



President's View

We've had our first snowfall and that's another sign that our Fall season has come to an end. While you and your kids have been focused on improving their soccer skills, the board has focused on making the club better for everyone. Over the past two months we've brought on two new board members.

Leanne Miller has graciously agreed to volunteer her time and talent as our new treasurer. She has an excellent corporate accounting background and also serves as a team manager. We very much appreciate her willingness to help and we look forward to the perspective she brings as a professional and as a soccer parent and enthusiast.

We've also recently hired a new Director of Coaching, Josh Sheldon. Josh succeeds Dan McAllister, who has taken on a women's soccer coaching position at Cornerstone. Josh brings a great deal of coaching experience to us and is very well respected by his coaching peers. He knows our club, and many of our parents and kids. Many of you have seen him at the Soccer Spot, as he manages both the Kentwood and Holland facilities. We've asked him to develop more formal camps, clinics, and winter training programs, and to work with our coaches. You'll hear more from Josh in future newsletters.

We still have several board positions open and will be contacting those of you who expressed a willingness to help. This is a chance for you to make a difference for a lot of kids. Please consider volunteering.

Before I sign off, I wanted to thank a special member of the GRASA family for his contributions to the club, John Hall. John first became a part of GRASA when his daughter, Rebekah, played on the U12 Girls team back in 1993. Always an active volunteer, John began coaching for GRASA in 1996, and has continued to coach since then. Perhaps his biggest contribution and testament to his skill is the fact that many of his "B team" players have moved up to Elite and Premier teams. You will also find him carrying a whistle, as he has been an active referee for several years. In 1998 John joined the board as our tryout coordinator, and immediately formalized a process that had, here-to-fore, been pretty disorganized. We still follow much of his method today. In addition, John has served as our club's fundraising coordinator. Last fall, John took on

the responsibility of editing the club newsletter. In addition to these specific board roles, John has provided invaluable guidance on all manner of issues. He has always kept the kids' best interests in mind. This Fall John decided to take a break from the board. However, his contributions will have a long-lasting impact on the club. I just wanted to thank him publicly for his commitment to the club.

Paul Clemens, GRASA President

Brewer Park Update

They call it the "Fields for Dreams," and finally those fields are a reality. The greater Grand Rapids area is now home to its first soccer complex, Brewer Park. It is located on 84th St. SE between Division and Eastern Avenues.

Four area GVSA clubs have contributed to the complex in terms of both money and effort. They are GRASA, Kentwood Soccer Club, West Michigan Panthers, and Grand Valley Premier. These are the member clubs who will now call Brewer Park home. Other non-member clubs may use the fields when they are available.

The Brewer Park Complex has five full-sized soccer fields. In addition, there are restrooms, a covered pavilion picnic area, playground area, basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court, and parking for 300 cars. If you haven't already seen it, check out the photos on the GRASA website (www.eteamz.com/grasa).

The fields are crowned for better drainage, and the actual drainage system is top notch. Because the fields will only be used for games and tournaments (yes, we will finally be able to host tournaments right here in Grand Rapids!), the fields will not suffer from overuse.

Be watching future newsletters for more information on the Brewer Park "Kick Off" Day, scheduled for May 17th. Games will be played there as soon as our spring season begins, but the official ceremony won't be until May. There will be special recognition for Kent County, Gains Township, State of Michigan, USSF, the financially supporting soccer clubs, the major private donors, and area government leaders. As you can see, it took many people and organizations to make this dream a reality. What an exciting time for our club and soccer as a whole in Grand Rapids!

Laurie Wilson, GRASA President Emeritus

Referee's Call

How do you become a referee?

We are approaching the time of year when classes are offered for training new referees. These classes are only offered during January, February, and sometimes March. The basic requirement for becoming a USSF referee is the successful completion of the "entry level" referee class. This involves attending about 15 hours of classroom instruction, studying the Laws of the Game, and passing a written test. The cost of the class is \$50. The minimum age is 12.

Classes for new referees are being offered in the Grand Rapids area in a week-end format (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) as follows:

January: Fri 10th 6pm-9pm, Sat 11th 8am-5pm, Sun 12th 11am-3pm

February: Fri 7th 6pm-9pm, Sat 8th 8am-5pm, Sun 9th 11am-3pm

And if both the January and February clinics fill up (they usually do), a third clinic will be offered in March:

March: Fri 7th 6pm-9pm, Sat 8th 8am-5pm, Sun 9th 11am-3pm

All classes will be held at the Soccer Spot of Kentwood (3701 32nd Street SE, at the corner of Lake Eastbrook). Lunch will be available on Saturday for \$3-\$5.

To register, you must send your name, address, phone number, age, club affiliation, payment (\$50, check made out to The Michigan Referee Committee), and requested clinic dates, mailed to NKSE-ATSA, c/o Ref Clinic, PO Box 202, Comstock Park, MI 49321. Each class is limited to the first 35 candidates.

