



President's View:

The Importance of Communication

"Silence gives consent, or a horrible feeling that nobody's listening."
-Franklin P. Jones

Communication is a crucial part of any relationship or organization. It is also one of the things that we are continuing to emphasize within GRASA. In order to be successful, we need to continually dialogue with our coaches, team managers and families. I use the word dialogue because it is a two way process. We want to inform you of what is happening within our club, and we want you to let us know your thoughts.

If you're a coach or a team manager, you're very familiar with the regular e-mails you receive from Dan McAllister, our Director of Coaches, and Claudia Judson, our Manager of Managers. Everyone in our club from coaches to parents and players receives our bi-monthly newsletters, and hopefully, you're frequent visitors to our website (www.eteamz.com/GRASA), our bulletin board at Soccer Spot, and our monthly board meetings. In addition to that, all of the board members are readily available via e-mail or telephone. When appropriate, we meet with individual teams, and, of course, we hold the GRASA annual meeting for everyone each October.

We welcome your feedback on what other ways you want or need for us to communicate with you, so pick up the phone, send an e-mail, or start a conversation with one of our board members next time you see one. Together we will continue to provide a positive soccer experience for all of our players, families, team managers, coaches and administrators.

The next time I write this newsletter article, the spring season will be well underway. I want to wish everyone a successful and rewarding season. Let us know how it's going! Until next time,

Laurie Wilson, LWW920@attbi.com
GRASA President

Got Soggy Shoes?

There is a neat trick for drying wet sport shoes quickly. Stuff lots of newspaper into the wet shoes and they are almost perfectly dry by the next morning! If they are really soaked, change the wet paper after a couple of hours and it works even better. The newspaper works like a wick and draws the moisture out of the shoe.

Free Money:

It Happens Every Spring!

If any of you are AMC fans, no doubt you've seen the movie, "It Happens Every Spring". It's a baseball story about a Chemistry Professor who invents a compound that keeps a baseball from making contact with the bat. He also loves baseball and becomes absorbed with it each season, hence the title. Although my passion is Soccer (not baseball) and I'm not creating anything to keep the opposing team from kicking the ball, we've had a tradition here at GRASA for several years that also happens every Spring. Fundraising!

Now, before you give me the cold shoulder please hear me out. If you've read my past columns, you know that Fundraising has been one of my chief topics. I've done my best to convince you of how important it is and why. In the next few weeks, you will be given an option for Fund Raising. You can participate by selling "Worlds Finest Chocolate Bar" or by writing out a check for \$35 to GRASA. But either way, we need your help. My goal is to see our club raise \$12,000 this Spring.

This may sound like I'm asking for the World here and my fellow Board Members probably think I'm crazy, but I believe in each one of you. Most of you believe that GRASA is the top Soccer Club in West Michigan. Most of you take pride in our Club's Heritage and believe we are on the right track for the future. Most of you want to see us provide more for your kids and continue to set a standard that the other Clubs will follow. Then I know that we can accomplish this goal.

As I mentioned in our last issue, our goals include new uniforms (both home & away), paid Head Coaches or Skills Coaches, and more Individual or Team Training. We want to provide ongoing training and evaluation, for both our coaches and referees. Because of the scarcity of fields available to us, we are considering using the new Soccer facility in Cutlerville for our Home Fields. All of this will cost our club more money and certainly Fundraising will not be enough to pay for it all, but *it is* a start.

So remember, when your Team Manager calls on you and asks, "World's Finest" or Check? You'll know what they're talking about. Now let's see, who played the lead in that movie, Cary Grant or Gary Cooper? Until next issue,

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

Coach's Corner:

Choosing a Soccer Camp

Although there're many things to consider when looking for a quality soccer camp, we'll look at what to seek during that search. Also, there are questions to answer before moving forward. Such as:

