



President's View:

West Michigan Soccer

Soccer in Michigan, particularly West Michigan, seems to be going through a sort of evolution with new clubs popping up here & there, and new Premier clubs trying to get established. Even Recreational soccer is going through changes. As far as GRASA parents are concerned, I think it may be helpful to understand the big picture of soccer in West Michigan.

Traditionally, there have always been three tiers of youth soccer; Recreational (AYSO, Parks & Rec., etc.), Select, and Premier. GRASA is a Select club, which is a part of the Grand Valley Soccer Association (GVSA), one of the strongest and largest clubs in the state of Michigan. And GVSA, in turn, is a part of the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA).

GVSA is made up of Select clubs from West Michigan such as, Lakeshore, Georgetown, SCOR, PASS, and many more, plus one Premier club, Grand Valley Premier (GVP). Recreational players who are ready for more competition, commitment, and a higher level of coaching move up to the select level, and then the few players who want and need even more than select can offer them, try out for the premier level. GRASA and the other select clubs within GVSA have always encouraged their players to go to GVP, when appropriate, as they offer a quality and competitive premier program (one of the best in the state).

So why do you need to know all of this? Well, as changes occur in our area, it's helpful to understand the infrastructure of the organizations you are involved in. You may have more and more choices in the future as to where to play, and choices are always a good thing. We as a club encourage our players and potential players to explore all possibilities, with the goal of finding the club that is best suited for your individual needs.

GRASA will continue to strive for the things that we feel a quality select soccer club should have:

1. Coaches that have character, knowledge of the game and are appropriate role models for their players.
2. A reliable and quality organization that has the necessary framework to run a good, quality program that you can rely on.

Continued on Page 6

Special Feature:

By Jay M. Bylsma

Youth Sports Can Burn Out Kids

We Must Keep Things in Perspective. Know When to Put Away the Skates

When I tell you that my son Dan plays hockey for the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim, you could rightly conclude that youth sports played a big part of our family's life. If it could be thrown, kicked, pitched, hit or caught, we did it, watched it, coached it or refereed it.

Now, all the kids are grown and we're reduced to watching Dan's games on TV, or, occasionally, in Detroit or Chicago. My wife and I are starting to take our life back. We've even begun to make friends our own age who don't have kids that throw, kick, pitch, hit or catch.

Back to the ice

Recently, I dropped into a local ice rink for old time's sake; to see my breath in the frosty air, hear the crisp crunch of sharp blades against the ice, hear the thwack of the stick hitting the puck and watch young lads in the swift ice ballet that hockey well-played can be.

I was unprepared for what I experienced. Oh, I saw my breath and watched the ballet. But what I also saw was anger, rancor and bitterness – from the stands. I had to remind myself this was a Squirt hockey game – not a Middle Eastern funeral. I don't see that kind of intensity at NHL games in the third period (even after the beer taps have run dry).

An old friend, there to watch his grandson, spotted me and clambered down from the stands. "Can't stay away, can you? You miss this?" he asked.

"I've never experienced this before," I replied, shrugging.

He nodded in agreement. "Sompun' ain't it? But then, our kids and us were just in it for the fun, am I right? These kids and their parents are here to make the NHL. That's all my son talks about: his Johnny playing for this coach not that one, in this league in the winter, and this one in the summer. This summer camp, then that. He's got 'er all mapped out."

"Things have certainly changed in just a generation. Is the boy having fun?"

"He better be with all the money they've sunk in him."

Continued next page

And while my experience is with hockey, I am aware that this kind of intensity pervades most of youth sports with travel leagues, player ratings, etc.

Learning and fun

There are only two reasons why kids should be involved in youth sports: to teach them life lessons and for them to have fun. To participate in sports to generate a professional athlete is useless at best and often destructive.

Why is it useless? There are incredible odds stacked against success. The odds of an American-born hockey player making it to the NHL are one in 3,333. In baseball, the odds of making it are one in 6,666. In both sports, the odds are diminishing. In hockey, for example, 38 percent of rookies entering the NHL were from Europe. This season it was 51 percent.

The disproportionate number of non-North American NHL players is especially troubling to our hockey establishment, considering that North America has six times as many players in youth hockey as Sweden, Finland, Russia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia combined.

