



President's View

It's Saturday, the last weekend of September, and the Fall soccer season is nearly half over. This is my first letter to you since I became your board president and I'm going to take this opportunity to tell you why Saturdays are so special for me.

I've been on the board only 12 months. During that short time I've been impressed with the many volunteers, fellow board members, team managers, and many others who work so hard to make GRASA special. GRASA derives its "specialness" from the promises the Club makes to you and your child. During my first month I've met with many parents and I've tried to clearly state these promises. For those of you who have heard them before, please indulge me because I think they bear repeating.

We make the following promises to you and your child:

- To give as many kids a chance to play as possible, without any financial restrictions;
- To strive to make soccer fun and safe for every kid and family;
- To make every kid a better soccer player, if he/she is willing to work;
- To help every kid learn the meaning of fair play and teamwork.

That's it. And, that's plenty. We stay focused on these when we select teams, choose coaches, apply for tournaments, and set fees (and spend your money). If an activity doesn't help us fulfill one of these promises, the Club isn't interested in it.

Every week-end this season, we have approximately 300 kids playing soccer. We have the chance and responsibility to fulfill our promises to them. As adults, it's what we're called to do as leaders and as parents. Knowing I have a role in the development of these kids makes my Saturdays special. I hope you'll keep in mind your role as well when you watch your son or daughter next Saturday. If you don't think we're fulfilling our promises, please let me know.

Finally, I must recognize two board members, Mike Bart and Claudia Judson, who will be leaving the board in November. They have devoted countless hours to GRASA. Mike has held many board positions. He's been in charge of fields, uniforms, equipment, and I

don't know what else. Claudia has served as the coordinator of team managers for the past year, as well as the tryout volunteer coordinator. Both have also served as the conscience of the board when we faced difficult issues. We can't thank them enough for their contributions and we wish them well. Their leadership will be missed.

I also wish to recognize someone who has displayed incredible leadership this past year, Laurie Wilson. Laurie is our outgoing president. She previously served as board treasurer and has recruited many talented folks for the board. She won't be leaving the board entirely. She has agreed to serve as President Emeritus so as to give me a helping hand. I can't adequately express my gratitude to her for her friendship and mentoring. She's an outstanding role model. I hope I've sufficiently embarrassed her with my high praise and honest opinion.

Lastly, I think you'll see we've made another significant improvement. We've hired Ken Coviak to serve as our Club Administrator. He currently serves as the board's communications director. We think this addition will greatly enhance our ability to serve you better and more quickly. You'll read more about his duties elsewhere in this newsletter.

Now onto Saturday.

Paul Clemens, GRASA President

First Aid Kits

Thanks to Dr. Dennis Hammond and his wife Mabelle for volunteering their time and medical expertise to assemble first aid kits for the teams. Dennis and Mabelle are the parents of Sarah Hammond, a member of the Girls U11 White team. Dennis and Mabelle keep very busy with soccer schedules as they also have a daughter who plays for Grand Valley Premier and a son who plays for AYSO in the U8 division. It was very generous of both Dennis and Mabelle to make time to help out with these kits. The club will provide the initial kit for each team, and the team is then responsible to replenish the supplies as needed. The kits should be available (that is, at the team bench) for all games, and should also be available for practices.

Sheila Schlosser, GRASA Secretary

Referee's Call

"Handball!" Where?

Sometimes referees hear calls for fouls that aren't listed in the LAWS OF THE GAME (LOTG). For example, playing the ball while laying on the ground and high kicks are not fouls or misconducts. They only become important to the referee when they create an element of danger. When the referee stops play because of the danger, you should never hear the referee say "high kicking" or "playing the ball while on the ground", because those are not offenses. You should hear the referee say that play is being stopped for "dangerous play".

My pet peeve (and it occurs many times in each game) is the call for "handball". I hear parents, kids, players and coaches request that call be made dozens of times in a game - but the actual foul may occur only 2-3 times in any given game. I can excuse some parents who don't know the law. When players and coaches make that request, I find it troubling because they are supposed to know the law. Players who stop for an anticipated call may lose possession, or lose a scoring opportunity. There should be no mercy for the player who calls "handball" on an opponent, and then grabs the ball to position it for the restart.

