Lance Reich Interview

Lance Reich Esq.,this may not be a name that jumps off the page for soccer enthusiasts, but maybe it should. He was responsible for a number of teams getting money from FIFA following the latest World Cup, well after the deadline. Why was it well after, he was able to get it extended as the USSF did not move that information on to the clubs eligible for the money in many cases. What I want to know is the why behind it, the reason widely held does not fit. But let me put this to you, should you be the governing body of a national group and the governing body of you, an international group makes it known that as much as $8.46 million was allocated to pay out member clubs, it was predetermined how much, would you not want to do what you can to have them secure these same funds?

Lance is an attorney with Holley Driggs in Las Vegas and Seattle, and is rather involved with soccer as well. While seeking something else on the FIFA website, he stumbled upon the details on the fund mentioned above. The fund holding $50,000,000 was to pay out just under 10%, similar to solidarity payments. Here, youth clubs that had a player in this most recent World Cup who had any of the players from ages 12-22 and their current teams would be entitled to funds, nationally, the Portland Thorns of the NWSL received the top amount approx. $84,000, as Auburndale had $750 from the Jamaican GK who was with their club for a time & OL in France was tops in clubs overall with a whopping $178,700. The top nation overall was the USA with their $790,000. The dollar amounts were reached by way of individual players being there, if they never saw the field it made no difference. So with the US playing until the end, and most players having played their youth club soccer here, as well as players for other nations, they had the largest payout.

A total of 60 clubs were fortunate enough to get a piece of this pie, 9 (all of them) in the NWSL and 50 youth clubs. Reich for his part was the driving force as he stood up for 8 clubs, almost 10%, that is rather telling. These clubs in California, Colorado, Washington & Florida had almost $42,000 sent their way, just over 10% of the total funds. These lucky clubs were then able to do as was stipulated by FIFA, to put those funds towards advancing soccer for their female players only. He was of course not alone in this battle as he enlisted Soccer America in this effort. Locally as stated Auburndale received funds, as did Albertson ($10,230) for both Allie Long & Crystal Dunn, Crystal was also why the Rockville Centre club received monies ($3,840) as well while Allie lead to Northport Cow Harbor ($2,560) benefitting here. Other local groups to be on the receiving end of this fund include Sky Blue ($29,620) & Matchfit ($4,500). The disbursement was to go half to the current club as the other half of the money for the player would then go to the teams of their youth. Many clubs who would be compensated had never heard of this from USSF in any way, shape or form.

What did Lance and those he dealt with do to address this egregious oversight, they went straight to FIFA. Yes they did file with FIFA and copy the federation and it worked. These payments did then come straight from FIFA.

As to the why? I am unable to come with any legitimate reason to deny those under you, with your goal to grow soccer to be the top game of the land, money? The USSF as I understand had knowledge of this fund and did not pass it on to their member organizations, for all the bad press deserved or not, all the disenfranchisement within their members, why on earth would you not tell them of funds they are fully eligible for? The reason we have this far holds no water, that they were awaiting word from FIFA as to how the funds would be allocated. Who cares, have your people put in for the money, have it awarded, then figure out how it is to be dispersed, do not leave them on the sidelines as others are getting compensated. This bothers me at every level possible. Did the NWSL who they support a great deal at the league and player levels get told, yet not the youth clubs who make up many more players from groups with far less money. They are the head of soccer in the USA, not to play favorites, give one group a fair shake while denying others the same opportunities.

I will reach out to the USSF, but after this is published. When I have asked them in the past for their chance to address an issue, there was no reply. Will this already being out cause them to change their tune, I cannot say.