For more information about the class, please contact Gregg Stavros at (616) 581-6877, or email gpstavros@netscape.net.

All GVSA league games require the center referee and the assistant referees (aka "linesmen") to be USSF (United States Soccer Federation) certified. The current pay scale is \$26 per game for the center referee and \$18 per game for the assistants, so this is an attractive way for high school age players to earn some extra money. The experience also gives you a whole different perspective on the game, players, coaches, and spectators.

We should note that high school games do not follow USSF / FIFA rules, and do not use USSF training or certification. They instead use their own MHSAA rules and MHSAA certification. This is simpler than USSF certification, as no class is required, the test is shorter (and it is a "take-home" test that is mailed to you), and the fee is less. Many referees have both USSF and MHSAA certification, and will officiate both high school and youth league games.

Spring Tournaments

The tournament selections for the spring teams are:

Boys Team	Tournament
U9 (VanAirdale)	Petoskey
U10 White (Udell)	Canton
U10 Blue (Betts)	No spring tournament
U11 (Barlow)	Canton
U12 (VanAirdale)	Petoskey
U13 (Chavez)	Canton
U14 (Stacy)	Canton
U15 (Schulte)	Petoskey and Jr. Irish
U16 (Roberts)	Canton
U17 White (Dufendach)	KISS
U17 Blue (VanThomme)	Have not decided

Girls Team	Tournament
U9 (Rammal)	Canton
U10 White (Bowman)	Petoskey
U10 Blue (Wolffis)	No spring tournament
U11 White (Rammal)	Canton
U11 Blue (Hamlyn)	Petoskey
U12 White (Stacy)	Have not decided
U12 Blue (Murray)	Canton
U13 (Derrico)	Petoskey, maybe another also
U14 (Panse)	Canton

The Canton tournament is waiting for MSYSA approval, which is expected in December. We expect to register the teams in December, and provide hotel information to the teams at that time. Canton hotel reservations will be handled through the tournament selected agent, which is Strategic Partners. They are going to try to get all of the GRASA teams into one or two hotels.

Hotel reservations for Petoskey will be handled through Anthony Travel. Hillary Laza is no longer with the agency, so we will be working with someone new. We expect to provide hotel information to the teams around early January. June in the north country is a popular tourist time, so hotel rooms will be more difficult to obtain, and will tend to be more expensive.

Teams going to other tournaments, such as Jr. Irish, should coordinate with Mary Brandon regarding team registration and hotel reservations.

Mary Brandon, Tournament Coordinator

SportsXChange Closed

With the sale of the SportsXChange facility to the First Assembly of God Church, the Grand Rapids area has one less indoor soccer facility available. The church does not have any plans to utilize the indoor soccer field, and it may be sold.

Boys U15 and U16 Tryouts

We will be holding winter tryouts in the next few weeks to find players to complete the Boys U15 Blue and Boys U16 Blue teams. Tryout for the **U16 Boys** will be held on January 8 at 8:15 pm to 10:15 pm at the Soccer Spot of Kentwood. Players who tried out last June are invited to participate, but are not required to do so. However, players who tried out last June and do not come to this tryout must notify Ken Coviak (676-2873) prior to January 8 to confirm their intention to play on the Blue team.

Tryout for the **U15 Boys** will be held around the middle of January. The date and time will be available around January 2, and will be posted on the GRASA website and on the GRASA bulletin board at the Soccer Spot. John Hall will be coaching the U15 Blue team, and interested players may contact him at 676-1631 for more information.

Indoor Soccer

Now that winter has arrived, and you can't play soccer outside, play inside! Indoor soccer is a great way to stay fit, improve your footwork and ball handling skills, and HAVE FUN!!

Here are some suggestions for you at your local Soccer Spot:

1. Play in the indoor soccer league. You can sign up as an individual or sign up as an entire team. There are two sessions left. Don't forget that the deadline to sign up for Session 2 is December 21. It runs from January 2 until February 26.
2. Tell your younger brother or sister about the Soccer Spot instructional classes and leagues for kids up to 8 years old. They'll have something to do while you play!
3. Plan to have your birthday bash at the Spot. Pizza, pop and soccer – it doesn't get any better than that!
4. Do the two-day Holiday Break camp December 26 and 27. Great way to brush up on your skills and have some fun over the break!

Any questions? Call the Soccer Spot at 464-1000 or visit their website at www.soccerspot.net. See you there!

June Tryouts

It may be a little early to be thinking about tryouts next June, but if you are making plans, you might want to consider them. GV Premier plans to hold tryouts on Sunday, June 15 and Monday, June 16. GRASA and most other area clubs will be holding tryouts immediately following that. No tryouts may be held before June 15.

