

2015 Recipient of the Dr. Thomas Fleck, US Youth Soccer Excellence in Coaching Education Award Announced

VIDEO: Dr. Lew Atkinson of Delaware honored at Awards Gala in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA (Jan. 16, 2015) — US Youth Soccer honored Lew Atkinson, of Dover, Del., as the recipient of the Dr. Thomas Fleck, US Youth Soccer Excellence in Coaching Education Award at the US Youth Soccer Awards Gala Friday in Philadelphia. The Awards Gala was held in conjunction with the 2015 US Youth Soccer Workshop at the NSCAA Convention.

The Excellence in Youth Coaching Education award is also known as the Dr. Thomas Fleck award. It is designed to honor a lifetime of dedication where one has led with integrity, honor, humor and humility and has made extensive and far reaching contributions to the process by which youth soccer coaches are educated in America.

Hilary Kennedy, host of The US Youth Soccer Show, set the stage for the night as the master of ceremonies for the more than 1,000 in attendance. Boys and Girls Recreation and Competitive Coaches of the Year, Young Referees of the Year, Administrator of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Goal and Save of the Year and the TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year were also presented during the Gala, and the US Youth Soccer Hall of Fame inductees were honored.

Atkinson, an Associate Professor for Doctoral Studies in the College of Education at Wilmington University, has devoted much of his life to coaching and education. He served on a volunteer basis as the Director of Coaching for the Delaware Youth Soccer Association for 19 years and is currently serving his 12th year as a U.S. Soccer National Instructor.

Atkinson is a National Youth License instructor for US Youth Soccer, a frequent clinician at the annual US Youth Soccer Workshop, and he has been part of the coaching committee for US Youth Soccer Region I — mentoring many technical directors in the region both on and off the field.

He is also a member of the NSCAA's National Instructional Staff and serves as a mentor in their Master Coach Program. In addition to the Fleck Award, Atkinson is being honored by the NSCAA as this year's recipient of the Charlotte Moran Award for long-term service.

His influence on education has not been limited to soccer, as Atkinson previously served as the Assistant Secretary of Education for the state of Delaware.

Currently, he is leading the committee that is revising the 'D' License course for U.S. Soccer and is one of only 30 coaches invited by U.S. Soccer to take part in the FIFA Futuro III Course. Atkinson holds USSF 'A' and 'Y' Licenses, as well as a 'B' License from the Scottish Football Association.

Since 2005, Atkinson has been the head coach for the US Youth Soccer ODP Boys Region I Under-14 team, and he also currently coaches an Under-23 club team and assists at a local high school. In addition to previous youth head coaching positions, Atkinson coached the Central Delaware Futures of the WPSL.

Atkinson has been recognized by his peers as the Boys Coach of the Year for the Delaware Youth Soccer Association and noted for Outstanding Contribution to Delaware Soccer, recognized by the Delaware High School Soccer Coaches Association.

In recent years, Lew has been published twice in Success in Soccer magazine. His works include "Why 6v6 at U-10?" published in May 2004 and "Give the Little Guy a Chance! Keeping Younger Elite Players in the US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program," published in November 2010.

Prior to getting into coaching, Lew played collegiately at Davis and Elkins College and won the NAIA National Championship in 1968 and 1970. At the amateur level, he played in the United League in Philadelphia.