

GRASA NEWS

PREPARED BY: BENNY GORDON

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006

As we begin our spring season, it is time to look at where we are and where we

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE GAIL O. SUTTON

are going as a club. We are fortunate to have the enthusiasm and dedication of so many volunteers who make your child(ren)'s soccer experience a great one. Many people work behind the scene and put in countless hours unknown to the masses. I would like to thank all the G.R.A.S.A. Board members, past and present, for making this club a success.

Please make sure you check out the website mentioned in this newsletter. It is a great way of keeping up to date with all the teams, opportunities and upcoming events. Try-out dates have been listed for over a month. This also allows you to e-mail different Board members.

I would like to personally thank you, the parents, for your support. The experienced parents have been great with ideas, yet understanding of doing things for the good of all players. The new parents have brought renewed enthusiasm, and also great ideas. We love to hear from all of you, because we are continuing to grow, and want the club to give our players the best opportunities possible. To that end, we are extremely fortunate in having Abrahm Shearer as director of coaching. He is taking our club to new levels and offering our players more options by working with the youngest of our players (U-9 House League), and the oldest of our players (U-19 Girls and Boys, and men's teams). Additionally, he works with teams and coaches upon request, and attends many of the games and tournaments. His monthly reports to the Board make us realize he covers a lot of territory for one person. Mark Stockoski, as president-elect, brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and energy to the Board. As a player himself and a coach, he gives us first-hand knowledge of what makes a club great, and guides us in making wise decisions. I confer with him often for his advice.

As president, my main goals for the year have been organization, consistency and communication. I am in the process of networking the presidents of all the G.V.S.A. clubs, so we may support each other in our growth. We are finalizing plans for try-outs and notification of players. The coaches and managers have received their packets for this already. None of this would be possible without the entire Board working together.

I hope all of you have a great spring season! I want to end with a statement made at an inservice I attended as the Gifted and Talented Consultant for our high school. As we get caught up in the excitement of the talent of a child, let us not forget the child behind the talent!



GRASA MISSION STATEMENT

GRASA is a soccer association dedicated to the development of our players. Our mission is to be the community leader in soccer development by providing top level coaching and excellent organizational structure. The association will strive to reach this goal through continuous improvement while promoting sportsmanship, team play, and a healthy respect for others.





FOREST HILLS COMMUNITY SOCCER PARK

FROM THE TREASURER'S POSITION DAVE CRAMER

We currently have \$19,817.46 in our checking account. We also have \$10,031.87 in our savings account. We have an investment CD for new uniforms in the amount of \$8,090.25, and a CD for field development of \$8,089.24. Our grand total for all accounts is \$46,028.82.

In the fall of 1999 the board instituted limits on coaches tournament reimbursements. This combined with an aggressive fund raising program have increased our monies \$22,294.82 over the same period last year. It is the goal of the board that the reduced expenses and increased income will allow us to enter an interest earning fund for future uniform needs.

The board would like to continue to provide the high quality coaching and guidance that will allow excellent soccer skills development as well as excellent character development for our kids. I feel we are in a strong financial position to achieve these goals.

Registrar's Corner

Diane Parks

Julie Barrett

I am Diane Parks, Co-Registrar for GRASA. Julie Barrett is my assistant in this endeavor. I wanted to take this opportunity to let each of you know a little about us.

I am co-owner of a physician medical practice management and technology organization. My mission while serving as registrar for GRASA is to computerize the documents required to register the players and attempt to streamline this process to make it more player, coach, and manager friendly. The documents that have required hand-written completion in the past will be completed electronically and you will just update information as necessary and sign.

My address is: Diane L. Parks, GRASA Registrar
P. O. Box 3142
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-3142

My e-mail address is: [HYPERLINK "mailto:dparks1059@aol.com"](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:dparks1059@aol.com)

Feel free to send me your e-mail address as we can communicate and forward any required documents through this method. Please include your name, title (mgr, coach, etc) and the team you represent, (U10 White boys, or U12 Blue girls).

Julie Barrett lives locally and has offered a drop box on her front porch for easy access when documents come due and time doesn't permit for them to go through the traditional postal process. Julie will be the person you receive phone calls from primarily, for questions regarding player registration information, payments, etc.



By now you have heard of the soccer complex to be built behind the Forest Hills Community Aquatic Center. Most people have heard just enough to be hopeful, yet confused. I would like to take this space to clarify a few things.

The complex will consist of eleven fields to be used by three organizations: A.Y.S.O., Forest Hills Schools and G.R.A.S.A. Game times do not conflict since the schools' games are on week nights, A.Y.S.O. games are Saturday mornings and ours are Saturday afternoons. I am on the Board for this as the G.R.A.S.A. representative.

At this time, fund raising is progressing well. It is our hope, that people will see the benefit of having such a complex and donate generously as a family and/or business. If you know of any companies who would be willing to help us out, please let me know. It had been hoped to break ground by now, but with your help, we will very soon.

If you have any questions, the best people to answer them are Kathy Wildt: 676-3678 and Chuck King: 682-0324. Hopefully, in the very near future, we will have our own tournament!
Gail Sutton, President

DIRECTOR OF COACHES REPORT

ABRAHM SHEARER

Through my own mistakes in the past year, I have learned an excellent lesson: communication is key to the success of any great organization. GRASA has made tremendous strides to improve in this area throughout the past year. As a board, we have made the newsletter a priority and have worked very hard to increase communication through our managers. For nearly a year, GRASA has had a web-site that offers everyone instant access to important information. The address is:

<http://members.aol.com/arshearer>

Contact your coaches and managers to discuss how your team can use the Message Board to exchange important information.

