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SDA MAGAZINE

SDA ALUMN KATIE CAPPELLETTI

SDA STAR TO NWSL

INTERVIEW WITH JANINE BENNETT GIRLS ACADEMY SDA DIRECTOR

TOURNAMENT
SUCCESS
ACROSS THE
NATION

REMEMBERING
KEVIN "POPS"
PERRIGO SR.

PLAYER PROFILE
**ADRIANNA
CALABRIA**



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**Wishing you and your
family a wonderful and
relaxing 4th of July
holiday.**

We'll see you soon!

JANINE BENNETT

**GIRLS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
GIRLS EDUCATION ADVISOR**

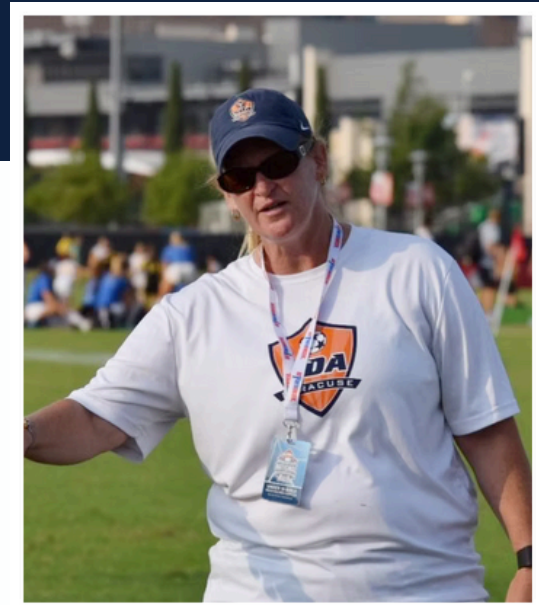
SDA's Janine Bennett Helps Players Become Leaders Through Girls Academy Advisory Panel

At SDA, the game is just the beginning.

Janine Bennett, who heads up all things Girls Academy at SDA, has helped create something truly special with the GA Advisory Panel. It's not just a group or a committee—it's a movement. A chance for young players to speak up, step up, and make a real difference on and off the field.

"The Girls Academy Panel is made up of players who represent their teams, club, and region," Janine says. "Each team chooses one representative who serves as a leader for her teammates and acts as their voice. Then each club has two club reps who collect feedback from all the team reps and bring those thoughts to the league."

In other words, these girls aren't just playing the game—they're shaping it.



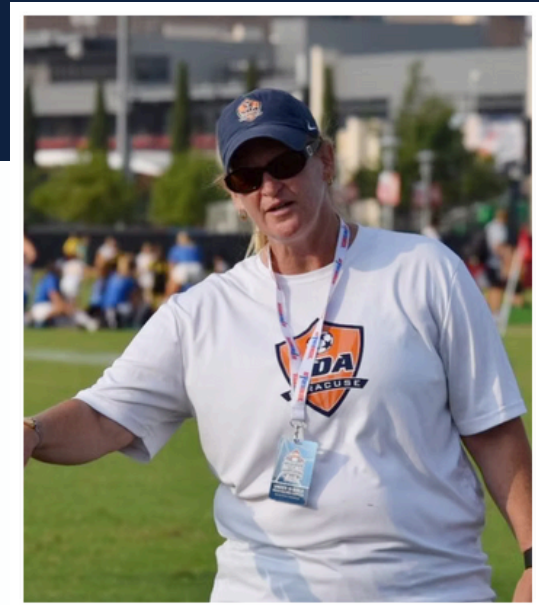
JANINE BENNETT

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From running monthly meetings to launching community campaigns, the GA Advisory Panel gives players the tools to lead with purpose. The experiences they gain go way beyond soccer: they learn to communicate, collaborate, and advocate. They grow as people, not just athletes.

“This is about building confident leaders who want to contribute to something bigger than themselves,” Janine adds. “It’s been amazing to watch them grow.”

And grow they have.



