

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Byfield, Bucich, Christopher, Ferraro, Gulmi, McCabe, Turchi inducted into ENY Hall of Fame Dec. 21, 2004

By Michael Lewis

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Franklin Square, L.I. -- There were so many worthy and qualified candidates for induction into this year's class of the Eastern New York Soccer Hall of Fame that the Hall of Fame committed decided to add seven instead of its maximum six inductees.

The honored at the Sand Castle included Cosmopolitan Junior Soccer League president Carlo Bucich, long-time Long Island Soccer Football League and club official Orlando Byfield, New York Pancyprian Freedoms owner Philip Christopher, Eastern New York Soccer Association registrar Ken Gulmi, long-time Long Island Junior Soccer League official Joe Ferraro, former national referee administrator Jack McCabe and former State Referee Administrator Sal Turchi.

MCCabe was added after the first vote by the selection committee.

"I guess I'm starting in Eastern New York and it looks like I am ending in Eastern New York," he told a crowd of 220 onlookers.

He looked toward Christopher with a smile and remembered the last game he officiated -- Pancyprians vs. Olympiakos.

"I remember it well," he said. "What a night that was. I called an offside on the most beautiful goal that was ever scored in history. What a mistake it was." The crowd laughed. "It's an honor for me to just stand up here with these people," McCabe said. He wasn't the only one humbled.

These men with big hearts, big dream and big egos were brought down to earth by their inductions. "I am completely humbled and honored because all those names that are on this are on the Hall of Fame (plaque)," said Christopher, founder of the Pancyprian Athletic Association and New York Freedoms. "I know how much time and effort they have all put in. in soccer. Many, if not all of the inductees had similar sentiments. "I am very, honored to be chosen among these great people who are surrounding us," said Bucich, also one of the driving forces behind Istria S.C. in the Cosmopolitan Soccer League. "I'm not sure I deserve it. Obviously I feel very grateful." So did Ferraro. "I am very proud to accept this award," he said. "I am particularly proud after seeing the names of the people who have gone before me -- Peter Masotto, Peter Collins, Rocco Amoroso, Addie Mattei, Enrico Varani. Those are the ones I know well. I don't know the other ones as well because they are from other leagues." "I am sure there are hundreds out there who deserve as I am to receive this award and are not recognized and I thank them for their contributions." For many, it was a big family experience. "I would like to accept this honor not just for Salvo Turchi," said Turchi, the Italian-American Soccer League president who had eight brothers emigrated to the U.S. in the 1950s. "Since 1958 soccer has been a family affair. My father, he wanted to come, but at 90 years old, he said that he can't see too (well) and he was ashamed he would not recognize people. Two of my players were select players in IASL in 1959. I was the odd man out. I think they made the better choice. "I would like to dedicate this honor to my brothers." Virtually every person talked about their passion for the sport. "I would like to thank my wife, Norma," said Byfield, founder of Integral S.C.

"She has been a soccer widow. I spend most of my time with the game. "I've always said that service is the price you pay for being on planet earth. I will be proud to serve this game until my dying day. "My wife knows that my passion has always been soccer and it will always be soccer." That brought laughter from the crowd. Someone jokingly told Byfield, "You can sleep at my house tonight" That brought this response during Gulmi's acceptance speech: "My wife -- you come first, Chris," Gulmi said. "I love soccer, but I promise you come first." Then Gulmi, president of the East Hudson Youth Soccer League, became serious. "We don't sacrifice anything, they (wife and family) do because we do the things we love," he said. He then tried to thank the parents of all of the children he has coached through the years. "For 21 years they have been entrusting their kids to me to train and the players I've spent time with, that has made me such a rich man," he said. "I can't possibly thank them. People say thank you to me and the truth is that I'm selfish because I get far more out of it than I put into it."

Christopher said that he would like to take the Hall of Fame a step further beyond annual inductions and a perpetual plaque that is updated every year.

"I want to help to really build a Hall of Fame so these people can have a true Hall of Fame here in New York State so the kids can see it and hopefully the kids can grow up and become part of the Hall of Fame," he said.

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Nov. 28, 2005: This Year's Magnificent Seven: ENY Hall Of Fame To Induct DiPasquali, Boehm, Lazari, Maniccia, Mernone, Salter, Snizek.