Why does any of this belong in a Director of Coaches Report? Because I am continually working to recruit, place, and educate the best coaching staff possible, I feel that everyone should have a voice in regards to our coaches.

Last year, at the Libertyville Cup our members were given a questionnaire that many returned with valuable information. GRASA responded by making every change that a strong majority wanted to see.

I am inviting each and every member to give feedback about our coaching staff. Take this opportunity to help improve our club. Be honest, your name is optional, include from which team you are a member, and include contact information if you want a response.

E-mail- arshearer@aol.com
Phone- 616-456-5165
Write- 60 Portsmouth N.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Comments about the director of coaches should be sent to Mark Stockoski, our president-elect.

Mark Stockoski
E-mail- mj.stockoski@helmholdt.com
Phone- 616-742-5811

FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT
MARK STOCKOSKI

As GRASA continues to expand in ideas, skills, talent, and enrollment it too is opening up to the idea of expanding into inner city Grand Rapids. Gathering new ideas is the first step in reaching out to the youth of the inner city. As the sport of soccer grows, we must assume that many of the inner city youths who have an interest in soccer do not have the opportunity to participate. This may be due to financial reasons, transportation factors, or perhaps a lack of communication from the suburbs about who to contact to join.

We need to continue to bridge the gap between the inner city and the suburbs, and soccer provides a wonderful opportunity to do so! If we can overcome our anxieties and prejudices and share our wealth, we can invite all interested kids to play 'the beautiful game' - to the benefit of the entire community!

During the coming season, GRASA will be searching for ways to make this happen. If you have ideas, contacts, or any other assistance to offer please contact any member of the GRASA board. Where there is an interest, there is a way for things to happen.

Thanks!

Mark



Tournament News

Applications for Spring tournaments are complete as noted below. If your team is not able to attend a tournament as indicated, please contact Wendy Hoerner ASAP (676-0352). GRASA will make hotel reservations for the Libertyville and Saginaw tournament weekends only as KISS is considered commutable.

TEAM MANAGERS have received a packet of information containing tournament documents and a request for bankcard information and room requests for each player. Please include information for any guest players as applicable.

COACHES will receive a listing of late Summer and Fall tournaments from which they should select one to attend under GRASA sponsorship. Registration, travel arrangements, and hotel accommodations for any tournament other than the three listed below are the responsibility of each individual team.

TEAM	COACH	Tournaments		
		Libertyville 5/27 - 5/29	KISS 6/17 - 6/18	Saginaw 6/23 - 6/25
U-19 Boys	Shearer	Y	Y	
U-19 Girls	Shearer			Y
U-16 Boys	Licari	Y	Y	
U-16 Girls	Hill			
U-15 Girls	Hinton			Y
U-14 Boys	Dufendach	Y	Y	
U-14 Boys	Van Thomme	Y		Y
U-14 Girls	Swainton	Y		Y
U-13 Boys	Stackowski	Y	Y	
U-13 Boys	Noe	Y		Y
U-13 Girls	Klynstra	Y	Y	
U-13 Girls	McQuigg	Y		Y
U-12 Boys	Schulte	Y		Y
U-12 Boys	Hall	Y		Y
U-12 Girls	Underwood	Y	Y	Y
U-11 Boys	Barone	Y		Y
U-11 Boys	Belmonte	Y		Y
U-11 Girls	Turek	Y		Y
U-11 Girls	McAllister	Y		Y
U-10 Boys	Johnson	Y		Y
U-10 Boys	Baker	Y		Y
U-10 Girls	McMahon	Y		Y
U-10 Girls	Hennes	Y		*
U-9 Boys	Bowen	Y		Y

Tryouts Update John Hall

A lot of GRASA tryouts have been conducted since the very first one my sons attended during the winter of 1991. All told, one or more of my kids have been at most of them during the last nine years. I can still remember the struggles GRASA faced getting the first girl's team started. Even inviting U14 girls to try out for a U19 team couldn't attract enough quality players to field a team. A lot has changed since then hasn't it?

That would include the format we introduced last year. After several years of different standards and measures, we've settled on a method that we think works well. Last year at Jaycee Park, a circuit of stations was set up. Each evaluation station had a different skill to be focused on ranging from 5v5 scrimmages to timed sprints. Coaches and evaluators moved with their age group to each station and conducted the drill at that location. They were given 25 minutes per station with the goal of giving every player a score. With the exception of a few snags, we felt things went very well.

This year, we plan on using the same structure with a few minor changes. We will deploy fewer stations to provide more time per drill. We will modify drills to provide a greater depth of evaluation at each station. Coaches and evaluators will have tryout materials in advance so that they are familiar with the format. And we also hope to have more skill coaches as objective third members to each age group. These changes will help make the success we enjoyed last year even better.

For many years now, GRASA has been the most successful club in West Michigan. Last year we had a record number of players tryout for our club. Seeing we are able to attract such a large group, it only makes sense to have the best method for evaluating them. With our new tryout process we feel that we're on the right track. We hope you look forward to tryouts this summer. We are!