Just as spectators want referees who don't make unfounded calls, I think that spectators should also be sufficiently versed in the LOTG so their comments are not unfounded either.

There is no foul or misconduct called "handball". Many times the ball hits a player's hand or arm, and perhaps drops to an advantageous position for that player. If there was no effort to play the ball, or direct the ball, then there is no foul. Even if a goal is directly scored! There is a foul called "**handling the ball**". (If you remember those 3 words, you will correctly recognize the foul more often.) There are obvious situations where handling the ball is seen: a player reaches out and makes contact with the ball to stop it, or redirect it; and, players in a wall who raise and leave their hands over their heads (or outstretched from their sides) prior to the kick, are also handling the ball if the ball is hit by their hand(s). More subtly, a player who brings in his arms to chest-trap the ball, and the arm guides the ball, is also guilty of handling the ball.

The key is "handling". If you see it, there is a foul. If you don't see the handling, you don't see a foul, and neither should a referee. If a player is in a wall, with arms stationary at his side, and the ball hits an arm - no foul. If the ball hits the backside of an attacker's arm, drops to the foot of a teammate who shoots and scores - a goal, but no handling of the ball. Most referees will take the time to answer questions about the LOTG before or after the game. Make use of them, they are a very valuable resource for our club.

John Corbett, Referee Coordinator

Registrar's Read

Here are the results compiled from the questionnaire form handed out during registration. We really appreciated your helpful comments.

280 Number of players registered for Fall 2002

19 Number of teams registered for Fall 2002

248 Number of families that completed the questionnaire
(Some families have multiple GRASA players. They completed one form per family.)

66% In favor of a Family Fun Night (fundraiser)

78% In favor of keeping uniforms for two years

53% In favor of a Picture Day

87% In favor of a choice in spring tournament
(holiday or non-holiday weekend)

65% In favor of mail-in registration

As the open board positions are filled, we will investigate the feasibility of the options listed above. We are pleased with the number of people that have offered to volunteer. Thank you for the show of support!

Linda Sellman, Boys Registrar
Laura Bowman, Girls Registrar

Spring Tournaments

For Spring 2003, GRASA teams will be given a choice of two club tournaments. Each team should select one of these to attend as the spring club tournament:

- 21st Annual Canton Cup, Memorial Day weekend (Friday evening through Sunday), in Canton Michigan. This tournament features divisions U9-U18 for boys and U9-U15 for girls, with multiple levels in most divisions.
- 21st Annual Petoskey Soccer Invitational, June 13-15, in Petoskey Michigan. This tournament features divisions U10-U19 for boys and U10-U15 for girls. The U10 division may be combined with U11, depending on the number of teams.

Teams are encouraged to attend one of the club tournaments, but may select a different tournament if they wish. In that case, the team will be responsible for the tournament application, hotel reservations, paperwork, etc.

Mary Brandon, Tournament Coordinator

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Game...

As we get more into the season, I am reminded of a couple of stories involving player cards. The first one happened at the Libertyville Tournament. The team had done well on Saturday and was moving on to play on Sunday. The coach and his family were up and had left for church on Sunday morning. Unfortunately, they had taken the cards with them. When the team manager got to the field, she realized she did not have the cards. As you can imagine, mild panic set in. After some careful recall, someone remembered where the coach said he was going for church. The next scene involves the team manager sliding into the pew behind the coach and asking him for the cards, which he gave her. The team went on to win the entire tournament. You can draw your own conclusions.

The second story happened last year. This same team was playing in the Elite Division in Muskegon and we were missing a player. This player was also the son of the team manager. About 5 minutes before game time, they arrived at the field. After a little coaxing, we learned what the delay was in getting to the game. It seems they had placed the player cards on top of the car before leaving and drove about a half-mile before asking each other who had the cards. As they doubled back they started to see the cards scattered over Breton Avenue. Thus the hunt began. All the family members were out gathering cards. One of the cards was sitting dangerously on top of a sewer grate. They found them all and made the game just in time.