- **Resident or Day Camp:** There are many good reasons parents may choose a day camp over a resident camp, or vice-versa. Does your child have the ability to be away from home by himself or even with a friend? Remember that your child will be exhausted at the end of each day and some children's emotions are affected by this kind of fatigue. Is there a significant amount more of coaching instruction in a resident camp? Often there are more games, but not always a great deal of more actual training. Some, but not all resident camps do spend time in the evenings in video and/or classroom training of game elements of which can be beneficial to players.
- **Location:** Whether you choose a resident camp or a day camp, you will have to consider the location of the camp. If it is a day camp, of course it will have to be within a distance from home that you can get your child to and from each day. In most cases, there will be other friends of whom you might organize a car pool with and share that responsibility. Most will want a day camp within about 1 hour from home. A resident camp can obviously be farther away, but one may want it still close enough that if your child became sick, injured, or homesick, you could drive there to get him without a great deal of trouble. Consider the age and maturity of your child when looking at resident camp locations. Generally, the older they are the farther away they will be able to go.

Once you have determined these important elements, here are some other things to consider in choosing your type of camp:

- **Staff Quality:** This is the most important element and one that will take a little research. Most camps will feature in their camp brochure's 2-4 of the camps top coaches. However, at too many camps, these camp directors or coaches may not even be present at the camp you choose. In other cases, these staff members may not do that much of the coaching. The non-listed camp coaches can often be high school coaches, youth coaches, college players (who may not really be trained or equipped to coach the game yet), and high school players (even less equipped to coach) who are often not licensed or may not have the background to do high level coaching. I know of players who have gone to a camp to be coached by a particular coach on the brochure and they never got him/her for even one session.

The best way to find out who you can expect to be there and coach your child is to ask other parents of soccer players who have been, especially in older age groups. Word of mouth is a very good way to get the scope. The next way is to call and ask the camp director. However, they are trying to fill their camp and may stretch the reality somewhat in order to entice you to come.

Summary: The number of Nationally Licensed coaches, College coaches, and College players, factored in by the expected or maximum number of campers, will give you the ratio of highest to lowest level of coaches per camper. For example, if a camp that usually has 150 campers has only 2 Nationally Licensed coaches, no College coaches, 3 High School coaches, 3 youth coaches, and a variety of College and High School players, your staff quality is less desirable.

However, if a camp that usually has 150 campers has 10 Nationally Licensed coaches, 5 College coaches, and a variety of players, will at least have the best chance of delivering a quality teaching experience for your players. Coach to player ratio is most important based on level of coaching experience and training, not just numbers.

- **Reputation:** We have already touched on the importance of Word-of-Mouth advertising. This may be the single most important way of finding out whether a camp you're looking at is worth going to.
- **Camp Curriculum:** What training methods does the camp curriculum follow? Is it a proven and tried way to teach the game? Most successful camps offer very specific training on skills and tactics in an environment that is both fun and enjoyable. Often, the camp curriculum is pre-determined by the camp director(s).

However, if the camp staff is of high caliber, some camp directors will allow these coaches to follow a camp agenda and have each coach implement his/her own coaching preferences and personality into the topic. Each player should leave a camp having learned at least 2 or more tangible pieces of the game they did not have when they came.
- **Staff Character:** Another potentially overlooked area is the character of the coaching staff. Is there swearing from the staff? Do they yell at players? Is there an environment of encouragement? Do the coaches go out at night and party? Are they mature and responsible? What kind of evening socializing do they typically do? I believe that most parents agree that they want their kids to become better players AND better people.
- **Parental Access:** Are the staff coaches available to parents? Can parents inquire about the child's play, improvement, areas to work, etc.? Also, are parents invited to attend the evening games? Or possibly a closing ceremony for parents, players,

and family members? Players go to camp to play... and to have fun! Parents pay for their kids to go to camp so they will learn (and to have fun of course). If the parents are paying, they ought to have at least some access to the activities of the camp. Some camps don't offer access, or minimize that option. If it matters to you, it needs to be available.

