

## Lightning Soccer Welcomes New Director of Coaching

Many exciting changes are happening at the Lincolnshire Lightning Soccer Club, starting with a brand new leader for the future.

We are proud to announce that Michael Cockroft has been named Director of Coaching (DOC), supervising coaching and player development for all girls and boys teams. Cockroft was selected following a lengthy interview process by the Board of Directors that involved many qualified candidates. He brings a wealth of experience to Lincolnshire from across the country and overseas.

Most recently, Cockroft, who owns and operates Midwest Soccer Coaching, has served as DOC for Panther Soccer Club in west suburban Oswego for the last 8 years, where he more than tripled the size of what was originally a club with only 12 teams in 2006 to a 35-team program with multiple professional coaches contracted through his company. Prior to arriving in Oswego, he served as DOC for the skill based training company Coerver soccer coaching program of Illinois and was also on the coaching staff at the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) national office in California's Bay Area. Cockroft has also coached and managed youth soccer programs along eastern Florida's space coast and in Long Island, New York.

Originally a native of Newcastle, England, Cockroft moved to the U.S. in 2000 after earning a sports management degree from Leeds Metropolitan University, where he played on the school's soccer team while also coaching local youth programs.

"Coming to Lincolnshire is a tremendous opportunity for me to work with a well-established, community-based soccer club that emphasizes player development at all levels," he said. "There is huge potential in growing the Lightning program for girls and boys throughout our surrounding community and preparing them to shine at the high school level for Stevenson, Deerfield, Buffalo Grove or wherever they continue playing while with our club."

Cockroft's impressive coaching background is highlighted by achieving a USSF A National License - a prestigious and rare accomplishment for a community club director. Beginning in June, he and his Midwest Soccer Coaching staff will operate new speed, skill and agility camps that will be coming to North Park, home of all Lightning teams.

When not coaching or playing soccer, Cockroft lives in the Northwest suburbs with his wife, Sabrina and son Luca. He officially joins the Lightning on July 1, but he'll be at multiple Lightning spring practices, games and upcoming parent meetings.

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