The question that should come to mind (but which few parents caught up in the youth hockey frenzy address): why are the Europeans producing so many NHL players? This is especially puzzling when European players do not play organized games until age 9 or 10, play far fewer games in their season, they don't play year-round, and play other sports.

The conventional wisdom in our country is to become successful you must start kids very young, play ever more games, play all year and concentrate on one sport. And the youth sports establishment perpetuates this fallacy despite its enormous economic cost (up to \$4,500 per year for a travel hockey player) and medical warnings from the American Pediatric Association advising of the developmental and physical dangers of this path.

Consider the example of Wayne Gretzky, who said his dad sometimes hid his skates when the season was over. "He wanted me to play other sports, to just be a regular kid having a great summer," Gretzky said. "Hockey was the focal point, but it was what I did in the winter."

Gretzky ran track, was a pitcher and shortstop in baseball, and was an 'A' student who always did his homework before he went off to play hockey, according to his father.

Consider Pavel Bure, whose draft year stats were 25 points in 30 games of league play at the age of 18. Typically, kids in travel hockey start in the fall and will have played 30 games before Christmas.

Consider that the NCAA -- taking into account the demands of getting an education, the amount of travel and the physical stress on college students (young adults who are physically and emotionally mature)

-- limits the games to 34 per season. It's not uncommon for kids 9 and 10 to play almost three times that many games and travel just as far, the logic and benefit of which apparently escape the NCAA. It's not working

And sadly, for all the time, money, and travel spent, it isn't working -- in fact, it's counterproductive.

We are burning our babies out as surely as Canaanite worshipers of Molech burned theirs up. I say "we" because it's not an 8-year-old child's idea to dress up in matching uniforms, jackets, and equipment bags and travel 120 miles packed in the family van to play three or four games on the weekend against kids he doesn't know and will never meet again. That's an adult idea.

My son has concluded that professional athletes are almost always created by default, very rarely by plan. He notes that, like myself, most parents of NHL players never thought, never planned that their kid would play in the NHL.

His experience confirms what baseball manager Sparky Anderson said: "Your son will play (professional sports) in spite of what you do for him, not because of what you do for him."

Dan's translation: if your son has what it takes to make it to the NHL, you'll not be able to stop him. If he doesn't have what it takes, you can't give it to him.

Destructive frenzy

But I argue further that the youth sports frenzy our society is drawn up in is more than benignly counterproductive. It is all too often destructive. There's the recent example of the father of a player out East who beat another player's father to death over "too much physical contact" in a pickup hockey game (I don't think any more irony could be packed into a fictional sentence).

This month, the father of a 14-year-old hockey player in Massachusetts was arrested and charged with assault and battery. He had attacked his son's high school coach in a locker room after a game because "the coach has been after my son for a long time."

Sadly, I think it's more insidious than just these two blatant examples. I'm troubled by the values we teach a child when we would make this kind of an expenditure of time, money and emotional involvement for what should be a child's pastime and we haven't the time for parent/teacher conferences or the money for a math tutor.

What are we saying when matters of spiritual importance and the ultimate realities of life are well behind a hockey or soccer schedule in our list of priorities?

What impression do we leave when we choose to travel to the other side of the state for a hockey game instead of going to a Christmas celebration with our extended family?

If we think success in athletics is what we should value as a society, perhaps the Europeans' success in hockey should give us a clue as to how to achieve that success. That would be: no organized games until age 9 or 10, far fewer games in the season, and play a variety of sports.

Let our kids be kids and have fun, and let parents heed the advice of Sparky Anderson. It's a novel concept these days, but I know it worked for Dan and for lot of his teammates in the NHL.

About the Essayist

Jay Bylsma once called sports a "microcosm of life" and a useful tool for parents to instruct youngsters. He is not an opponent of youth sports.

But as the father of a professional athlete, Bylsma knows it is not the parent who makes the player.

Son Dan Bylsma and his siblings had a backyard ice rink, but they also had a three-hole golf course in the summer. Dan excelled both at hockey and golf and, like his father, played basketball and baseball.

Dan Bylsma now plays for the Mighty Ducks in the National Hockey League. Dan and Jay have written two books together -- "So Your Son Wants to Play in the NHL?" and "So You Want to Play in the NHL: A Guide for Young Players."

They also have a historical novel coming out in January called "Pitcher's Hands is Out," a story about baseball during the Great Depression.

Bylsma laments the change in parental attitudes about sports since he was young.