The Eastern New York Soccer Hall of Fame will induct seven new members in December.

Glen Mernone, George Snizek, Nino DePasquali, Boris Lazari, Ben Boehm, Barry Salter and Cesar Maniccia were elected into the hall and will be inducted at the Christmas party of Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association and Eastern New York State Amateur Soccer Association in Franklin Square, L.I. next month.

The seven inductees (in alphabetical order):

* Ben Boehm -- Well known in youth circles, Boehm has been the driving force for B.W. Gottschee's success in the Cosmopolitan Junior Soccer League. The Gottschee boys teams captured an unprecedented five State Cup titles this June.

* Nino DePasquali -- A major proponent of the women's game, DePasquali is coach of the New York Magic (W-League) and has played an instrumental role at the club and league level of the New York Metropolitan Women's Soccer League.

* Boris Lazari -- A former national referee, Lazari is well respected and the State Referee Administrator.

* Cesar Maniccia -- An icon in the Capital District and Albany area, Maniccia is a founding father of the Capital District Youth Soccer League (serving as president and director of coaching for the Select program) and the founder of the Rotterdam Youth S.C. (president for more than 20 years. Maniccia, who also was a referee and coach, taught mathematics at Albany University.

* Glen Mernone -- A life member of ENY amateur, Mernone also is fourth vice president with the organization and first vice president with the Long Island Soccer Football League. He has been heavily involved with the N.Y. Hota/Bavarians for years.

* Barry Salter -- Salter, who has the most seniority of any ENY youth vice president, is former president of the Westchester Youth Soccer League.

* George Snizek -- A long-time Long Island Soccer Football League officer -- he is now a life member -- Snizek is well known at the amateur level. He was one of the mainstays of the Lynbrook club for years and is an official with the Long Island Ladies Soccer League, among other many responsibilities in the game.

The Hall is joint venture between Eastern New York Youth and Amateur Associations.

Dec. 11, 2006: The Elite Eight: Cuellar, DeLuca, Dominguez, Kleinstauber, Nigrin, Petrocelli, Varas And Vargas Inducted Into ENY Hall Of Fame

By Michael Lewis
ENYSoccer.com Editor





Franklin Square, L.I. -- Area soccer's best was honored Saturday night as the eight newest members were inducted into the Eastern New York Soccer Hall Fame at the Sand Castle.

In alphabetical order, the Class of 2006 included Miguel Cuellar, Pasquale DeLuca, Dino Dominquez, Klaus Kleinstauber, Dr. Gabriel Nigrin, Settimio Petrocelli, John Varas and Jose Vargas.

They were inducted during the annual Christmas party of Eastern New York Youth Soccer

Dr. Gabriel Nigrin (center) of the Silver Lake S.C. was inducted into the Hall of Fame as well.

Association and Eastern New York State Amateur Soccer Association.

The hall, established in 1997, is a joint venture of the two organizations. Seventy-eight men and women have been inducted.

While there were many thank you's and smiles from the inductees and their friends and families Saturday night, two of the most emotional presentations were for Dr. Nigrin and Varas near the end of the ceremonies.

Pat Wolyniec, whose son, New York Red Bulls forward John Wolyniec, played for the Silver Lake S.C., introduced Dr. Nigrin, who founded the Cosmopolitan Junior Soccer League club.

"We were lucky they decided to live in Staten Island," Wolyniec said. "It's one thing to run a soccer club, it's another to start one."

Wolyniec admitted she did not know Nigrin's actual specialty, though he was known as "Doc," to many people. When a child of a friend of Wolyniec's came down with juvenile diabetes, Pat was told: "You have to call your friend, Dr. Nigrin from soccer."

Added Wolyniec: "I found out that Dr. Nigrin helped all children. He never told me. That's how humble he was."

Dr. Nigrin thanked the members of the Silver Lake S.C., past and present. "I learned a lot about soccer from them," he said, also mentioning his wife of 52 years. "She has always been on my side. She has always helped me, supported me and guided me all these years."

Nigrin then spoke about four important facets of life -- security, attention, the need of a new experience and need for recognition.

"I have received a number of awards," he said. "Today is particularly a distinguished one and I am very proud to receive it."

