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US Youth Soccer announces 2011 TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year regional award winners
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National winner to be named at US Youth Soccer Awards Gala
Twitter: [@USYouthSoccer](#), live announcement of national winner

FRISCO, Texas (Jan. 12, 2012) - US Youth Soccer announces the regional winners of the 2011 US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year award. It honors a role model who creates a fun learning experience as a mentor, advocate, coach or administrator.

[US Youth Soccer TOPSoccer \(The Outreach Program for Soccer\)](#) is a community-based training and team placement program for young athletes with disabilities.

The national TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year will be announced at the US Youth Soccer Awards Gala on Friday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m., as part of the [US Youth Soccer Workshop](#) in Boston.

Brief bios of the regional winners are below based on the submitted nomination forms:

Region I – Chris Przybylowski – West Haven, Conn.

When West Haven Youth Soccer started its TOPSoccer program, Chris Przybylowski was one of the first players to join. Now, 10 years later, Przybylowski has evolved into a standout leader and Buddy in West Haven Youth Soccer's TOPSoccer program. As a Buddy, Przybylowski exemplifies the ability to encourage players to work a little harder, inspire them have a little more fun and empathize when things get hard.

Region II – Annie Dunbar – Lexington, Ky.

Annie Dunbar has been involved as a dedicated TOPSoccer volunteer in the Lexington Youth Soccer Association for four seasons. As a Buddy, Dunbar has helped improve the social skills, self esteem and soccer skills of the athletes with whom she works. In addition to her time as a Buddy, Dunbar has become involved with the TOPSoccer advisory committee, serving as high school

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Region III – Cassie Thorla – Boca Raton, Fla.

Cassie Thorla began serving as a Buddy in the Soccer Association of Boca Raton TOPSoccer program as soon as she was old enough to serve in this role. For the five years since, Thorla has displayed a unique ability to relate to and motivate all the players in the program. Inspired by her TOPSoccer experience, Thorla will study nursing at the University of Florida, concentrating on service to the special needs community.

Region IV – Riley Protz – Gresham, Ore.

For years Riley Protz played soccer freely while his sister, who suffers from cerebral palsy, watched from the sidelines. Driven to give her the chance to play the game he loves, Protz started a TOPSoccer program in Gresham, Ore., with the help of Oregon Youth Soccer Association and EastSide United F.C. Since its inception in 2007, Protz has served as a Buddy every season.

The US Youth Soccer Workshop will be held in Boston from Feb. 16-18, 2012. The annual convention will be held at the Hynes Convention Center and is designed to further the education of coaches, administrators, referees and enthusiasts involved in the game. [Online registration](#) continues through February 9. For more information please visit USYouthSoccer.org/Workshop

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About the United States Youth Soccer Association (US Youth Soccer) – US Youth Soccer - "The Game for ALL Kids!®" is the largest youth sports organization in the country and largest member of the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body of soccer in the United States. US Youth Soccer registers more than 3 million players annually, ages 5 to 19, and over 900,000 administrators, coaches and volunteers in 55 member State Associations. US Youth Soccer programs provide a fun, safe and healthy environment for players at every level of the game. For more information, visit www.USYouthSoccer.org.