

2019-2020 CSO President's Report

<https://columbusmssoccer.org/>

Will Starks, Treasurer

Tenita Jackson, Registrar

Randy Francisco (Next Stage Media), Head of Media & IT

Board of Directors:

Tom Velek, President

Lee Milam, Board Member for Recreational Soccer

Dave Albertson, Board Member for Competitive Soccer

Anika Perkins, Board Member for Sponsorship and Public Outreach

Randy Francisco, Secretary

Overview

Columbus Soccer Organization (CSO) is a non-profit that offers four distinct soccer programs in the area. These programs are recreational soccer, competitive soccer through Columbus United Soccer Club, TOP Soccer for players with special needs, and adult soccer for players 19 years of age and older. CSO offers player and coaching development opportunities to our members as well as the community. In addition to our programs, CSO is proud to support the sport of soccer throughout the area.

The 2019-2020 year has been a challenging one due to the advent of Covid-19 in spring 2020. However, it was also a very productive and dynamic one for CSO. In this report I will outline major accomplishments for the organization. Then I will review specific programs and outline future initiatives.

CSO Accomplishments

This year was one full of challenges but also accomplishments. Below are some of the major accomplishments of 2019-2020.

- CSO completed its second full year of the new governing structure. Rather than a single individual acting as “president” of CSO we now have a board of directors, treasurer, and registrar. We also recognize our members as an important part of the organization.
- CSO completed and approved a new set of bylaws. Those bylaws can be found on the main CSO webpage listed above. This was a major step forward and accomplishment for the organization.
- CSO completed the filing for 501c.3 federal non-profit status. I am happy to report that CSO was successful in this application and was awarded 501 c.3 status. This means that in addition to being a recognized Mississippi non-profit corporation CSO is a federally recognized non-profit. This has many important ramifications. For example, ALL donations to CSO are now tax deductible. In addition, CSO is the ONLY organization offering soccer in the area with this status.
- CSO was awarded Mississippi trademark protection for its logo and name.
- CSO worked with soccer.com to establish an online store front for CSO merchandise including t-shirts, hoodies, hats, and more. The public can now visit soccer.com, order merchandise, and have it shipped directly to their home.
- CSO launched the “CSO Collegiate Scholarship” to help our players as the move on to higher education. The scholarship fund was established by generous donations in honor of Marolyn Albertson, the grandmother of Columbus United coach Dave Albertson. A local business has

committed to the fund for the next three years. The first recipient of the \$500 scholarship will be announced soon. This scholarship is open only to individuals who played for CSO.

- CSO changed its sponsorship structure last year. Previously sponsorship had been designated only for Columbus Unite Soccer Club. This was changed so that sponsorship now is for CSO and benefits all of the programs offered. Our sponsors for 2020 are the following:
 - Trout Family Dentistry
 - J 5
 - Dick's Sporting Goods
 - King & Associates Cardiology
 - Columbus Orthopaedic
 - TGV Properties, LLC
 - Next Stage Media
 - Dex Imaging
 - Allstate Insurance
 - Columbus Recycling
 - 4 County Foundation—Grant to support TOP Soccer
- CSO was also granted permission by the Lowndes County Recreation Department to put up a new sponsor's sign at the Lowndes County Complex.
- CSO is happy to have fostered a strong working relationship with the Lowndes County Recreation Department. In addition to allowing for the sign mentioned LCRD provided training space for Columbus United teams, a field for TOP Soccer, and partnered with CSO to offer adult soccer.
- CSO now has a new website thanks to Next Stage Media. Rather than relying on the original Columbus United webpage, the new page allows us to feature more prominently and distinctly all the wonderful work CSO is doing.
- CSO has a new Instagram page as well as distinct United and CSO pages on Facebook.

Challenges remain. We never rest on our accomplishments. However, this list is evidence of a dynamic organization that is constantly evolving and finding new ways to serve our members and the soccer community.

Program Evaluation

CSO offers four distinct soccer programs to the area—recreational, TOP Soccer, competitive soccer, and adult soccer. The motto for this year and next is quite simple: "Maintain and build". As an organization we want to maintain the significant success we have had with all programs as well as build on that success.

- TOP Soccer, Adult Soccer, Columbus United Competitive Soccer
For a full discussion of each of these programs please see my full DOC Report for 2019-2020. It can be found by following this link: <https://columbusunitedsoccer.com/>
- Recreational Soccer
CSO continued its partnership with Columbus Park & Recreation Department in the fall of 2019 to offer recreational soccer to the community. By most measures the season was a success. Unfortunately, CRD would not share registration numbers with us so I am unable to report those to you. However, based on number of teams it appeared that registration was good despite our

dropping the policy of requiring Columbus United players to register for recreational soccer. This policy change will be a positive for our recreational soccer program going forward.

After the conclusion of the season we had numerous conversations with Greg Lewis about continuing our partnership with Columbus Recreation Department. Those talks have not been fruitful, and we will be moving in a different direction. After much consideration and thought by the Board of Directors, CSO is excited to announce it will continue providing a Fall Recreational Program, but it will be separate from any other recreational programming by CRD. More details to follow.

New Initiatives

- CSO Soccer Closet

This month CSO is officially launching its new program—"The CSO Soccer Closet". The program allows anyone to donate gently used and washed soccer gear—cleats, socks, balls, shorts, keeper gloves, even training apparel like t-shirts, sweatshirts, and backpacks. As the only 501c.3 non-profit soccer organization in the area CSO can write a tax receipt so families can deduct their donation. You can drop off your items or arrange for pick-up. Beginning this summer and continuing in the fall any CSO registered player (this includes recreational, United, U8 development, TOP, and adult) can come by and simply pick up what they need. No charge.



- Indoor Soccer Facility

During the spring the CSO board began exploring the possibility of developing or building an indoor soccer facility for its members. The board visited several locations. The requirements of such a facility were studied as well as possible sources of grants and funding. There should be more news on this in the 2020-2021 year.

Annual General Meeting & Awards

CSO is happy to announce our 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on May 27th beginning at 6pm. Because of the uncertain nature of group meetings at this time the meeting will be held via FB live. All members will be receiving information as well as the manner to vote remotely soon via Sports Engine message.

All members of the board of directors will be elected for the 2020-2021 season. We are accepting nominations for the following positions until May 13th at 5pm: Secretary, President, Board Member for Competitive Soccer, Board Member for Public Outreach, Board Member for Recreational Soccer. In addition, any other motions or business for the agenda/vote should be submitted by the same date. Please send nominations, business, matters for vote to tvelek@yahoo.com by May 13th at 5pm.

Please note that we will be giving our awards this year for the Todd Fishel United Coach of the Year, CSO volunteer of the year, TOP Soccer Buddy of the Year, and the new Todd Waldrop Adult Player of the Year. We will be making those announcements soon. We will also be announcing soon the first recipient of the CSO Collegiate Scholarship.

Conclusion

As president of CSO I am accountable to each member, player, coach, family, and supporter. I provide this report as a summary of our organization to all those groups. However, I am always open for questions and comments. I welcome input at our AGM as well as individually.

One of my favorite and guiding principles is "More Oars In the Water". A boat moves much faster when lots of great people are in it with their oars in the water working. People working together will move an organization forward much faster and more efficiently than one person determined to run everything by themselves. CSO has a great many oars in the water. Please note all the members of the board listed at the beginning of this report as well as our treasurer, head of technology, and registrar. Thank them if you see them.

Thank you to all those who coach, manage, cheer, sponsor, and in so many other ways support the work of Columbus Soccer Organization. The future is bright with so many oars in the water.

Regards

Dr. Thomas G. Velek
President, CSO