"Baby boomers are far more interested in results and in gains," Bylsma said. "Unsupervised playing just doesn't cut it any more."

He said children are missing out on valuable lessons when parents make the rules and decisions for them.

"The children are deprived of a real opportunity to learn to get along with each other," he said.

Bylsma, 59, and his wife, Nancy, live in Grand Haven. They have four sons and a daughter, all grown.

The Grand Rapids native is a graduate of Grand Rapids Christian High School. He attended Calvin College then earned bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from the University of Michigan.

Try Outs:

Tentative Dates and Location Set

Tentative Try Out dates have been set for Saturday, June 15th, and Monday through Thursday, June 17th to June 20th. We hope to use Catholic Central's Athletic Complex at Leffingwell and Knapp. Specific Age Group for nights has not been set, but will probably be similar to last years schedule.

Coach's Corner:

Positional Strengths Effect Player Roles

This may be one of the more difficult issues to address, player roles. What is expected of an outside midfielder? You see, the complication comes from a few different directions.

First off, there are several different styles of play that different coaches will prefer. So, if we say that the outside mids are to always run wide on attack to open up space in the middle, another coach may prefer to have one outside mid run wide on one side, while the other makes a penetrating diagonal run through the middle.

Secondly, if we teach our players that "every time we attack I want you to....." Then we take away from the most unique part about soccer, it's personal creativity. Players really need to be taught the Principles of Play and then create an environment where they will be able to discover their use.

Thirdly, game elements such as who the competition is, what the score is, how much time is left in the game, are we playing a man short, what system of play are we using (4-4-2, 4-3-3, etc.), what players are on the field at the time (each players strengths and weaknesses may affect our ability to play certain ways as a team, etc.), and other factors will effect roles.

Fourthly, we are teaching our players in today's game about interchanging of positions during play. An outside back must now know when he can make a run forward to create a good scoring opportunity while an outside mid will be the likely candidate to drop behind and assume the role of that outside back when they do make runs forward. Each must be able to assume those roles effectively, of which the Principles of Play are the guiding principles universally applied world-wide that govern these roles.

Below are some of the common strengths and/or roles of our players that hopefully will give players, coaches, and parents at least some understanding of what each player should be doing during play and positional strengths that many coaches look for.

Goalkeeper – The GK is the last line of defense, and after the save, the first line of attack (not always coached). The GK should be able to organize his/her defense verbally and be sure that players are not left untracked or unmarked without losing track of the ball and a potential shot.

On attack, GK's must be smart about distribution when they have the ball in order to attempt to 1) get the ball safely to one of his team mates to restart their offense, especially forward, but without giving up the ball 2) not give the ball away unnecessarily to the opponent by simply kicking it as hard and far as possible with no purpose of trying to link with a team mate.

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GK's must also provide the deep option of possession-play in order to maintain possession while seeking the best and safest way to play the ball forward to create a goal scoring opportunity.

Main Points: Communication to organize defense, Provide positive distribution to teammates when starting attack, Provide safe possession options in which to build an attack from the back.

Outside Defenders – Defensively, OD's should be able to track players making runs on their outside and provide proper distance and angle to those attackers in order to be sure those making runs are unable to penetrate behind them. Be able to defend players 1-v-1 and not allow turning or penetration, direct players away from most dangerous areas, and be able to tackle cleanly. They must be strong in the air to defend balls sent into the box. Be able to volley balls safely out of the box both facing forward and towards own goal, over their shoulder.

On attack, they must display ample skill and confidence to be facing own goal and turn up field to pass safely and effectively away. Be able to pass short or long down the flank successfully. Be able to safely pass from outside to inside. Be able to see and perform attacking runs from the back, usually down the flank to exploit weak side opportunities that often occur. Be strong in the air on attack. Outside defenders are often very strong in the air.

Main Points: Good in the air, Good at tracking players off the ball, and Understands defensive principles.

Central Defenders – CD's are typically very smart and good organizers. They must have a top understanding of the principles of defending and be able to attend to their own tasks centrally while organizing the other players. Central defenders often consist of a sweeper (the deeper back) and a stopper (the on top back).

These 2 central defenders must be able to interchange positions quickly and smoothly, as is demanded by the game. Example, if the sweeper must leave the middle to defend an attacker who has beaten the outside back down the flank, the stopper typically will move deep into the sweepers spot to provide support behind the sweeper. One role of the sweeper is to always provide defensive support or "cover" to the defender who is defending the player with the ball.