Varas, who passed away in March, 2005 after a long bout with cancer, was honored posthumously. His wife, Mary, died in October of last year.

Varas was an advocate of women's and girls soccer. He played the sport when he was younger with clubs such as Brookhatten, Brooklyn Hispano, Blue Star and Austria FC, but decided to become a coach because he knew he could give more back to the game. He coached at all youth levels -- boys and girls. He eventually became a referee and eventually was named a national level assessor.

"John was deeply ingrained in the game," said past ENYYSA president Peter Masotto, who introduced Varas and his family. "He is worthy of that award."

Varas, a lieutenant in the New York City Police Department, retired in 1989 after 29 years.

"I miss him everyday," said his daughter Jean. "He might have been a little loud at times. But his heart was in the right place.

"He dedicated his life to soccer refereeing. He loved it."

His son John and daughter Mary were at the ceremonies. Daughter Margie was unable to attend.

DeLuca, the first inductee of the evening, has operated Forest Park S.C. of the Long Island Soccer Football League for 38 years. Under DeLuca, Forest Park has won numerous championships at the league and state level, including eight LISFL titles.

He has been so dedicated to the soccer club that "his wife hasn't seen him on Sundays for 38 years," his presenter jokingly said.

DeLuca, who was in a wheelchair after breaking his pelvis in a construction accident, thanked the soccer community for the honor and had some advice for the some 300 people who attended the event:

"If you don't have respect of the team you play against, you don't play soccer."

Cuellar, who works for the New York City department of parks and recreation, has been a player, coach and administrator for more than 30 years. He established MetroKids, a league that plays in Queens at Flushing Meadow-Corona Park.

After thanking his wife and children, Cuellar then acknowledged "my second family" -- the soccer community.

"I've either played with or against 90 percent of the people in this room," he said.

Dino Dominguez, founder of the All-Foot League, was introduced by Alfonso Vargas, ENY amateur third vice president. Vargas called Dominguez "my friend, my mentor.

"I'm sure our friends look up to Dino as an administrator because he has taught us how to play and run a league," Vargas added.

Dominguez, who emigrated to the U.S. from his native Ecuador some 40 years ago, dedicated his honor to his wife, America, "Otherwise, he said, "I wouldn't have made it."

Kleinstauber, a former local player, might be better known to the current generation of players, coaches and referees as a game official and referee assessor.

"He was there for the game -- always," said former Long Island Junior Soccer League president Peter Collins, who introduced Kleinstauber. "I feel it was an honor to know him as an official. I didn't always agree with him, but he's a class guy."

Kleinstauber acknowledged the "people in the audience who helped me and encouraged me along the way -- the players and referees."

Petrucelli, who came to the U.S. from Italy as a 17-year-old in 1956, was honored for his involvement and dedication to S.S. Cosmo & Damiano, his Italian American Soccer League club. He was one of the founding members of the club and has been its president since 1981.

State amateur treasurer Mario Treglia then rattled off a long list of Cosmo & Damino's accomplishments, which included several IASL championships, indoor titles and reaching the league and state cup finals in the past quarter century.

Petrucelli gave "a thank you to all my friends and beautiful wife."

Anyone who has been to soccer games in Eastern New York probably has seen Vargas. He usually is the man wearing a hat or fedora -- with a feather in it. Pete Pinori, the amateur association's general secretary who introduced Vargas, noted the man "wears a multitude of soccer hats" -- literally and figuratively.

Anyone who has been to soccer games in Eastern New York probably has seen Vargas. He usually is the man wearing a hat or fedora -- with a feather in it.

"If you go outside and look inside his car, you'll see 20 of them," Pinori jokingly said.

But then Pinori got serious about Vargas' credentials. Vargas emigrated to the U.S. from Peru, has been director of operations of the Guiding Light. He has been affiliated with Shrub Oak and East Fishkill (president) soccer clubs, an East Hudson Youth Soccer League president, referee assessor, state referee instructor and a current assessor, among other titles.

"I am deeply honored and very highly privileged to be the recipient of an award that is not really mine," Vargas said. "It belongs to the players, coaches, referees and administrators of all of the leagues.

"At one time I was ready to quit. But I have to thank some people who convinced me to stay."

Vargas also thanked his wife Lynn of 34 years.