano, of Edgewater Park, N.J., teaches and coaches in Camden, N.J., a city that consistently ranks among the top most dangerous cities in the nation. Her team in the Camden Youth Soccer Club provides an outlet for the children where they learn sportsmanship, soccer skills, lessons in friendship, respect and kindness. The children Saccomano coaches exhibit camaraderie and confidence. To improve player development, Saccomano used the information she learned in the National Youth License course to make coaching packets for each age group to provide continuity in training regardless of who is coaching. She also worked on a free soccer camp for children in Camden.

### **Region II – Michael Zovistoski, Mundelein, Ill.**

Michael Zovistoski, of Mundelein, Ill., believes in giving players the ability and responsibility to make decisions on the field as opposed to making the decisions for them. Zovistoski's training environment is set up as a fun, challenging and creative one. Most of the exercises are in a small-sided game format that mirrors the decision making opportunities in larger games. He holds a USSF "B" License and has plans to complete his USSF "A" License this year. He also specializes in goalkeeper training. Zovistoski serves as the director of coaching and tournament director for the Eclipse Select Soccer Club and the tournament director for the Greater Libertyville Soccer Association.

### **Region III – Carlos Goncalves, Niceville, Fla.**

Carlos Goncalves, of Niceville, Fla., serves as the Emerald Coast United coordinator of player development and coaches an Under-10 Boys recreational team. He has coached in northwest Florida for 10 years and previously was a professional player and youth coach in his native Brazil. Goncalves not only develops his players' technical skills, but also develops their love of the game and confidence in their abilities. He uses the players' strengths to motivate and their weaknesses as a learning tool. He has the right combination of competitive fire, knowledge of the game and genuine concern for his young players. Goncalves has his National Youth License and has been working on his USSF "C" License.

### **Region IV – Shirley Thompson, Tracy, Calif.**

Shirley Thompson, of Tracy, Calif., makes her players feel that they have done their best, filling them with self confidence and independence. Thompson has coached for over 20 years and serves as Tracy Youth Soccer Association's league president. She coaches when and where she is needed to help teach the kids gain responsibility, teamwork and a sense of worth to the group. She is a mentor who teaches her teams to walk away from the game with their heads held high, win or lose. Her theory on life is to always make it better for someone else.

For more information about US Youth Soccer's Recreational Coach of the Year Award and the US Youth Soccer adidas Workshop, visit [www.USYouthSoccer.org](http://www.USYouthSoccer.org).

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**About the United States Youth Soccer Association (US Youth Soccer)** – US Youth Soccer - The Game for ALL Kids!® is the largest youth sports organization in the country and largest member of the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body of soccer in the United States. US Youth Soccer registers more than 3.2 million players annually, ages 5 to 19, and over 900,000 administrators, coaches and volunteers in 55 member state associations. US Youth Soccer programs provide a fun, safe and healthy environment for players at every level of the game. For more information, visit [www.USYouthSoccer.org](http://www.USYouthSoccer.org).

**Media Request:** When referring to the United States Youth Soccer Association, the largest youth sports organization in the United States, please refer to the association only as US Youth Soccer, and never as USYS or USYSA. We appreciate your cooperation.

## Kickin' it at the top



Written by Bob Brownne  
Friday, 23 January 2009

**Shirley Thompson got into youth sports to help her kids, and now she's being honored as one of the best youth soccer coaches in the country and up for a national award.**

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**Shirley** Thompson got involved with youth sports 22 years ago for the same reason as other parents — she wanted to get her children into athletics.

When she saw how much her own kids enjoyed the game, she couldn't help but stay active, even after her own children were grown and out of the house. Today, she is more involved than ever with Tracy Youth Soccer League and California Youth Soccer Association, the statewide group that governs youth soccer.

Now she has been recognized as one of the top coaches in the western U.S. — last month, the U.S. Youth Soccer Association named her the Region IV Boys Recreational Coach of the Year — and is up for a national award to be announced in March.

After 22 years with TYSL, she still coaches — sometimes more than one team at a time — and is also active in the administration of her league and the CYSA District 8 board of directors.

Thompson said the league, district and CYSA have honored her in the past, including the state coach of the year award that led to her most recent honor. But the awards are just recognition of her real motivation.

"I love the kids," she said.

First it was her children, Heather and Jason and their teammates. Now, the children she speaks of are the 2,200 soccer players in TYSL, including her three grandchildren. These days, Thompson works with any team that needs a coach.

"Right now, it's only one, but there have been times where I've done two or three in a year," she said.

The U.S. Youth Soccer awards begin with coaches in each district who nominate their peers for the state award. Letters of recommendation also pour in to support candidates. That's why Thompson considers this one of the top honors of her career.

"This was literally given to me by children I've coached over the past 20 years," she said.

Thompson is involved as the leader of the local league as TYSL's president. She is also the competitive team registrar for CYSA District 8, which governs youth recreational leagues where everyone plays and the competitive tournaments where the best teams vie for state and regional championships. On the state level, she is CYSA's rules revisions chairwoman.

Thompson is one of eight coaches to be recognized by U.S. Youth Soccer, part of the United States Soccer Federation. Four girls coaches were named, and four boys coaches, including Thompson, were named.

U.S. Youth Soccer represents 3.2 million young soccer players across the country, and is the governing agency that sets rules and guidelines for groups like CYSA and its leagues.

The national boys and girls recreational coaches of the year will be named at the U.S. Youth Soccer Awards Gala on March 6 during the U.S. Youth Soccer Adidas Workshop in San Jose.