CD's must have adequate skills to get the ball out of trouble in the back, preferably by linking with a midfielder or attacker to counter the opponents attack. The stopper ideally has excellent intercepting vision and skills, as well as strong tackling skills. Both sweeper and stopper will possess the ability to effectively restart the offense while maintaining possession in and around the back in order to pull opponents from forward and open up a better penetrating opportunity for their team mates.

Main Points: Smart defensively, Provides "cover" behind ball, Safely restarts offense.

Outside Midfielders – OM's often possess strong physical endurance and should be capable of assuming an outside defenders role when the OD makes a run forward. Defensively, an OM, will try to kill the opponents desire and/or ability to push the ball quickly forward by using the outside, a common attacking mode for many teams. Quick recognition of this is paramount, and OM's must move to cut off that pass option early.

OM's will track back with their OM's as they attack forward and must "read" when to stay with that player and when to assume the role of defending inside. This is usually when the OD takes the outside attacker. Offensively, OM's should try to play very wide to either 1) provide an open attack option down the flank, or 2) provide space in the middle to attack for other team mates. The attacking principle of width will often fall on the shoulders of the OM's.

OM's should be able to accurately place balls in the box from outside onto a team mate's head or shoe in order to maximize scoring opportunities. OM's are often quite fast and should possess good individual skill. The ability to trap balls from a distance, both in air and on ground, is very important. Also, the ability to explode into space with the ball under control is important when attacking down the flank.

Main Points: Fit, Provides Width in attack, Crosses balls effectively, Helps defensively both outside and inside as needed.

Central Midfielders – CM's are usually the best all-around players and should have excellent ball handling skills. Defensively, CM's should have excellent anticipation skills and be able to read and intercept passes in and through the middle. They should be able to defend the opponent's best ball handler with exceptional 1-v-1 skills, be deceptive in these 1-v-1 battles, and be able to win 50-50 tackles consistently.

On attack, CM's should have very good field vision to spot penetrating opportunities quickly and early. They must be able to pass in tight space with the proper pace, deception and accuracy in order to exploit the smallest of penetrating options. Passing on ground and in air, with extreme accuracy, both short and long, is essential.

CM's must be able to receive, control and turn the ball while shielding from a defender, they must be able to lay off first time passes backwards and to the sides with accuracy and touch. They also should be able to shoot with great power and accuracy from a distance, and be able to see and make runs through the middle. Overall ball-handling skills must be excellent.

Main Points: Playmaker, Excellent distributor, Proficient Defender 1-v-1.

Outside Attackers – OA's should be able to cross the ball into the box with accuracy while under pressure of an opponent. OA's play wide enough to pull apart the defending action in and around the box. They must be

able to shoot with either foot, be able to shoot on a full sprint under pressure, and be effective attacking in the air. Creative skills with and without ball are essential.

They must set up simple wall passes, overlap runs, and takeovers in order to confuse and disrupt the defending action of the opponent. Being able to run at, and past defenders, with one quick move is helpful. Defensively, OA's should be quick and deceptive at high-pressuring backs, forcing errors, and winning balls to provide quick counter attack options up front. Baiting defenders into predictable mistakes is a strength of a good OA as defenders try to play out of the back.

Main Points: Plays wide to proved space inside, Excellent at crossing from end line, Provides simple combinations with team mates, Shoot with any surface.

Central Attackers – CA's should have excellent ball handling skills in very tight space, are usually very quick footed with the ball, and have excellent balance and agility. CA's are most effective when they make diagonal runs, through runs, check runs, and various deceptive runs, in order to open space for themselves or team mates.

CA's work with OA's up front with crossing runs, overloads to one side to open space behind, and overall are creative and mobile. They should try to push up as high as they can in order to open more depth in the attack through the middle especially. Defensively, CA's also should be excellent at high-pressuring the opposing defenders, and be able to force errors in the back in order to create quick counter chances. The ability to shoot with both feet, from air balls, with back to goal, etc. is obvious. Vision to find other players while under extreme pressure is helpful.

Main Points: Excellent in tight space, very mobile and creative, ability to shot with any surface, quickly, and under pressure.

While the above descriptions of players by position, is certainly not the end all, it is a guide to the kinds of strengths and/or roles different positions require. In today's game, all players must be able to interchange with other positions during the flow of the game and recognize the needs of the game as it is played.