GRASA Welcomes Josh Sheldon, Our New DOC

The GRASA Board of Directors is very excited to announce that Josh Sheldon has accepted the position of GRASA's Director of Coaching. While many of you in the soccer community already know Josh, especially if you have ever spent time at the Soccer Spot, here are the highlights of one of the most qualified coaches in the area:

- Josh attended high school at Portage Central and received All State honors both junior and senior years.
- He spent his first two college years playing soccer at Central Michigan University.
- He then transferred to Hope College and played his last two years of college soccer there, receiving All Conference and All Region honors.
- Josh played semi-pro soccer for the Explosion for one year.
- He holds a NSCAA National Diploma for coaching.
- He currently coaches a U-13 boys premier team for the GLS Stingers.

GRASA is very lucky to have a DOC with the knowledge and experience that Josh has, both as a player and a coach. Soccer is Josh's professional life as well, as he has been with the Soccer Spot for five and a half years. He is currently General Manager of the Soccer Spot, both in Kentwood and Holland. Aside from his soccer knowledge, Josh has a gift for relating positively to players and parents alike, as you will quickly learn.

We want to welcome Josh and his wife, Lisa, to the GRASA family. He will join us in our efforts to provide the best possible soccer experience for our kids.

“Skip” DeVormer Memorial Fund

Following the loss of Skip DeVormer earlier this fall, family and friends have contributed to a memorial fund in his name, to support the development of the new soccer complex at Brewer Park. GRASA has been handling the fund. To date, several dozen donations have resulted in a fund of about \$500. We will continue to accept donations through the winter. In the spring, the fund will be presented to the Brewer Park development committee in Skip's name. We are considering options for doing something special at the complex in Skip's name, either with the funds or in addition to them. Suggestions are welcome and will be considered.

GRICS Gala to Raise Funds for New Field

Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer will be hosting a Christmas Soccer Fun Day event at the Soccer Spot of Kentwood on Monday, December 23, 2002, from 1 pm to 9 pm. The purpose of the event is to help raise funds to construct a new soccer field. The method of the event is to present lots of fun activities, so that just about anyone between the ages of 5 and 18 can come and have a good time.

The event includes a soccer basics area for kids 5 – 8, soccer pickup games, Santa's Secret Shop, a movie room, along with three raffles (soccer stuff in a basket, Kelme warm-ups, soccer balls, bags, etc.). An exhibition game between U of M and Cornerstone is planned.

The cost is \$5 per person per hour. Admission is available at the door. You may also pre-register, which will give you an extra hour for free. To pre-register, call (616) 682-1625. One free raffle ticket is provided with each paid admission, and additional raffle tickets are available for purchase. You can also get an additional raffle ticket if you refer a friend. Pizza and juice/soda are included in the price if you attend for 4 hours or more.

This fundraiser will help cover the construction cost of a new soccer field in the inner city area. A church has donated the land for this purpose. It is necessary to raise \$10,000 to cover the construction and equipment costs.

So don't let the kids sit around the house bored just before Christmas. Take them to the Soccer Spot where they can have some fun, and help a good cause at the same time.

GRASA Logo Clothing Coming

Keep your eye out for GRASA logo clothing, coming soon. Bonnie Desrosiers has been producing logo clothing for several years. You can often see her work worn by soccer players, coaches, and fans. She has produced items for GV Premier, other local clubs, and clubs in the eastern part of the state. She has even produced some GRASA items, on a very limited scale.

A variety of items will be available soon. A sample item package will be passed from team to team, along with a price list and directions for ordering. We hope to be able to do that this winter, with many teams crossing paths at the Soccer Spot. We might also be able to handle it through the GRASA website. Those who have seen Bonnie's work have been impressed. We look forward to seeing these items around the soccer fields this spring.

Super Y-League Comes to West Michigan

Both Grand Valley Premier of Grand Rapids and TKO of Kalamazoo have been accepted into the new Super Y-League. This is a national youth soccer league managed by United Soccer Leagues (USL). The league will provide a level of competition beyond what is available in the Michigan State Premier Soccer League.

This accomplishment places both of these clubs among the premier clubs of the country. It is an indication of the great progress which has been made in youth soccer in the West Michigan area over the past few years.

These two clubs will be competing in the spring of 2003 in the Great Lakes division against the following clubs: Vardar III, Michigan Wolves/Hawks, Toronto Ontario Lynx/Inferno, Rochester NY Rhinos, Cleveland OH Force, and Penns Forest PA. The season will consist of 10 games. The winner of each division in the league will go on to a national championship tournament.

GV Premier will also continue to participate in the Michigan State Premier Soccer League. Some reorganization may be necessary to administer teams in both leagues. There is currently much discussion over what form of reorganization should take place.

This is another example of change that continues to occur in local youth soccer. It presents new opportunities for those players with the enthusiasm, energy, and talent to compete at the top levels. It also broadens the base of soccer support and expertise available to the rest of the soccer community.

