



Community Pages

- Local Teams
- New York Red Bulls
- Sky Blue FC
- Long Island Fury
- Long Island Academy
- Brooklyn Italians
- Brooklyn Knights
- Westchester Flames
- New York Magic
- Home

- Big Apple Soccer.com
- U.S. National Teams
- Major League Soccer
- Women's Professional Soccer
- United Soccer Leagues
- College
- Amateur
- Youth
- Story Archive



April 7, 2010
GOODBYE, JOSE
Long-time game official Vargas, a man of many hats, passes away



Jose Vargas when he was inducted into the Eastern New York Soccer Hall of Fame.

By Michael Lewis
 BigAppleSoccer.com
 Editor

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

When Pete Pinori, the Eastern New York State Amateur Soccer Association's amateur association's general secretary who introduced Jose Vargas at his ENY Soccer Hall of Fame induction in December 2006, noted the man "wears a multitude

of soccer hats" -- literally and figuratively.

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

No one was joking about Vargas Wednesday when it was learned the long-time soccer game official and former State Referee Administrator, State Youth Referee Administrator and State Director of Assessment had passed away. He was 69.

Vargas' colleagues, friends and co-workers mourned the passing of the tireless worker and family man who died Tuesday night.

State Youth Referee Administrator Howard Rubenstein called Vargas a "hard working, dedicated family man and referee who couldn't and

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wouldn't say no to anybody. May his memory be engraved in the hearts of all his colleagues."

Vargas' death hit his colleagues and fellow referees hard. He was the mentor for many young game officials trying to mark their mark or improve their officiating.

Brendan Mullarkey, now a state referee, was one of them.

"He always loved the game of soccer and he helped a lot of referees who achieved their goals not on the soccer field but in life as well," he said. "I had the honor of working with him in several functions in our state."

Mullarkey remembered when he did poorly during the pro referee running test in 2001. Vargas and Boris Lazari told him that he had to be better in 2002, when Vargas was his timekeeper.

"I ran for my life and I passed the test in flying colors," Mullarkey said. "Jose told me right there that he was so proud of me that day."

Mark Silverstein was another game official who was upset about Vargas' death. He said that Vargas taught the entry level course that he took "as a newbie" in the fall of 1984.

Proud Winner:



"He's a reason that I'm still involved in the game," he said. "I can't add up how many games we worked as referees together, had to be well into the hundreds. He loved the game and life. Always had such a big grin, a heart-felt warm greeting for everyone and positive encouraging words. While I regret that I didn't have a chance to say goodbye, I feel some peace that I'm certain he knew how much he was loved and respected by everyone, including those of us in the game. I miss him already."

Vargas' home league was the East Hudson Youth Soccer League in which he was a coach, president of the East Fishkill Soccer coach and even league president for a pair of two-year terms. In 2009, the EHYSL also recognized him by naming its sportsmanship award, "The Jose C. Vargas Sportsmanship Award."

Soccer News Net:



"Aside from his prodigious resume, Jose embodied all the things that are important to our sport," according to a statement on the EHYSL website. "He cared passionately about our children and the experience they had in our sport. He personified fair play and good sportsmanship and worked tirelessly to share that vision with others. His personal dedication to excellence was evident in everything he did as a coach, as an administrator and as an official. His passion, insights into the game, advice and friendship will be sorely missed."

Pinori informed his membership of Vargas' death in an e-mail.

"Jose, as all of you know, dedicated his entire life for soccer," he said. "He wore many hats for the game we all love."

"To me he was and always will be a great friend and will really miss him. May God bless his soul and may Jose look down upon all of us from above!"

"Goodbye my dear friend and hopefully we will see you again in Paradise!"

That love of life was known by his colleagues and students at the Guiding Eyes For the Blind, where Vargas taught. He was remembered by many people for his well-known morning greeting, "Good morning beautiful people!"

Born in Ingenio, Nazca, Peru on Sept. 18, 1940, Vargas emigrated to the

U.S. with his family. He started his career in the kitch of the Guiding Eyes for the Blind, eventually becoming director of maintenance.

"Jose touched the lives of thousands during his 39 remarkable years with Guiding Eyes for the Blind," according to a statement on the organization's Facebook page. "In our memories we will forever hear his distinctive voice delivering his trademark, cheerful greeting, 'Good morning beautiful people!' Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Lynn, and their two sons, Cuper and Edgar."

And returning to that Hall of Fame induction, Pinori eventually got serious about Vargas' credentials, which included, of course, wearing a number of hats during his long and meritorious soccer career.

Vargas emigrated to the U.S. from Peru, was director of operations of the Guiding Eyes for the Blind in Yorktown Heights. 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.

In his hour of honor, Vargas was as humble as ever, thanking his wife life of 34 years and just about everyone else, but himself.

"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."

Viewing and funeral arrangements

The viewing will be held on Saturday April 10 from 4-6 p.m. and the memorial service will follow at 6 p.m. They will take place at the McHoul Funeral Home on 985 Route 82, Hopewell Junction, N.Y. (845) 221-2000.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations to:

Guiding Eyes For the Blind
611 Granite Springs Road
Yorktown Heights NY 10598

 

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