The principles of Attack, and the Principles of Defense, are what the game is based on and is essential for our players to understand. This is why we have included classroom training with our Winter Indoor Training this second session so as to introduce our players to these principles and show them how each one plays into the game.

Most players react to the game rather than anticipate it. As the competition builds, this kind of play will be exploited by better teams and players. This is why every player will be better off if they understand the principles of the game and can begin to apply them more effectively.

Dan McAllister, DMcall5553@aol.com
GRASA Director of Coaching



Soccer Spot News:

Session 3 Starting Soon

For those of you that have taken most of the Winter off, Soccer Spot has been in full swing. With two Sessions already under its belt, many GRASA teams have found playing Indoor helps keep their skills sharpened in the off-season. If you, or your team, is interested in playing 3rd Session, deadline for registration is Feb 12th.

Most age groups are offered, starting as young as U7 Co-ed, all the way up to Over 40 Men's (some of our own coaches play in this age group). Currently, Soccer Spot is offering Boy's or Girl's Divisions from U8–U19 as well as several Adult Leagues. The cost per Team is \$695. Don't have a team to play on? Individuals can sign up to play on a House Team.

This last Session runs Feb 26–April 21. If you have any questions, call 464-1000 and tell them you're from GRASA. While you're there, check out our new Bulletin Board. See you there!

Managing Managers:

A To Do List for the Upcoming Spring Season

- Remind your coach to sign up for the GRASA coach's clinic on April 14th
- Make sure you have a "nets and flags" parent
- Replenish your medical kit
- Make sure you have secured a practice field
- Register any new players (late fees will be assessed after 3/5/02)
- Touch base with parents by double checking their e-mail addresses
- Sign up your team for the Team Training session #3 (great opportunity for your players)
- Make sure Spring Tournaments are in order
- Place your orders for additional uniforms or equipment and locate your game ball
- Contact John Corbett to make sure your referees have been assigned

Good Luck!

Claudia Judson
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Free Money:

Fundraising Short and Sweet

If you've been part of GRASA for any length of time, it's obvious that we've been a Club of change. After having the same Uniform for ten years, we've had changes in our Kit for the last two. After being an entirely volunteer club for most of our history, we now have our first paid staff-position of Director of Coaching. Instead of parent coaches, some of our teams have a paid head or skills coach that they have opted to support. Even our Logo has undergone change.

All of this has been done for the betterment of our Club and often at the request of you, our members. We are the oldest and most successful Club in West Michigan and these changes have been a positive reflection of that. But it has not come without expense. In order to pay for these "extra perks" we have had to "ante up". Our registration costs have increased a bit and teams have had to collect money if they wanted a paid coach.

The direction of our Club continues to look positive. We envision having a paid coach for most, if not all, of our Teams. Home and Away Jerseys for our Kit each year. Even Fields that we can call our own Home Field. All of this will cost our Club money and it is our hope that we can accomplish this without having to raise registration fees. And how do you expect to do that, you might ask?

As Fundraising/Sponsorship Coordinator, I have a plan that will make this vision a reality. It will be a three-point plan of attack that will kick off this Spring. The first will be every parent's favorite pastime, "Fundraising". I can hear those groans even as I write this. But be patient! Hear me out. I will do my best to come up with the best and most profitable Fundraiser ever. If you would rather **not** participate, then write out a check to GRASA for \$35 and give it to your Team Manager. End of Story. Is that simple or what?

But realize this, that for some, \$35 a child is not easy. Some families have more than one kid in the Club. For 3 kids, that's over \$100. And for others, money just is not that plentiful. GRASA does not want to exclude any from being part of the Club, so Fundraising becomes the only means these families will have to participate in support of the Club. Anyway, details will follow. I tell you all this now so as not to catch you off guard.

The other 2 points of attack? Newsletter Advertisement and Team Sponsorship. If you haven't taken the time to really read Dan McAllister's articles, you've really been missing some good pieces. People pay a lot of money for subscriptions to magazines that have articles of his caliber. As we become more established as a medium, I believe the Sponsors will be happy to advertise in our Newsletter. Team Sponsorship is another way for Club revenue. This Fall I would like to see most of our teams with a Corporate Sponsor of \$500. More Next issue.

