

North Port Youth Soccer recognized

By **STEPHEN MCKAY**
SUN CORRESPONDENT

NORTH PORT — The Florida Youth Soccer Association, a nonprofit educational organization with nearly 250 member clubs, recognized North Port Youth Soccer with its 2010 Recreation Club of the Year award at its annual meeting held recently in Orlando.

“Several years ago we wanted to be able to recognize our outstanding recreational programs for their achievements in many areas,” said FYSA office manager Jennifer Davis. “The North Port program is certainly a worthy recipient.”

While NPYS was one of more than a dozen programs nominated for the award, North Port

was one of the few clubs which received multiple nominations. Davis said the Recognition Committee, which determines the honoree, reviews a whole host of criteria.

In determining its honoree, the FYSA asks those who nominate a club to give specific details on the goals of the program, the quality of its leadership, the ways in which it trains its coaches and players and other factors.

While Bob Renaud, president of the NPYS, was proud of the honor he is quick to deflect credit to others.

“The success of our program today is largely the result of a lot of people who came before



SUN PHOTO BY STEPHEN MCKAY

North Port Youth Soccer board of directors; back row from left, Dave McKinley, Bill Callan, Troy Cawthorne, Rod Hemberger, Vic Syzonenko and Rob Proffita; front row, Catherine Anderson, Gerard Gregoire, Bob Renaud, Stacy Shuman, Beverly Botelho, John Cannon and Vic Rebmann. Not pictured: Kelly Troche and Rocky Purvis.

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us,” said Renaud. “We benefit from the countless hours put in by people like Chip Stec and Chris Harrison who laid down the foundation we have today.”

Stec and Harrison, two past presidents of NPYS, helped build the program from less than 100 children to as many as 700, added Renaud. Among his predecessors accomplishments was to work with the city and county to bring more soccer fields to North Port. The vast Narramore Soccer Complex on Glenallen Boulevard, only a few years old, was the chief result.

“Chip Huntley, though not a president, was another who worked

hard to expand the soccer space in North Port,” added Renaud.

As youth participation in NPYS has expanded in recent years there has necessarily been an increased need to recruit and train more coaches. The greatest resource for coaching recruits are the parents of participants — though some may not have much or any experience. NPYS encourages parental participation and provides a strong support system for those who may be less experienced.

“In addition to providing training materials and clinics before they start with a team, board members will routinely help new coaches on the field,” Renaud said.

“Also, the coaches of our competitive teams, who are very experienced, will often assist new coaches.”

NPYS also has the versatile talents of Gerard Gregoire, the director of competitive soccer for the North Port Futbol Club (the competitive arm of NPYS). Gregoire played both college and professional soccer and has been involved with NPYS for eight years.

While Gregoire coaches the U-14 boys travel team and is chiefly responsible for the competitive side of NPYS, he is also very much involved with the recreational program. Gregoire roves literally and figuratively throughout the program, lending his expertise in training and conditioning.

As much as NPYS is proud of its achievements with hundreds of North Port youth every year, it also has a culture of community involvement. Recently NPYS participated in the American Cancer

Society’s Relay for Life, worked with Toys for Tots and was part of a canned food drive.

Last spring NPYS organized its own Autism Awareness Day with a three-hour day of soccer and fun. One of the competitive teams held a golf tournament to raise money for its season, but also distributed proceeds to charities like Ronald McDonald House and the Boys & Girls Club.

“As an all volunteer, non-profit organization we have to raise money to keep our program going,” said Renaud. “But we take real pride in not just taking funds, but when we can, give back. Even if it’s just with our time.”

Online registration for the fall recreation season will be ongoing until Sept. 6. The fall recreation season runs from October to December. For more information or to register a child, visit the NPYS website at www.northportyouthsoccer.org