- **Counselors:** For resident camps, another area to look at is who will be supervising the campers at night? How are the boys and girls housed? Are the staff required to care for the campers during the evening and night hours? If so, how many are on "duty" every night? How are the "lights-out" time policed? Some of the better resident camps I have worked at hire non-soccer people to serve as dorm counselors. This allows the soccer staff to better rest and prepare for the next day's training.
- **Evaluations:** Again, if the staff coaches are of high level, then their evaluations will be also. If however, the staff quickly falls off in quality, experience and knowledge of teaching the game, then evaluations may be more superficial. The ratio of coaches may affect that also. Camp evaluations can be very helpful for players to see what areas of their game an experienced coach feels may be improved in order to advance their play. A less experienced or trained coach simply does not see these elements of the game as well. Therefore, an evaluation may be of less value.
- **Facility:** The importance of the facility includes, the field(s) on which they will train and play, the indoor facility for training, especially when it rains, facilities such as bathrooms, showers (if residential), dorm rooms (air conditioning is wonderful), and cafeteria or eating area. Another aspect might include where players spend their down time, especially during residential camps.

These are just some of the many things you may want to look at as you dig yourself out from under the heap of camp brochures you're likely to receive in upcoming weeks. There will be some extra value items, such as camp balls, t-shirts, etc. but those are not the major reason your child wants to go to camp nor, I suspect, that you want to send them. These are definitely a nice extra, just not a replacement for quality coaching, and some of the other things listed above. I hope this is helpful in selecting a camp that works well for you. For more info, see website www.soccercampguide.com.

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

Try Outs:

Try Out dates have been set for Saturday, June 15th and Monday through Thursday, June 17th to June 20th. We will be using 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.

Team News:

GRASA Girls Go to Nationals

The GRASA U10 Girls attended the National Indoor Soccer Tournament in Columbus Ohio on February 9th and 10th. The girls had a great time and finished 9th place out of 25 teams! Teams that the girls competed against were Euro West Express from St. Charles, IL, GSSC Eclipse from Grand Blanc, MI, Cleveland FC from Strongsville, OH (Cleveland), and the final game was played against Lakota, OH (Cincinnati). The girls met the strongest competition that they have seen since they started playing together last fall.

The team has been playing Indoor Soccer all winter. The 1st session the girls played up one year at Sports XChange. They didn't win a lot of games, but had much tougher competition in the U11 division. During the 2nd session they played at Soccer Spot in the U10 division and had an undefeated season. They are currently in the 3rd session and in order to face tougher competition are playing in the U10 boys division. At press time the girls had recorded one win and one loss.

The GRASA U10 Girls are coached under the direction of Hamdi Rammal. Hamdi is a parent coach and has Madeline on the U10 team, Olivia on the U11 blue, and Sophia on the U9 blue. His knowledge and love for the game is displayed continuously as he unselfishly gives his time to what he loves so much...soccer and his girls. GRASA is very fortunate to have Hamdi Rammal as a coach.

Sheila Schlosser, Schl89@aol.com
GRASA Secretary

Nutrition for your Athlete:

Providing athletes with food guidelines will help them to pick out high performance foods. Diets that are high in carbohydrates and fluids, moderate in protein and low in fat, will give athletes enough calories and nutrients to grow, train and compete. All athletes should drink water Before, During, and After exercise.

- Before: Drink 10-14 oz of cold water 1-2 hours before a game or practice and 10 oz of cold water 10-15 minutes before activity.
- During: Drink 3-4 oz of cold water every 15 minutes
- After: Drink as much cold water as needed to quench thirst and then some.

Tournaments often leave your athlete with downtime between games. Food booths do not offer the high performance foods your athlete needs to maintain stamina in the remaining games. Some **between game** snack options could be: low fat cheese, peanut butter with saltine crackers, yogurt with bananas, apples, pears, nectarines, oranges, frozen yogurt, milk, pudding, sherbet, graham crackers, pretzels or Italian bread with low fat cheese or margarine.

Claudia Judson
Claudiajudson5@attbi.com

On Net:

Helpful Hints

The GRASA Internet web site has several features to help the soccer family throughout the soccer season. First up, the front page that you see when you first access the web site contains current and timely announcements. Checking these periodically will help keep you informed about events and happenings within GRASA and the local soccer scene.

If that map to the game field doesn't quite make sense (or if you can't find it), check out the Maps folder of the web site. On the left panel, click on the Maps link. You will find an alphabetical listing of the fields at which the GRASA teams play games. For many fields, you will find driving directions telling how to get to the field.