John Hall, jhall@rbc.org
Fundraising/Sponsorship Coordinator

Poaching:

Hunting Players Out of Season?

Poaching is the recruitment or solicitation of players for clubs or teams in a manner that violates league rules. This has been a problem since clubs first formed, so leagues have developed explicit rules governing them. All coaches, and players, should be familiar with the rules regarding recruitment and solicitation.

Soccer leagues in Michigan affiliated with MSYSA, are subject to MSYSA rules regarding recruitment. This includes all Youth Select and Premier Clubs in West Michigan. GVSA rules are consistent with MSYSA rules, and state the following (section A, item 5):

- b. Clubs may not actively solicit participation at their tryouts from players who played the previous season on a GVSA team for a different club, unless at least one of the following conditions is true:
- The club in question has ceased to function, or no longer belongs to the GVSA.
 - The player has moved, or no longer meets the criteria for membership in his club.
 - The player's club has scheduled no tryouts for the player's age group.
 - The player's club has never fielded a team in the player's age group.
 - The player has a signed waiver from his club. Such waivers may not limit a player's ability to try out for another club in any way, including his/her present club.
 - The player was not chosen at his/her club's tryouts for his/her age group.

Note that any player may try out for any club, of his/her own volition. Publicly advertising a tryout is **not** "active solicitation". What this means, is that no coach or club official may approach or contact a player from another club to invite them to try out or to join a team, except under the specific conditions listed above. To do so is considered poaching and a violation of league rules.

Ken Coviak, ken.coviak@attbi.com
GRASA Communications Coordinator

President's View, Continued From Page 1

3. A proven track record and history of successful soccer.
4. A commitment to developing players to the best of their abilities.
5. Reasonable fees, and scholarships when needed, that make it affordable for all players who want to play select soccer.
6. A true commitment and dedication to the kids, as they are the sole reason we even exist.

Now you know more than you ever wanted to about soccer in Western Michigan! And if you want to continue to learn more, I encourage you to attend our monthly board meetings, which are held on the third Monday of each month at East Hills Athletic Club. Your board is working hard to insure the quality of soccer for your child and welcome your input and involvement. Until next time,

Laurie Wilson, LWW920@attbi.com
GRASA President

GRICS Update:

GRICS—What do these initials mean? To many families in our community it means a way to keep their kids out of drugs, off the street corners, and to keep them from getting into trouble after school and during the summer.

GRICS stands for Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer. This volunteer organization has been in our local community for 1 year and I think we have made a difference in some kids lives. GRICS is run 100% with volunteers within the Grand Rapids area. Our efforts and mission is to bring soccer to all kids who want to play the game.

Many families and businesses have helped to make us a success, yet much more needs to be done. GRICS provided its first event to inner city kids last summer. We hosted two, 3-day camps, one at ML King Jr. Park, & one at Clemente Park. Although numbers were low, (approx. 12 at each camp), we made a huge difference in the children's lives. Each child who attended went home with cleats, shin guards, a soccer ball, t-shirt and shorts. The families who attended have been involved in our current indoor program along with many others. This is a 6-week program, free of charge, held at the Sports XChange on Friday nights. We currently have over 30 boys and girls participating.

What do we want to do in the future? To touch more children's lives. Currently, many children are unable to come due to lack of transportation. The indoor, as well as outdoor facilities are not in the area's where these families live. So, we have to rely on the families making financial sacrifices to get the children to these facilities. Our next big goal is to purchase a mini-bus or shuttle to get the children to these events. It is a huge effort but I am hoping we will be able to raise the needed funds.

We are planning a Spring Fundraising event at Soccer Spot. This is an event when parents of our local teams, GRASA, PASS, Kentwood, CATS, etc., can drop their kids off at Soccer Spot for a few hours on a Friday or Saturday night, let the kids enjoy the facility while mom and dad enjoy an evening without the kids. Date, time and cost are still to be determined.

Volunteers make this organization a success. Thanks to Sports XChange, Soccer Spot, and Country Fresh, a few of our corporate donors, and DeVries', Roden's, Peterson's, Wilson's, Bart's, Stacy's, Mendes', Bowen's, Vandemerwe's, McQuigg's, and many more have all helped to make this a success. Thank you for all your help over the past year. We still need volunteer help in many roles, such as, coaching, organizing, fundraising, serving food, organizing events, and just as simple as delivering flyers.

