



Soccer Made in America  
PO 5345  
Oak Brook, IL 60522  
630-257-6900 Fax 630-257-9455  
www.smia.com

## **ALEKS MIHAIOVIC NAMED USASA COACH OF THE YEAR**

**Oak Brook, IL. Oct. 30, 2006.** Aleks Mihailovic has been named as the 2006 National Coach of the Year by the United States Adult Soccer Association at ceremonies held on Oct. 21, 2006 at the USASA Hall of Fame in Alexandria, VA. This award is given annually by the USASA to recognize outstanding contribution coaches are making to the game and their role in the advancement of soccer.

Mihailovic is the founder and president of The Chicago Blast Soccer Club, based in Oak Brook. The Chicago Blast trains hundreds of boys and girls throughout the Chicago land area. Among those attending the ceremony were Sunil Gulati, President of United States Soccer Federation; Brooks McCormick, Chairman, USASA; John Ellinger, Coach Real Salt Lake M.L.S.; Mike Edwards, Vice-President, U.S.S.F.; and Frank Baroni, U.S. Soccer Foundation.

Mihailovic played professionally with Washington Diplomats and Jacksonville Tea Men of the North American Soccer League. He is the all-time leading scorer and a two-time All-American at Jacksonville University, where he was the NCAA Division 1 assist leader in 1978, and invited to represent USA in the 1979 World Games. In 1994, Aleks was inducted into the Jacksonville University Hall of Fame, and in 1999 named Player of the Decade there. Mihailovic also served on the Florida Sports Development Board for four years.

Mihailovic has had an extensive coaching career. He currently is an Assistant USASA National Team Coach and also the Region II representative to the USASA Coaching Committee as well as Director of Coaching for the Illinois State Soccer Association. Mihailovic has held a United States Soccer Federation "A" License since 1987 and an International High Level Coaching License since 1999. He has served as head coach with the Chicago Shockers of the American Indoor Soccer Association (an NPSL forerunner). Aleks also wrote the M&M Mars/Snickers US Soccer Manual for the 1994 World Cup and was a consultant for Bora Mulitinovic while he was the U.S. Men's National Team Coach.

In 1984, Mihailovic founded Soccer Made in America, Inc., an organization dedicated to upgrading the level of soccer played and coached in the United States. In 1987, he founded the Aleks Mihailovic's SAFE Foundation, a program developed for underprivileged children. In 2001, he founded the Chicago Blast Soccer Club, Inc. Mihailovic also has produced several instructional DVDs and tapes and authored the SMIA Coaching Manual for coaches and players of all levels. Mihailovic has also conducted special events and clinics for the Special Olympics, Cystic Fibrosis, Multiple Sclerosis, and Muscular Dystrophy Foundations, as well as the Midwest Epilepsy Center.

Bruno Trapikas, USASA Regional Director stated "We are very fortunate to have a person of Aleks' caliber, experience, and character at the forefront of USASA's programs. He richly deserves this honor, and we look forward to many years of working with Aleks in fostering the continued growth of the game at all levels."

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