If there is a compass icon shown or a Map quest link, you can click on the compass or the Map quest link to go to a map showing the location of the field. You can zoom in or out to select a map that is scaled for your needs. The map can be printed on your printer. You can select Driving Directions, enter your home address as the starting point, and get turn-by-turn directions from your house to the field.

Clicking on the Links link on the left panel will bring up a page with links to a wide variety of soccer resources. These include:

- Local youth soccer leagues (GVSA, WMYSA, CASL)
- Local soccer facilities
- Internet and mail-order soccer shopping
- Organizations (FIFA, USSF, USYSA, MSYSA, etc.)
- Coaching resources
- Referee resources
- General interest soccer stuff
- Tournaments
- Soccer camps and training
- Sportsmanship

Clicking on the Tournament News link on the left panel can provide useful information regarding Tournaments. This may include links to the tournament web site, which can provide information on the tournament itself, maps, and often information on the local area such as attractions, restaurants, hotels, etc. The Tournament News page may also have team assignments to hotels, as well as links to the hotel web sites with further information on the hotel facilities, maps, and directions.

Finally, as we approach the end of the season and try-outs for next year, be sure to check the GRASA web site periodically for the latest information on try-outs and registration. The GRASA web site address is www.eteamz.com/GRASA/. See you there!

Ken Coviak, coviak_ken@si.com
GRASA Communications Coordinator

GRICS Update:

Last newsletter I let you know how Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer (GRICS) has tried to help children in the inner city. I have had a few families ask if their children could help with events scheduled with GRICS. Yes, Yes, or YES! You can contact me at (616) 292-3633 or dparks1059@aol.com. I would love to have players volunteer to work with the kids in this program.

We are planning 2 summer camps, **June 25- 27**, and **July 16-18** at **Sherwood Park Elementary School**. If you could volunteer to help with coaching, organizing, distribution of flyers, or in any capacity, I would greatly appreciate it! We are looking for financial support or good fundraising ideas as well. GRICS is 100% free to the children who participate.

Sports XChange provided us with a great opportunity to have indoor training and a mini-tournament this winter. For 8 weeks, boys and girls, 7-17, learned new skills, and sharpened their existing ones. Over 60 attended and I still had new kids the last night of training. It was a great success. Every child who attended went home with a uniform (thanks GRASA) and a new soccer ball.

I would like to organize a soccer event this spring even if it's just for a Monday after school get together and scrimmage. I am in the process of building a web site www.eteamz.com/GRICS. Please come out and take a look at what we are doing, and get involved. Thanks to Jim Fuller, Sports XChange, and all those great GVSA families who have donated!
Diane Parks



WANTED:

A talented, creative and/or artistic person to *spruce up* GRASA's bulletin board at the Soccer Spot. We want to be sure that our board stands out and is an accurate reflection of all GRASA has to offer. While the text material isn't hard to find, we are currently lacking in the overall appearance and appeal.

This is a small time commitment, but a very necessary one. Please give it serious consideration.

If interested, call Laurie Wilson at 245-6973 or e-mail at LWW920@attbi.com.

Referee's Call:

In Search of the Gold

Earring, that is. Many young players today like to wear earrings. Soccer players know that all jewelry must be removed before each game, though occasionally they need to be reminded. How many coaches have been handed jewelry to hold for players, only to discover it much later still in their pocket?

The referees are responsible for checking a player's equipment before the game. Occasionally, a player will insist that their ears have been recently pierced and the studs must remain for a number of weeks and can't be removed. Such pleas will fall on deaf ears. There are only two choices— either the earrings are removed, or the player can't play. It is not acceptable to cover the earrings or studs with tape. They must be removed from the ears. After the earrings or studs have been removed, it is acceptable to cover the pierced areas of the ear to help keep them clean.

Other jewelry that must be removed includes watches, bracelets, and necklaces. An exception will be made for Medic-Alert bracelets, provided that they are made safe by taping it to the skin, leaving the label exposed and readable. It must be secured so that a player's finger does not slide under the bracelet and result in injury. It is the responsibility of the referee to determine whether such a bracelet has been safely secured.