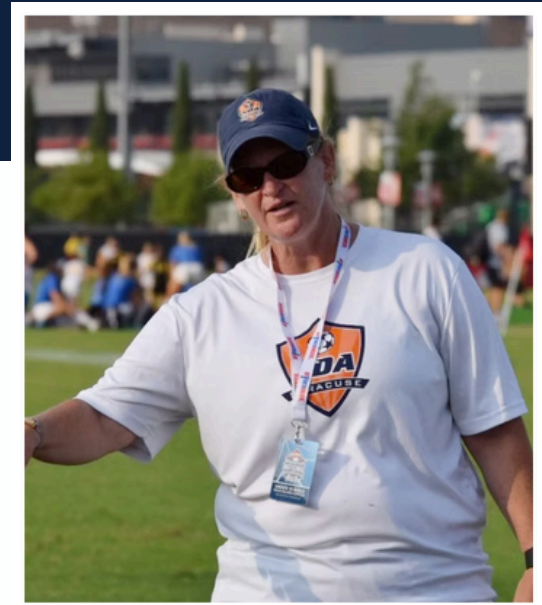
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This year, SDA's GA Advisory Panel has worked on a wide range of inspiring initiatives, including:

- Breast Cancer Awareness games to honor fighters and survivors
- A national show of support for an injured GA player from another club
- A toy drive for Tillie's Touch and Golisano Children's Hospital
- A league-wide moment of remembrance for a fallen GA player, showing love and solidarity
- Morgan's Message – Wear Green, bringing attention to mental health in youth sports
- An educational seminar with mental performance pros from Ithaca College
- Volunteering at national events at the GA Advisory Panel tent to raise awareness and build connections
- And a brand-new recovery program in the works, designed to help players take care of their bodies after tough games and workouts

It's about more than points on the scoreboard. It's about impact in the real world.



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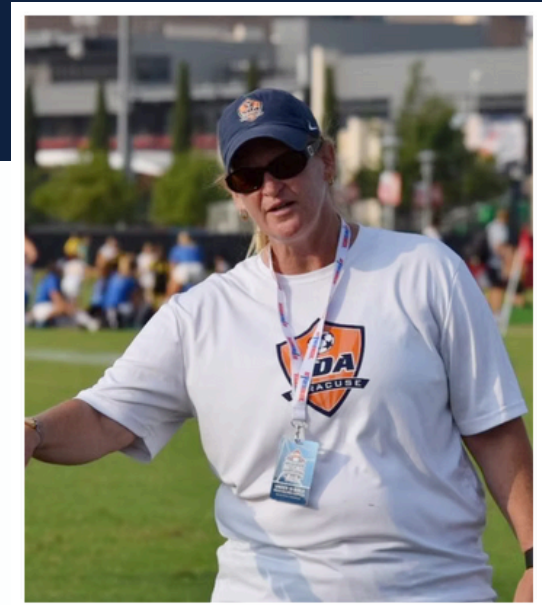
That's something 2011 GA Advisory Panel member Kennedy Perrigo understands deeply. For her, the experience has been as meaningful as it has been exciting.

"The Advisory Panel to me is a group of team representatives that lead and inspire their own teams beyond the field by organizing different fundraisers and awareness projects," Kennedy says.

"Being part of the Advisory Committee makes you grow a sense of leadership and love to help others, while learning how to grow yourself."

"Things I love about the Advisory Panel are having a feeling of leadership beyond the field and the sport with my teammates, being able to represent my team during events and activities, and building relationships with players on other teams on a local and national level within the GA."

That's exactly what Janine and the SDA staff are hoping to foster—leaders who are bold, compassionate, and connected. Leaders who rally around their communities, support one another, and make their voices heard.



KATIE CAPPELLETTI: FROM SDA TO THE NWSL



"THE PEOPLE
I MET AT SDA
ARE STILL
PART OF MY
LIFE TODAY."

KATIE HAS A LOT OF GREAT THINGS TO SHARE...

Katie Cappelletti's path from a tight-knit club team in Central New York to signing a professional contract in the NWSL is the kind of story that inspires anyone with a dream and a determination to chase it. For Katie, the journey started at SDA, where a passion for soccer took root in a culture built on connection, mentorship, and belief.

"Growing up playing club soccer for SDA was an experience I will always be grateful for," Katie said. "Ryan Hall played a huge role in shaping me both as a player and as a person. He gave me confidence, helped me grow into the position, and—maybe most importantly—made soccer fun."



Surrounded by teammates who felt like sisters, Katie thrived in a culture that valued development over results. That environment helped lay the groundwork for her next step: Division I college soccer. The leap from club to college can be steep, and for Katie, it came with a unique twist—arriving on campus at St. John’s University in the middle of a global pandemic.

“It was definitely an adjustment, especially with COVID. We couldn’t train as a full team at first, so I had some extra time to adapt,” she explained. “On the field, the biggest change was the speed of play. Off the field, it was finding my footing in a new city with people I had just met—behind masks.”


