



October 20, 2004

Captains and Players,

I hope everyone has had a competitive and successful 2004 fall season. I want to welcome everyone to North Carolina's 2004 Adult State Cup. We have had a great response this year with 39 teams in all. This should prove to be a great weekend of soccer.

Everyone involved in organizing this tournament has done an exceptional job at bringing this event together.

Our NC Soccer Referee Association has made outstanding efforts to invite only the top referees from around the state to work this tournament. Their hard work is a reflection of the respect our referee association shows for our strongest teams and prestigious tournament. Let's show our officials the same.

I'd like to address the changes in the schedule. Due to the high response of quality teams in the state we added a fifth bracket to the Men's Open Division. The schedule shifted slightly for all brackets. This was not an easy decision to make. I know there is a heavy impact on the teams and players. It also created more work for NCASA's staff (which is made up on one individual, Diego Munoz). In addition, it placed more burden on our referee administration for top officials, who are already in heavy demand during the college soccer season. Finally, there were field and time constraints, but as president, I feel it was the right decision.

The decision to add a bracket was made in the spirit of competition and sportsmanship. There was an exceptional amount of interest from strong teams and leagues across the state who had never participated in our State Cup. I felt it necessary to explore the possibilities of expanding the division to be more inclusive. I don't know about you but I'm a sucker for a strong soccer tournament. Now in the Men's Open division we have eight teams advancing after the first round of play versus four. Part of NCASA's goal is to evolve the State Cup into an important tournament for our teams from the coastline to our mountains, across cultures and strengths, and this year we have taken some big steps towards this goal. We have nine major leagues represented, Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, Durham, Raleigh, Wilmington, and Jacksonville.

Let the competition begin, Good Luck to all
I look forward to meeting everyone Friday night,

Darius Ejlali
NCASA President