

## **International Cultural Exchange Program USSR Visit**

In response to the first summit meeting between President Reagan of the United States and General Secretary Gorbachev of the USSR, where the Cultural Exchange Program was established. Ray Bernabei, with the approval of the NISOA Executive Board, submitted a proposal to the United States State Department. The purpose of the Reagan Gorbachev Cultural Exchange Program was to promote a better understanding between the peoples of the two countries so that all could strive for peace. The NISOA proposal was one of the 35 selected and approved by the U.S. Office of Information Agency, which was assigned the task of evaluating 135 proposals. After the specifics of the proposal were agreed upon, NISOA confirmed the visit with the agreement that the USSR would later send three officials to the United States. Ray Bernabei, NISOA Executive Director, and Bob Sumpter, NISOA Director of Instruction and Rules Interpreter, visited the Soviet Union from June 7 to June 22, 1987. Valery Butenko, Pavel Kazakov, and Eduard Shklovsky were their hosts. They visited Moscow, Tbilisi, Kiev, and Leningrad. Later, as part of the Exchange Program, the three host officials from the Soviet Union visited the United States, from July 21 To August 5, 1987, attending the NISOA Referee and instructor Training Programs at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and the NISOA Annual Convention at Host Inn, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Ken Andres and Zimmerman Boulos represented the NISOA as they visited Russia in 1993.

The objective of the International Exchange Program was to identify the various aspects of the referee development programs used by the Soviets and apply those that would fit to the NISOA program structure. An additional purpose was to learn as much as possible about their cultural heritage. We were given a comprehensive view of their training and assessment programs, organizational structure, game mechanics, and ongoing research in referee education and development.

The Cultural Exchange Program with Russia continued in 1994 when Eduard Shklovsky accompanied two Russian officials to The NISOA Referee Training Camp, Clinic and Annual Convention.

NISOA benefited greatly from exposure to the program the visitors presented. During their visit to Russia. Ray Bernabei and Bob Sumpter were particularly impressed with Dr. Konstantin Vtkrov's research on the psychology of refereeing. NISOA issued a special invitation to him to visit and teach at the NISOA Referee Training Camp and the NISOA Annual Convention.

Dr. Vikrov did visit in 1996, presenting excellent insights on the subject to the attending referees. NISOA also had Dr. Vikrov's work translated and distributed for use by its members.

### **Italy and Greece Visit**

After completing the Cultural Exchange trip to the USSR, Ray Bernabei and Bob Sumpter made two shorter visits in Europe; one to the Referee Association of Greece in Athens and the other to the Referee Association of Italy in Rome. The NISOA representatives found that the administrative and referee training programs of both countries were quite similar.

In both Greece and Italy, the referees are organized as unions, which are affiliated with and supported by their National Federation but which operate quite independently.

There are 52 state associations throughout Greece, each with its own sub-section for referees affiliated with the Referee Association of Greece. There is also a separate referee sub-section for the top-level referees (about 150 members who officiate Division I, II, and III matches).

The new referee candidate makes application to the local referee association and, on acceptance, attends a basic training course about three evenings per week for four months. One course is offered each year in major populated centers. In addition to a standard written test on the Laws of the Game, a fitness test consisting of a Cooper Test, a 50-meter sprint, and a 400-meter run must be passed. Referees are recommended for top-level assignments through their assessments and are invited to a two-week pre-season training course in order to qualify. In top-level division play, referees are assessed at games. The referee union rates and downgrades referees. Assessment ratings are not normally shared with referees.

The union retains a percentage of the official's game fees to finance the administration and the training, assessment, and development programs.

There are 29,000 referees throughout Italy organized in 40 local associations, which are members of the Referee Association of Italy. There is also a separate association for the referees who qualify for and are assigned to top-level competition in Divisions II, III, and I. Referee candidates apply to the local association and attend a one-month basic training course. The NISOA representative found the published texts for the course, which were correlated with and supported by accompanying videotape instruction or media, to be about the best-designed materials they came across in visits to seven European National Football Associations. Italy's top-level referees meet annually for a one-week pre-season seminar in early fall. Qualifying tests include an oral examination on the Laws of The Game, a fitness test, and a practical examination for game-related information.

These short, concentrated visits to Greece and Italy yielded a great deal of relevant information. After returning home from this first Exchange Program with the USSR, Italy, and Greece, NISOA analyzed the information collected and was able to add many excellent new components to the NISOA Referee Training Program. The basis was also established for continuing the exchange of information in the future.

### **Italian Referees in Exchange Program With NISOA Officials**

The NISOA International Cultural Exchange Program took another step toward excellence by hosting two Italian referees. The Italian Referee Association is undoubtedly the best organized and has the most advanced training methods and materials yet seen by NISOA representatives. Visiting in the United States with soccer referees for the first time. Mr. Salvatore Lombardo and Mr. Vittorio Benedetti from Italy were impressed with the well-organized programs NISOA had implemented.

#### **Convention Speech —Salvatore Lombardo Vice-president, Italian Referee Association**

Mr. President, Doctor Bernabei, Members of the Executive Board, Regional and Chapter Representatives, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

"On behalf of the President of the Italian Soccer Referee Association, Mr. Campanati, and our twenty-nine thousand (29,000) Italian soccer referees, I wish to extend our

heartfelt greetings and wish to personally thank you as the Vice-President of the Italian National Soccer Referee Association, for giving us the opportunity to participate in the first official exchange program between the Italian Soccer Referee Association and NISOA.