If you have any stories you would like to share or anything you think might assist other families in GRASA, please submit to Ken Coviak for upcoming newsletters.

Mike Bart

Players Wanted

Several GRASA teams have openings and could add a few more players. Specifically we have openings for a few U10 Boys, U11 Boys, and U11 Girls. For more information or to arrange an evaluation, send email to grasa@attbi.com or contact the club administrator Ken Coviak at 676-2873 (evenings).

Also, following the fall high school soccer season, we will be having tryouts to form a second Boys U15 team and a second Boys U16 team. More information will be posted on the GRASA website and on the GRASA bulletin board at the Soccer Spot as it becomes available.

Soccer Loses a Wonderful Coach

Recently Lloyd "Skip" DeVormer passed away. Skip was slated to be the coach of the Girls U10 White team last year. The parents of the team were very excited when they met Skip, as he had awesome ideas and philosophies on coaching soccer. Unfortunately between the time that Skip held his parent meeting and the first practice, he learned that he had bone cancer. The girls never were able to play for Skip, but Skip remained interested in his team. He and his wife called the team manager on a couple of occasions to inquire on the team, and they followed the team on the web. This past spring the girls had a game in Caledonia. They weren't quite playing up to their usual pace. At half time someone noticed a frail appearing man in a wheelchair down on the sideline with a woman...it was Skip and his wife. The girls learned that Skip was there, and one of the girls shouted, "Hey our coach is here, let's win this one for our coach Skip!!" Needless to say, the pace of the game picked up and they did indeed win the game for Coach Skip.

After the game, the girls approached Skip and thanked him for coming. The last time he saw these girls was at tryouts, and he continued to have interest in the team. His wife said when he saw that there was a game that was close to home and didn't interfere with his dialysis, he was very excited and couldn't wait to attend the game.

Skip passed away this September after a battle with cancer that lasted just over a year. There are many people who knew Skip well and say that he truly was a class act as a man and coach. Skip was a man who's children were grown and no longer playing soccer. Skip loved the sport and loved kids and did his coaching purely out of the kindness of his heart.

Sheila Schlosser

Club Administrator

After several months of discussion, the GRASA Board has decided to hire a club administrator. This is intended to provide better coordination of GRASA activities, support better coordination and communication with team managers and coaches, and to provide clerical and administrative support for the board (including support for the registrars, tournament coordinator, and tryout coordinator). The club administrator will serve as a general contact person for questions and inquiries. This is not a new board position; it is a staff position reporting to the board.

The Board has selected Ken Coviak to serve as the first club administrator. Contact information for the club administrator, as well as the members of the board, is listed on the back of the last page of this newsletter.

Sideline Coaching

Did you ever wonder how your child's coach feels about the parents and spectators coaching from the sideline? Almost all of us who watch soccer could use a gentle reminder from time to time that we are there to watch the game and the coaches are there to coach. The following is a coach's view on sideline coaching...

I truly appreciate all of the support that the team is getting from you, the parents. I think that it is very important for the kids and the coaches. Without your support we the coaches would not be able to do what we do with the kids. During the last few games, I find myself hearing a few parents doing some exciting sideline coaching and refereeing. Please remember that if you want to do so, we are in need of good and qualified coaches to help us out with the kids. Please step forward and we'll put you to work immediately. You will not be turned down for the job!!

The game of soccer requires patience and direction, associated with skill, speed, and intelligence. We must let the kids do their thing out there, even though at times they may look out of synch, out of position, not making the correct decisions, and making mistakes in setting plays. They need to learn to think for themselves and to work with their teammates. It takes time and experience.

I am certain that the kids would do anything to please their parents, which means that they will do what their parents just instructed them to do regardless of whether the instruction was good or bad. I find myself doing the same thing in some of the other soccer games I watch or play myself. I think is the human nature in us that takes over and wants to help and elevate our own kids to new heights. However, what we are telling them may not necessarily be correct or appropriate for that particular situation on the soccer field.