Still, Katie made the most of it, forging strong bonds with her teammates and coaches while soaking up every bit of the experience. Then, during the spring of her sophomore year, a simple question from her goalkeeper coach changed everything:

“Tori Corsaro asked if I’d ever want to play professionally. It was the first time I truly saw that future for myself. When someone you admire and trust says they believe it’s possible, it lights something in you.”

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From that moment forward, Katie put her foot on the gas. She committed to refining both the physical and mental aspects of her game, with support from her college coaches, strength staff, and mentors at The Keeper Institute. It wasn't just the extra reps or technical drills—it was about doing the hard things well, consistently, even when no one was watching

“I prioritized sleep. I studied film. I stretched when I was exhausted. I asked questions. I focused on the ‘other stuff,’ and that’s when the growth really started to show.”

That dedication paid off in the biggest way possible: Katie signed her first professional contract with the North Carolina Courage. The moment was surreal—not just for her, but for her entire support system.

“Making the call to my family and coaches was everything. They’ve been with me every step of the way, and to say, ‘We did it,’ was just so full circle.”

Now, Katie’s embracing her next challenge. While getting game time is the long-term goal, she’s currently focused on developing her game alongside some of the NWSL’s best.

“This is a big step up, just like college was. I’m here to develop and grow, and I’m excited to do it in such a competitive and rewarding environment.”

Katie never forgets where she started—and she hopes young SDA players don’t either.

“Everything is possible if you believe in it and act on it,” she says. “Hold yourself to a standard of excellence, even when it’s hard. That’s what will separate you.”

Katie’s favorite SDA memories —car rides, hotels, pre-game routines, and the teammates who became family. “Those are the moments that stick with you. The people I met at SDA are still part of my life today. That’s the kind of bond this club creates.”

JOIN THE SDA FAMILY

Know a passionate soccer player eager to expand their game or a family who wants to learn about the world of SDA?

Share your SDA experience with them and encourage them to reach out to us. Have them email us at syracuseda@gmail.com for an in-depth exploration of what SDA has to offer.


Your involvement could make a positive difference in their soccer journey.



A close-up portrait of an elderly man with white hair and a mustache, wearing a white shirt and a red tie. The image is slightly blurred and serves as the background for the text.

**"POPS" PERRIGO:
A LEGACY OF LOYALTY,
LOVE, AND LASTING
IMPACT AT SDA**

**"HE SAW EVERY
PLAYER AS
FAMILY. THAT'S
WHY THEY GAVE
HIM EVERYTHING
THEY HAD."**



The Syracuse Development Academy family mourns the loss of a beloved figure in the local soccer community: Kevin “Pops” Perrigo Sr. More than just a coach, Pops was a mentor, leader, and father figure whose influence stretched far beyond the field. His legacy lives on through the countless lives he touched, especially through his son Kevin Perrigo—one of SDA’s most dedicated coaches.

We spoke with Kevin to reflect on his father’s extraordinary journey in youth soccer, his values, and the impact he had on players, families, and the culture we cherish at SDA today.

A Family Passion, Reversed


Unlike many coaching stories, it was Kevin who first stepped into the coaching world—at just 15 years old—and later brought his father into the game. “I started coaching with my cousin and then was asked to lead my own team at 18,” Kevin recalls. “After a few years, my dad wanted in. He leaned on our knowledge and grew into an incredible coach himself.”

Though Pops had a background as a standout baseball player, he threw himself into soccer with intensity, curiosity, and heart. He studied top coaches, absorbed strategies, and above all else, prioritized building personal relationships with players. “He saw every player as family. That’s why they gave him everything they had.”

From Volunteer to Visionary

Pops’ first involvement came through the Salt City International Invitational, where he started as a volunteer and quickly became the tournament director and club president. Under his leadership, the event grew into a premier showcase, attracting teams from across the U.S., Canada, Scotland, and Russia.

As the Syracuse Commissioner for New York State West, Pops became a fixture in the lives of local soccer families. From sunup to past midnight, the Perrigo household was a hub for processing player cards and stamping rosters. “He never said no—ever,” Kevin shares. “It was crazy, but we met so many people, and he never turned anyone away.”



His devotion earned him a place in the New York State West Hall of Fame, a recognition that barely scratches the surface of his contributions.

