In the 2017/2018 season, we saw significant changes within Northern Chautauqua Soccer Association. Some highlights were the acceptance into the Buffalo and WNY Junior Soccer League, strict registration deadlines for House League and new Player Development Initiatives (PDIs) from US Soccer that caused changes to the coaching format at 6&8U divisions.

In the 2016/2017 season, NCSA/Concord FC entered one team in the Buffalo and WNY Junior Soccer League through a partnership with Lakeshore Youth Soccer Association. That year proved to be a success. In the interest of providing our membership with a different playing experience and other travel options, in the fall of 2017, Concord FC applied for member status with the Buffalo and WNY Junior Soccer League. Concord FC was accepted on a provisionary and probationary status. This first year was a success far beyond our expectation. This, in large part, was made possible by the dedication of our coaches, families, Director of Coaching, Technical Director and our VP and Director of Travel.

In the 2018 Travel Soccer Season with BWNYJSL, we entered 6 teams. Every game was played away as a stipulation of our probationary status. Despite a rigorous travel schedule, 2 teams earned the distinction of Division Champions, 2 teams took second place in their respective divisions and the other two teams were acknowledged for their dedication and sportsmanship. This hard work has helped Concord FC to move from probationary status to member, and has also earned Concord FC the right of home games in 2019. We are actively seeking home fields for our games for the coming season. We also continued play in the Southern Tier Travel Soccer League and remain in good standing with that organization.

The PDIs from US Soccer pertain to the youngest ages we serve and drove a change in the format of coaching and play offered at the 6&8U divisions. This change helped to highlight the biggest opportunity for growth within NCSA by helping us to identify a critical need for coach education. To address this need, NCSA partnered with NYSWYSA to offer 5 different opportunities for coach education (over 20 hours) in the new grassroots coaching programs offering certificates of training to all who completed the classroom, on field and online course work. NCSA also continued a relationship with Brett Gould, Director of Coaching, and hired PJ Gondek to serve as the Technical Director. Both Coach Gould and Gondak are New York State West Staff. Coach Gould is currently coaching the NYSWYSA Academy out of Jamestown, NY.

Beginning in the winter of 2017/2018, the NCSA Board, focused on the newest Player Development Initiatives encouraging smaller goals for 10U players, and purchased 6 FarPost adjustable goals with money secured through a grant from New York State West Youth Soccer Association. These versatile goals can play as small as 6x12’ and extend as far as 6x15’ or 6x18’, and were used for both the House League and Travel Soccer, in the 2018 season.

During the 2017/2018 season we participated in 4 seasons of play. Winter Futsal; hosted by the Dunkirk Recreation Department but managed by NCSA Coaches. Spring and fall (competitive) Travel were both run by NCSA. Our Concord FC Spring players were a part of the Southern Tier Travel Soccer League in the Southern and Twin Tiers and the BWNYJSL. For fall, NCSA entered teams grade 3-4 and 5-6 in the unsanctioned MOHL organized by STTSL clubs.

In an effort to become more efficient, the House League adopted strict registration deadlines to help address concerns expressed by the dwindling volunteer base and to help combat additional cost through rush orders with uniform vendors. This cost savings allowed us to offer scholarships in both house and travel leagues to every person who requested and met the criteria outlined in a formal Financial Aid policy. Due to decreased volunteerism, the board rebid field lining and eventually awarded the field lining work to Tabone Southtown Sealing with an agreement for NCSA to purchase paint from Sherwin Williams. This partnership also lead to a more cost efficient, larger and more easily accessible storage facility for all NCSA equipment including, the goals which were previously stored outdoors.

Success was not limited to our players, and we certainly could not have accomplished these new initiatives without a dedicated team of volunteers. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to nominate 4 individuals from NCSA for their service to our soccer community. Tim Finnegan – Volunteer of the Year, Aaron Pietro – Boys Competitive Coach of the Year, Paul Sellari – Girls Competitive Coach of the year, and Jake Wilkins for Administrator of the Year. Paul and Jake were selected by NYSWYSA, and their nominations have been sent on to US Youth Soccer for Region One recognition.

NCSA remains focused on continual improvement, player and coach development and innovative practices to improve its offerings at every level. The 2018/2019 season will be another year of monumental growth, and I am confident that our NCSA board and coaches are positioned to excel within the guidelines being set by US Youth Soccer.