Ken Coviak, coviak_ken@si.com
GRASA Communications Coordinator and Referee

TOPSoccer Update:

Upcoming Events

TOPSoccer, Grand Rapids' Outreach Program for physically and mentally challenged kids who want the opportunity to play soccer, is teaming up with Josh Sheldon and the Soccer Spot! Together, we will be offering two clinics this spring for any kids who are interested, ages 5 to 18. The dates are:

April 17, 2002 - 5 to 6 PM

May 16, 2002 - 4:30 to 5:30 PM

The clinics will be held at the Soccer Spot in Kentwood, and there is no charge. No reservation is necessary.

Also, there will be a **TOPSoccer Training Academy** on **June 24-28, 2002**. This summer camp will be open to all interested special needs kids. If interested, please contact Craig or Laurie Wilson at 245-6973, or Josh Sheldon at the Soccer Spot at 464-1000. Additional information and enrollment forms are available at the Soccer Spot.

Let's all help spread the word about this wonderful opportunity for kids who have never had the chance to experience youth soccer!

Special Feature:

By Shelia King

Good Sports:

Raising a Young Athlete – Part I

We've seen them on TV and the local playing fields: overbearing parents so over-involved in their children's sports that they undermine growth and performance. Consider the plight of 17-year-old Australian tennis sensation Jelena Dokic. Not only did officials eject her father from a Wimbledon warm-up tournament for shouting at officials, but he was also arrested "for his own safety" after he laid down in traffic and jumped on the hood of a car.

Want to hear a sadder story? Gymnast Dominique Moceanu became an Olympic gold medallist at the ripe old age of 14, while ignoring a painful four-inch stress fracture in her left leg. "Who's looking out for this child?" ESPN sportswriter Mark Kridler wondered at the time. At 17, Moceanu asked a judge to declare her a legal adult so that she could free herself from her parents (former gymnasts who had nursed gold-medal dreams for Dominique since her birth). After a very public battle, she won the right to choose her own coaches, control her own money and lead her own life.

Let's not kid ourselves, parental interference isn't just found at the level of the professional athlete. In recent years, police had to break up a fistfight between coaches and parents at a Little League game for 10-year-olds; one father was accused of beating another parent to death after a dispute at their sons' hockey practice. Such violence is "epidemic" and is turning off many young athletes, says Fred Engh, president of the National Alliance for Youth Sports and author of "Why Johnny Hates Sports". In fact, approximately 73 % of children who compete in organized sports quit by age 13. Many drop out because they say the pressure from coaches and parents simply takes all the fun out of playing and competing.

So how can we keep our kids motivated and help them achieve their sports goals without burning them out? We need to shift the emphasis from competition and winning to fun and play, whether we've got a budding Mia Hamm or Michael Jordan on our hands or a kid who's happy playing intramural ball. We need to let our children take the lead in defining their sports commitments. Our job as parents is to help set healthy limits and reasonable expectations. While there're no recipes for creating star athletes, we can nurture elite talent and promote healthy exercise habits in young people.

About the Author: Shelia King is an exercise physiologist at UCLA with more than 15 years of experience. She is a certified Program Director of the American College of Sports Medicine, and a trainer of personal trainers at UCLA Extension.



PO Box 232
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Your Board Members are here to serve you! Feel free to email us with any Questions or Comments.

World Cup Trivia:

What 2 Countries don't qualify to be in the World Cup?
Which Final Game saw the most goals scored?
Who was America's GK in '90 and '94 and still plays?
Who scored the most goals in a World Cup game, what country did he play for, and when did he do it?
When and where did the United States last play Brazil in a World Cup game and who won?
What controversial Goal is known as "the hand of God" Goal, why is it called that, and who scored it?

Answers in our next Issue

Answers from last Issue:

Who hosted the 1st World Cup, what year, & who won?
Uruguay, 1930, Uruguay
Which 2 Countries have played in the most Finals?
Brazil and Germany, 6 times
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?
Michael Owen, England
Which 2 players have played in the most Finals?
Lothar Matthaus, Ger. & Diego Maradona, Arg. -21
Who was the Golden Boot (most goals scored) winner in France 98 and what country did he play for?
Davor Suker, Croatia
Who is the Greatest Soccer Player of all time?
Most fans choose Pele'