Please strengthen your child's morale and work ethic on the soccer field, but leave the coaching to the coaches. We are always open for new ideas and suggestions that are positive and would help us improve our team. I believe that the success comes from discipline, respect, responsibility, good work ethic, and perseverance. If we can teach the kids to practice them on the soccer field, I think that we will have done our job.

Contributed by Hamdi Rammal

More Sideline Coaching

Last Fall, I was assigned as a referee to a Girls U14 game. After the game I was walking back to my car behind one of the players and her father. The girl was in tears, and the father was trying to find out why she was so upset. She told him that he was always

criticizing her play, and telling her what to do on the field. The father was dumbfounded. He couldn't even believe that he did those things. It was all I could do to restrain myself from going over to him and saying "Yes, you do! You do it through the whole game!" It wasn't necessary. I think he was starting to get the picture.

Ken Coviak

On Net

Goalkeeping

One of the features of the GRASA website is a Links page. This page features links to a variety of Internet resources related to soccer. These include:

- Leagues
- Soccer facilities
- Shopping and mail order
- Soccer organizations
- Coaching resources
- Referee resources
- General interest
- Tournament links
- Soccer camps and training
- Sportsmanship

We have recently added a link in the Coaching Resources section to Jeff Benjamin's Goalkeeper Coaching web site. Jeff is a goalkeeper coach with the Fort Collins Soccer Club in Colorado. He has put together a very impressive tutorial on the art and practice of soccer goalkeeping. The site is designed to help coaches coach their goalkeepers.

It is organized into the general areas of Techniques, Tactics, Advanced Tactics, Penalty Kicks, Psychology, Equipment, The Laws, Training Sessions, and Links (to yet more soccer and goalkeeping resources!) The material includes detailed descriptions and discussion, diagrams, and even video clips demonstrating techniques. Special symbols are used to identify coaching points and mistakes to watch for. Anyone with an interest in goalkeeping should check out this site.

In the Links page General Interest section, we have added a link to the Soccer Patch. This is a site that features patches and pins from teams, clubs, towns, and tournaments from all over the country and around the world. Our GRASA uniform patch has recently been added to their collection and may be seen on their site.

The GRASA website is at www.eteamz.com/GRASA on the Internet.

Ken Coviak

Indoor Soccer

Indoor soccer season will soon be upon us. Many teams choose to play indoor soccer to keep up on their soccer skills as the snow flies. This may be a nice opportunity for a parent who is somewhat interested in coaching to step up and give the head coach a break while he sits back and watches. Indoor soccer has slightly different rules and is at a much quicker pace. If your child has never played, it might be something that they would enjoy to keep them active in a more laid back atmosphere. (No two days a week of practice, there isn't any place to warm up except for some stretching, so you most likely won't be expected to arrive as early for games as you do in the regular season!)

At the Spot

For those can't-get-enough-soccer teams who are eager to start on the indoor court, the Soccer Spot session 1 registration deadline is October 20. The first session runs from October 27 through December 22, 2002. For those I-need-a-break-from-soccer teams who are more interested in session 2, the registration deadline is December 21, for a season that runs from January 2 through February 26, 2003.

What to do if you want to play but your team wants a break? Individual players can sign up for a SPOT house team.

There are a couple of indoor soccer tournaments coming up over the holidays. The Holland location of the Soccer Spot will feature a Thanksgiving Soccerfest on Nov. 30 – Dec. 1, 2002. The Kentwood location of the Soccer Spot will feature a Holiday Tournament on Dec. 28-29, 2002.

The Holland location of the Soccer Spot is also the host of the regional competition of the National Indoor Championships, on Dec. 14-15, 2002. Our GRASA U10 Girls team entered last year, and made it to the national competition in Columbus, Ohio.

As you can see, there is still lots of soccer activity even after the snow flies. For more information, call the Soccer Spot at 464-1000 or check out their website at www.soccerspot.net.

