

NJ Youth SoccerBoard of Directors – **Questions for the Candidate**  
Annual General Meeting

Candidate: Dana Lopes-Sharples

Club: Bricktownship, Soccer Association (BTSA)

**A) Why do you wish to become a member of the NJYS Board of Directors?**

I believe in the mission and vision of NJYSA. I would like to be part of an organization that is developing the physical and mental well-being of youth soccer players in the state of NJ. As a board member it will allow me to represent the interests of the players, coaches and clubs. It is an opportunity to learn and further my knowledge to help local clubs, players and parents make their programs better.

**B) What is your relevant experience (e.g. experience with youth soccer, non-profit, other Board positions held)?**

I have been coaching youth soccer for the past 7 years as the head coach of a girls travel soccer team. I am presently the president of our youth soccer club in town and prior to being president I was on the board for six years in various roles from secretary to web designer.

I had the opportunity to sit on many committees and boards that serve the greater community. My most recent accomplishment has been chairing a committee that developed a fully functioning resource pantry for college students with food insecurities

**C) What is your vision for soccer in New Jersey during the next three years?**

**Vision** in soccer is the ability to see potential passes. A player with good **vision** will quickly scan the field and find a better pass. I would like to think as a member of the board I would bring that same insight and be part of the team that develops effective ways to improve youth soccer in our ever changing society. This recent pandemic has allowed me to see different passes or ways in which we can deliver services and communicate with players and coaches as well as keep them engaged. My vision for youth soccer in New Jersey to build upon what we have and make it better. Get on the field and find out what clubs and coaches need.

- Educate clubs and coaches on how to develop the cognitive aspect of the game.
- Develop a mentor program for new clubs and new coaches looking for guidance and support.
- Provide ongoing training and support networks to help new coaches become better coaches.
- Training/support for newly formed clubs.
- Programs for U14-U18 players; How do you keep players engaged? How do you help young players develop their skill set and passion for the game and still love to play soccer past the age of 12?
- Improve the drastic drop out rate of players from small sided to full sided and from middle school to high school.
- Increase the number of female coaches in youth soccer at the highest levels.
- Provide support for females who want to coach and referee.

My experience working in higher education with division I athletes, coaching youth from recreation to competitive soccer has allowed me to really learn what players and clubs need to be successful.

**D) What is your perception of New Jersey Youth Soccer?**

It is the governing body that oversees clubs in the state of NJ. They provide guidance, support and training not only to clubs but to coaches and players. My experience with NJYS has always been positive.