To help financially, donate new or slightly used soccer equipment or be a volunteer, please contact me at (616) 292-3633 or Diane Parks, PO Box 3142, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-3142. Thanks everyone for helping with GRICS thus far.

Diane Parks

From The Pitch:

Think Spring

Somewhere underneath the blanket of snow that we're receiving (as I write this article) there are soccer fields. I thought it would be good to remind you that it's never too early to find your practice fields. Fields can be hard to come by; so the earlier you secure your location, the better. Also, many fields require a permit or permission to practice on.

I would like to compile a list of fields where your teams are practicing, so please e-mail me when you have them secured. Our requests for Game Fields for Spring Play will be sent to GR Parks & Rec. and GVSA soon. If you have any questions regarding field concerns, feel free to contact me. Yours in Soccer,

Mary Boettcher, Mebo711@aol.com
GRASA Field Coordinator

World Cup Trivia:

Who hosted the 1st World Cup, what year, & who won?
Which 2 Countries have played in the most Finals?
An 18 yr old was nicknamed Wonder Boy after scoring a spectacular goal against Argentina in France 98.
Who was it and which team did he play for?
Which 2 players have played in the most Finals?
Who was the Golden Boot (most goals scored) winner in France 98 and what country did he play for?
Who is the Greatest Soccer Player of all time?

Answers in our next Issue

Answers from last Issue:

Where and when is the next World Cup to be played?

May 31st in Japan and South Korea

Why is this Tournament the most unique of all past?

It is the 1st to be played concurrently in 2 countries

How many teams play in the World Cup Tournament?

32 Teams

How many can you name that will be playing?

A: France, Senegal, Uruguay, & Denmark

B: Spain, Slovenia, Paraguay, & South Africa

C: Brazil, China, Turkey, & Costa Rica

D: South Korea, Poland, U.S., & Portugal

E: Germany, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, & Cameroon

F: Argentina, England, Nigeria, & Sweden

G: Italy, Ecuador, Croatia, & Mexico

H: Japan, Belgium, Russia, & Tunisia

Which 3 teams have won the Tournament the most?

Brazil, Italy, and Germany

How many of the last 5 Host Countries can you name?

France 1998, United States 1994, Italy 1990,

Mexico 1986, Spain 1982, Argentina 1978

Who coached the US National Team in 1994? Which team is he coaching now? Why is he famous?

Bora Milutinovic, China, Most Countries coached

Who are the top 4 teams going into this Tournament?

Argentina, Brazil, England, France, (editor's pick)

Which 3 teams does the US play in the 1st round?

South Korea, Poland, Portugal



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To Our Friends At:

Current GRASA Board:

Member:	Position:	Age Representative:
Laurie Wilson	President	U16
Open	President-Elect	
Sheila Schlosser	Secretary	U11
Paul Clemens	Treasurer	
Patti Masotta	Registrar	U9
Ken Coviak	Communications	U15
Dan McAllister	Director of Coaching	
Mike Bart	Equipment Coordinator	U13
Mary Boettcher	Field Coordinator	U12
John Hall	Fundraising Coordinator	U14
Claudia Judson	Manager Coordinator	U17&U19
John Corbett	Referee Coordinator	U10
Mary Brandon	Tournament Coordinator	
Open	Try Out Coordinator	

Your Board Members are here to serve you! Feel free to email us with any Questions or Comments.

Goalkeeper Training

Attention All Goalkeepers!

GRASA will be offering a 6 week Goalkeeper Training Session featuring Jeremy Thelen. Jeremy played goalkeeper for Grand Haven High School and Olivet-Nazarene University where he was a 4-year starter. Jeremy is a Michigan ODP West Goalkeeper Coach, Age Group Assistant Coach, holds a National USSF Coaching License, and is one of the area's best Goalkeeper Trainers.

He is a teacher by trade and is very gifted in breaking down the game both in skills and decision making and presenting it in a competitive, understandable manner to the players. This is a great opportunity to give your goalkeepers position-specific training that will lead into the spring season.

These sessions will be held at Soccer Spot in Kentwood on Tuesdays from 4:30pm – 5:30pm
February 12 – March 19, 2002

Cost is \$75 – Payable to GRASA

Do you need an application? Visit our website today at www.eteamz.com/GRASA. Do you have any Questions or Comments? Feel free to contact Dan McAllister at Dmcall5553@aol.com.