Our first exposure to your activities in the United States began for us, with our presence at the NISOA National Camp at Elizabethtown College. This unique and wonderful experience has given us the opportunity to measure the high standards you set for your officials, and the technical capabilities of your instructors and assessors. We have enjoyed the opportunity to participate in your classroom works and in field assessments of some of your talented officials. In addition, based on our visit to Elizabethtown, we are convinced that we can indeed share critical information and exchange ideas about instruction and assessment of officials at all levels of the game.

"The fruitful exchange between the Italian Soccer Referee Association and NISOA has indeed served to bring about "a joint experiment in the uniform approach to applying the rules of the game and to improve the field performance of all our officials."

In my opinion, today's referees must be physically and technically capable to meet the challenge. Referees must now be able to recognize new techniques and strategies invented and applied by coaches and players throughout the world. In short, it has become necessary for all of us to anticipate better to read the (set plays, deliberate delays and/or fouls), and to maximize our field performance.

Above all the referee today must apply his personality and field presence to prevent violence. He must do this without relying heavily on the use of cards. For all these reasons, it is extremely important, now more than ever, to increase the frequency of international exchanges between referee associations. We must learn from each other if we are to be consistent in the application of the rules and in our overall approach to the game.

In this connection, we applaud NISOA's efforts and unique initiatives in the field of international exchanges.

In 1991, the Italian Referee Program reciprocated by hosting NISOA's representatives, Mario Donnangeio, Peter Accolla, and William "Bill" Fortin who traveled to Italy and participated in their training program.

During the July 8-12, 2007 NISOA Referee Training and Certification Camp at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania, 105 potential NISOA members will have the opportunity to hear and learn from two Italian Referee Association Instructors. Both Davide Carini and Francesco Capraro, well known Italian Referee Instructors, will lecture to our NISOA Officials on various aspects of officiating at the highest level.

Their expertise on quality soccer officiating is an added feature of our continuing International Exchange Program.

### **Ghana, Africa, Referees Visit NISOA**

In July 2001, NISOA, through the International Cultural Exchange Program, hosted four referees from Ghana, Africa. The agenda for their visit included New York City and Philadelphia, Bethlehem, and Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. During their visit. NISOA's guests were able to get a feel for the social, economic, and political flavor of big city, small city, rural. and suburban America. The visitors, Patrick Adoo, Felix Kofi Yaboah, Justice Agbeko and Peter Yaovi, participated in the Assignors Work-shop and the annual Referee Training Camp at Elizabethtown College. At NISOA's Annual Convention in Bethlehem, Patrick Adoo, President of the Ghana Referees Association and well-Traveled, stated: "The National Intercollegiate Soccer Officials Association Is one of the best organized and professionally administered referees organizations that I have seen

around the world. I am especially impressed with how friendly and giving all members have been. We would like to model our organization after yours."

Through Patrick Adoo, Ghana, Africa, July 8-12, 2007 Referees Training Camp will have Ghana Referee Instructors, Alex Quartey and Barlnah Stephen Yaw, participating. In addition, plans have been made to have two Ghana National Television cameramen to shoot scenes from the NISOA Referees Training Camp to show on its National TV Stations in Ghana.

Events such as the Cultural Exchange Program with Russia, Ghana and Italy do not merely happen. They are planned and implemented by many dedicated people who have contributed, not only to the welfare of the game, but also to the "Betterment of Mankind".

As a result, NISOA continues to contribute to the realization of President Reagan's Vision by not only gaining a better under-standing of the people of other countries, but by making many new friends as well.

### **International Cultural Exchange Program Highlights**

- 1974 Dr. Costa Miranda, Bahia, Brazil, visits NISOA in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 1981 NISOA International Exchange Program proposal approved.
- 1983 David Chandler, England, visits NISOA for 5 consecutive years; Ab Leonard & Henry Papa visit England.
- 1987 Bob Sumpter and Ray Bernabei visit the USSR, Greece, and Italy.
- 1987 Valery Butenko, Pavel Kazakov, and Eduard Shklovsky, USSR Referee Association, visit NISOA
- 1988 Carlos Caugnaro, Argentina coach, visits NISOA,
- 1989 Salvatore Lombardo and Vittorio Benedetti, Italian Referees Association visits NISOA.
- 1990 Eduard Shklovsky, Boris Sobennikey, and Valentin Kupriaskim, Russian soccer officials, visit NISOA.
- 1991 Mario Donnanqelo, Peter Accolla, and Bill Fortin visit Italy.
- 1993 Kenneth "Ken" Andres and Zimmerman "Zim" Boulos visit Russia.
- 1994 Eduard Shkiovsky and two Russian officialis visit NISOA.
- 1995 Dr. Konstantin Vikrov, Ukraine, visits NISOA.
- 2001 Patrick Adoo, Justice Agbeko, Peter Yaovi, and Felix Koli-Yaboah from Ghana, Africa, visit NISOA.
- 2006 Peter Dhima and Brian Kirkley Attended Italy Referees Training Camp
- 2007 Davide Carini and Francesco Capraro, Italian Referee Instructors participate in NISOA Referee Training Camp; Alex Quartey and Barinah Stephen Yaw, Ghana, serves as Instructors at the NISOA Referees Training Camp July 8-12,2007.