Soccer Festival

Soccerbuzz, Virtual Soccer, and Soccer Spot are sponsoring an end of the season soccer festival at the Kentwood Soccer Spot on October 20th from 4pm-7pm. The activities include shooting competition, speed dribbling, fastest shot, mini tournament, special coaching sessions for players and coaches from Nationally licensed coaches, and continuous soccer FUN. The cost is \$25 per player or coach and ALL the proceeds from this festival go to several local players

going to the Liverpool Soccer Academy in April, 2003.

Come enjoy a time of soccer fun and learning, while you also help some of our local players earn their way to a once-in-a-lifetime soccer tour of England. To sign up or for any questions, just call 667-1000.

Brewer Park Soccer Fields

"Progress has been made toward GRASA's dream of a new soccer complex. The latest developments involve the approval by the Gaines Township of the plans for a 10 field complex." Those words were written by then GRASA President Dave Whitehouse in the Summer 1995 issue of this newsletter. This approval was followed by seven years of effort by a variety of people toward accomplishing that goal.

Grant applications were submitted to try to obtain funding. One of these applications resulted in a \$50,000 grant from the US Soccer Foundation. This was a key event that kept momentum going for the project. A total of \$61,000 has been contributed by soccer clubs including the West Michigan Panthers, GRASA, Kentwood Soccer Club, GV Premier, and GVSA. Businesses have contributed \$46,000, and individual contributions have totaled \$19,000.

The project has been guided by the Grand Rapids Metro Soccer Board. Mary Boetcher participated on this board as a GRASA representative, and currently Mike Petrusma is our representative. Kent County has also been heavily involved in the project. The soccer complex is located in Brewer Park near Byron Center. This is near the intersection of US-131 and the South Beltline which is under construction (north off of 84th street, between Division and Eastern).

There are currently five full size fields with a healthy grass surface (after two seeding attempts). Games will be played on these fields starting next spring season (Spring 2003). Except for the U9 and U10 games, which require smaller fields, it is expected that GRASA home games will be scheduled at Brewer Park. Kentwood, Panthers, and GV Premier will also be scheduling games at the park, and there will still be some field times available.

This should make it much easier to schedule games and to schedule referees. The park facilities also include restrooms and a playground. And how many of us are going to miss putting up and taking down nets and flags? This complex will be a welcome addition to the area.

"I've told the players we need to win so I can have the cash to buy new ones." - Chris Turner, Peterborough manager, 1992.

Contributed by Brian Donovan



PO Box 232
Ada, MI 49301

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ADA, MI
PERMIT NO. 163

To Our Friends:

GRASA Board of Directors:

Member:	Position:	Age Group Representative:	E-mail Address:	Phone:
Paul Clemens	President	U15	Paul.Clemens@53.com	575-0515
Laurie Wilson	President Emeritus	U9	LWW920@attbi.com	245-6973
Sheila Schlosser	Secretary	U11	schl89@aol.com	
(open)	Treasurer			
Linda Sellman	Boys Registrar		sellmansix@attbi.com	956-8016
Laura Bowman	Girls Registrar		Cbls03@aol.com	
(open)	Director of Coaching			
John Corbett	Referee Coordinator	U14	JSCsails@aol.com	245-4858
Claudia Judson	Manager Coordinator	U16 & U17	ClaudiaJudson5@attbi.com	
Ken Coviak	Communications	U10	Ken.Coviak@attbi.com	676-2873
Mike Bart	Equipment Coordinator	U13	pmsmbart@attbi.com	
Mary Brandon	Tournament Coordinator	U12	maryb@asrcorp.com	
Mike Petrusma	Field Coordinator			942-2218
(open)	Fundraising/Sponsorship Coordinator			
(open)	Try-Out Coordinator			

Club administrator: Ken Coviak, email Ken.Coviak@attbi.com, phone 676-2873 (evening)

GRASA Website: www.eteamz.com/GRASA

GRASA Email: grasa@attbi.com