The Power of Presence

To those who knew him, Pops wasn't just a coach. He was a constant. A steady hand. A mentor who believed in you more than you believed in yourself.

"He had a rule growing up—no one spends a holiday alone," Kevin says. Pops opened his home to friends, players, college athletes, co-workers, and anyone in need. "If someone needed work, he'd teach them to paint and give them a job. That's just who he was."

That same spirit extended to every player he coached. He gave more than instructions—he gave belief.

Building SDA's Culture—One Relationship at a Time

Kevin sees his father's influence everywhere at SDA. "He taught me that coaching starts with understanding people. That's how I plan practices, how I place players, how I build teams. It's about trust." At Syracuse FC (the early stages of what would become SDA), father and son coached side by side—two strong personalities learning to blend their styles. "I'd push the players to their limits, and he'd build the emotional connection. That one-two punch made us great together."

Today, Kevin leads the 2011 Girls Academy team and continues Pops' legacy with the help of a staff that shares his values. "I've got three incredible coaches with me who all believe in what my father believed: care deeply, coach selflessly, and stay loyal."

Home Field Advantage: A Backyard Legacy

Even as his health declined, Pops never stopped coaching. He transformed his backyard into a training ground, working with kids from ages 5 to college. He created schedules, curated sessions, and brought joy and purpose back into his life—all while caring for his wife, who has been bedridden with MS.

“Kids would stop in just to say hi to my mom,” Kevin says. “That meant everything to him. He had the backyard ready every day. It became his field, his community, his pride.”

The Values That Live On

When asked what he hopes future SDA players learn from Pops’ example, Kevin’s message is clear:

- Care about people.
- Loyalty matters.
- Let coaches coach.



“Parents sometimes forget it’s a process. We push players hard because we care. We don’t move on from kids—we build them. And when they leave too soon, it breaks our hearts.”

Pops’ philosophy wasn’t about winning games—it was about building character and lifelong bonds. “We’re in their lives long after soccer ends,” Kevin says. “They become our support system too.”

Honoring Pops

When asked how the community might honor Pops’ legacy, Kevin didn’t suggest trophies or plaques.

“He just wanted people to stay connected. He lit up when he got a call or message from a former player. If there’s something that brings people together—something that reminds them to care about each other—then that’s how his legacy will live on.”

And it will. Every time a coach listens a little longer, a player digs a little deeper, or a team gathers in unity off the field—that’s Pops.

ADRIANNA CALABRIA



Adrianna Calabria is heading to Utica University—and she's bringing her SDA spirit with her. After years of dedication, growth, and a whole lot of soccer, she's ready for the next chapter.

Her love for the game started young. One day in the backyard, her mom gave her a choice: soccer or lacrosse? Without hesitation, Adrianna picked soccer—and never looked back. After one practice with Lil Kickers, she was hooked. She joined SDA a year later with Coach Lauren, and that's where the journey really began.

From technical drills to fast-paced transition play, SDA helped shape her into the player she is today. But it wasn't just about skills. "The coaches at



“The coaches at SDA really care. They push you, help you fix your mistakes, and build your confidence every step of the way. I always knew they had my back.”

Adrianna says the biggest thing she learned at SDA—besides how to finish a ball under pressure—was what it means to be part of a team.

“Leadership, commitment, family—that’s what SDA taught me. My teammates became my second family, and I’ll always be there to support them just like they supported me.”

With her sights now set on college, Adrianna’s more motivated than ever.

“Being accepted into Utica is a huge step toward my goals. I’ve always worked hard to become the best version of myself, both on the field and in the classroom—and that’s not going to stop.”

Her advice for younger players? “Stay positive and give it your all—every



“THE COACHES AT SDA REALLY CARE. THEY PUSH YOU, HELP YOU FIX YOUR MISTAKES, AND BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. I ALWAYS KNEW THEY HAD MY BACK.”

single day. If you improve just one thing each time you step on the field, the progress adds up fast. Keep chasing your goals!”

Utica is getting a driven, passionate, and all-in teammate this fall—and SDA couldn’t be prouder. Let’s go, Adrianna!



**2008 AND 2010 BOYS TEAMS WENT TO VIRGINIA TO
COMPETE IN THE USYS REGIONAL TOURNAMENT!**





**OUR 2009 GIRLS BATTLED HARD AND CAME OUT
ON TOP WITH A 4-2 VICTORY, PUNCHING THEIR
TICKET TO NATIONALS!**





GALLERY





GALLERY





GALLERY