Fall Season Observation

It is not uncommon for spectators to summarize a team's season by quoting their win-loss record, or by counting their victories. The players, on the other hand, will summarize a season by recounting their memories. They may remember the traditional stop at the 7-Eleven for a Slurpee after practice. They may remember the chant that the team made up, and did before each game. They may remember when they all put blue spray in their hair before the big game.

One of the interesting stories of this fall season was the Boys U11 team. This new team had a record of 0-6-1. That may not seem very exciting, but consider the game scores: 10-0, 6-1, 12-0, 3-0, 2-0, 2-1, 0-0. This shows a steady and dramatic improvement over the course of the season. This is what soccer development is about, and it is just as exciting to see as a bunch of wins.

GRICS First Season

The Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer club completed another milestone this fall as their first team competed in the GVSA league. Their Boys U14 team played in the GVSA Yellow division. They were new to competitive soccer, and unfamiliar with some of the soccer etiquette and traditions, such as how substitutions are handled. They learned quickly, and finished with a very respectable record of 6-2-0 for the season, placing second in their division.

GRICS was formed to provide soccer opportunities to inner city youth. Community support, donations, and volunteers allow the club to provide soccer opportunities at little or no cost to these players. This past summer they were able to provide two soccer camps, thanks to the help of volunteers. GRASA and other local clubs have provided support and volunteers. Area businesses such as the Soccer Spot and the Soccer Loft provide support. The Grand Rapids Police Department also provides volunteer support for the organization.

The club is largely the result of efforts by Diane Parks. Her enthusiastic and persistent efforts have resulted in the gradual growth of the program. Anyone wishing to provide support for the program, as a volunteer or in any other manner, may contact Diane at (616) 292-3633. The club also has information on their website at www.eteamz.com/GRICS

Why Drop the Ball?

When play is stopped in a soccer game, there are a limited number of choices to restart the game. However, the correct restart is not always the one that seems most appropriate or equitable.

For example, two opponents simultaneously touch the ball, and the ball goes out of touch (out of play over the touch line) or over the goal line. Many people believe that the correct restart should be to drop the ball since it appeared that both players touched it last. Sometimes referees think that is an equitable restart too. However, the Laws of The Game (LOTG) do not allow the referee to drop the ball to restart play in this situation. Law 15 clearly states that when the ball leaves the field of play over the touch line, the only restart is a throw-in. Laws 16 and 17 dictate that if the ball goes over the goal line (and no goal is scored), a goal kick or corner kick is the only permissible restart. Therefore, the referee **must choose** which team will restart play - even if he is not sure which team touched the ball last. (We can note that even if the players, coaches, and spectators saw who touched it last, it does not matter. A referee can only base decisions on his or her own observations, or the observations of an assistant referee.)

Another example is when a non-player enters the field and strikes a player, handles the ball, dog bites ball, etc. In this situation, it would seem logical to award a free kick to the non-offending team - especially if a substitute or non-player interrupted attacking play. To give a dropped ball almost seems to reinforce interrupting the attack. However, after the referee deals with what interrupted play, the mandatory restart is for the referee to drop the ball.

If the referee stops play to only warn a player, and not penalize for misconduct, the correct restart is to drop the ball.

If the referee incorrectly stops play, even in the penalty area, the only correct restart is to drop the ball.

If the defending team had possession near their own goal when play was stopped, it is not unusual for the referee to drop the ball and only have the goalkeeper participate. This goes towards reinstating the advantage that existed when play was incorrectly stopped. To have both teams participate creates a 50/50 (or more) chance that the attacking team will obtain a scoring opportunity when they did not have possession when play was stopped. There is no requirement that both teams, or either team, participate in a dropped ball. So to drop only to the goalkeeper is well within the LOTG, and certainly within the spirit of FAIR PLAY.

Then, there are situations when the dropped ball is **not** the correct restart. For example, when there is "simultaneous" misconduct by opponents. The LOTG do not allow the restart to be a dropped ball. If both misconducts are of equal severity, the referee **must choose** which team to award the restart to. If the misconducts are not equal in severity, the referee must award the restart to the team committing the lesser misconduct. In the worst-case scenario, the referee must make the best guess.

ESOTERIC QUESTION: What is the only restart that does **not** require that the ball move in order to determine when the ball is in play? (HINT: It is also the only restart that must be repeated if a player touches the ball before it is in play.)

ESOTERIC ANSWER: The dropped ball. It is in play when it touches the field of play. In fact, if a player plays the ball before it touches the ground, the ball must be dropped again to put it into play.

John Corbett, Referee Coordinator

"That's great, tell him he's Pele and get him back on." - John Lambie, Partick Thistle manager, when told a concussed striker didn't know who he was.

Contributed by Brian Donovan



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