



President's View

As the season winds down I'd like to take a moment to review the year, comment on what we've all accomplished, on what we could do better, and thank those that made this year a successful one. By and large, it was successful because of each of you, from coaches, to parents, to team managers. We couldn't have done it any other way. And, of course, because of the kids. That's why we're here.

Our goal each year is to provide a positive and competitive soccer experience for as many kids as possible. An experience where they learn the importance of hard work, determination, teamwork and sportsmanship. I think we accomplished this for the most part.

In our zeal to give as many kids as possible a chance to play competitive soccer, we sometimes tried too hard. We had several teams that struggled with too few players. In each case, the parents made this work for the kids. It's hard to know where to draw the line when forming teams. However, I wanted to especially thank those families for their patience and efforts. We've taken this into consideration for next year, and are already working with other area clubs to pool our resources of players when necessary to try to handle this problem.

We've been working on the tryout process for 6 weeks now, and believe players and parents will see a smoother process from start to finish thanks to active participation in the planning from our coaches and parents. We have been working so that the evaluation process on the field will be better defined and the subsequent team formation will be wrapped up much quicker than last year. We've spent much time on this because tryouts and team formation set the stage for all that follows the rest of the year. Thanks to all who are working to make this go smoothly.

We've taken steps this year, with the hiring of Ken Coviak as our club administrator, to make the club more accessible to each of you. You now have a person to call for information, to offer suggestions, or just to express yourself or your frustration. This position sets us apart from most other clubs. He keeps our web site up to date, serves as club historian and rules committee at times, and coordinates so many things. In addition, he has freed up Josh Sheldon, our

Director of Coaching, to concentrate on the coaching aspect. He's made Josh and the board more effective. Ken, I can't thank you enough.

Finally to the board members with whom I've worked this year, I can't begin to express my appreciation for all they've done for me and the GRASA family. Each of them worried about every child and parent. I know first hand that their only desire was for each family to have a fun and fulfilling soccer experience. That's not always possible because there are many things we can't control. But, they always strove to make it fair for everyone. That's all anyone can ask. I thank them.

So that's it. We're at the end of the year. Our next newsletter will kick off the new fall season. We will be electing a new president for the next year. I ask that each of you continue to support GRASA. It really is a wonderful club. It relies on each of you to keep it so.

Paul Clemens, GRASA President

Tryouts

GRASA tryouts for the 2003-2004 soccer teams will take place during the week of June 16 – 20. See the enclosed tryout flyer for specific dates and times, as well as additional tryout information.

Note that if you will not be able to come to the tryouts, you must contact Josh Sheldon ahead of time to arrange an evaluation, if you wish to be considered for a team. (Just telling your coach does not count!) We are going to try to form teams quickly following tryouts.

Note that the tryouts this year are taking place at the Cornerstone University main soccer field and adjacent areas. There are two parking areas available. From Leonard, on the south side of the street, you can enter the parking lot at 3000 Leonard, at the sign for the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary. Follow the drive to the back of the lot, which is adjacent to the soccer field. From Leffingwell (south of Leonard), you can enter the parking area for student housing for Babcock and Crawford Halls (at the sign for 1084 Leffingwell / Babcock Hall / 1090 Leffingwell / Crawford Hall), on the east side of Leffingwell.

For further information, watch the GRASA website at www.eteamz.com/GRASA

Player Registration

The player registration for the Fall 2003 – Spring 2004 teams has been scheduled:

Date: Wednesday, July 16
Time: 5:00 – 8:00 PM
Location: Soccer Spot
3701 32nd Street, Kentwood

What to bring:

- Photo of player, approximately 1" x 1"
- Insurance and physician information
- Copy of birth certificate if first time GVSA player
- Check for player registration fee

Some teams will also be taking advantage of the evening to hold a team meeting. If that is the case for your team, your coach will notify you and specify the time of the team meeting.

If you are unable to attend the registration night, please contact your registrar as soon as possible. We will only have a couple of weeks to get all of the registration forms ready to submit to the league.

Linda Sellman, Boys Registrar
Laura Bowman, Girls Registrar

Changes Coming

Nothing is constant except change, it seems. Here are a few things to look for this summer and fall.

U11

The U11 teams will be playing small sided games this coming year. The U9, U10, and U11 teams will be playing 8 vs. 8 players on a small field. This is part of a national trend toward smaller sided games for younger players. It is better at teaching them the fundamentals of the game, and gives them more participation in the game.

Summer Camps

GRASA wants to encourage our players to attend our first annual summer camp as a way to fine tune skills and get a jump on the fall season. This year's camp will be Monday through Friday, August 11 - 15. The times are as follows:

U9 - U11	9:00 - 11:00 AM
U12 - U14	11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
U15 and up	2:00 - 4:00 PM

The camp will be held indoors at the Soccer Spot in Kentwood (no cancellations due to weather!), and will be headed up by Josh Sheldon, our Director of Coaching. Cost will be \$50.00 per player and includes a camp t-shirt. For sign-up information, check our website or contact the Soccer Spot at 464-1000 x17.

U7 and U8

Starting in the Fall of 2003, GRASA will be introducing our "**Little Magicians**" training program for U8 players

(5-8 year olds). We will help develop our young soccer players through a noncompetitive, educational and fun training program. There will be six weekday training sessions and two exhibition games each season, plus an indoor game during the winter. Look for details on GRASA's website or call Josh Sheldon at 723-3623.

Falcons vs GRASA

On Thursday, May 29th, the Kentwood Falcons U-12 boys joined the GRASA U-12 boy's team for a night of soccer and picnicking. We were able to rent the Forest Hills Central High School stadium for this event, which made it very special for the boys. The evening started out on a dubious note with everything being delayed by rolling storm clouds, and occasional bolts of lightning. Fortunately for us the bad weather eventually gave way to sunshine and a beautiful evening.

This event came together as a result of Ken Lovell contacting me about our teams playing in a good old-fashioned scrimmage in place of a normal practice night. He also suggested a twist to the typical way of doing things; we would work with our own teams for 20 minutes then we would switch teams for 20 minutes. This idea looked great on paper, and I must say, it far exceeded my expectations once we did it. After the team/coach swap we had just enough time left to let the guys go at it on their own. It was a hard fought, highly charged game filled with laughs, smiles, tears, and scrappy play. (And that was just in the stands!)

We ended the evening with a banquet enjoyed by parents and players from both teams. There was a smorgasbord of casseroles, salads, desserts, and more desserts. It looked more like a family reunion than a picnic with an opposing team. Everybody even enjoyed Ken's hotdogs that he had saved from this spring when the power went out for a few days across our area. I never knew hotdogs "seasoned" that way could taste so good.

I left the stadium that night with a feeling of complete satisfaction for an evening that could not have gone any better if we had scripted it. After working with my team for as long as I have, and having the opportunity to work with the Falcons for a short time, I have to tell you these young men really impressed me. The kids I have met through soccer have always shown exceptional character, and these guys continued to strengthen my opinion. It's obvious we have a lot of parents out there doing the right things, and for this we will all benefit for years to come.

If you have the opportunity to participate in an event like this one, jump into it with gusto and enjoy, it's a guarantee you'll be glad you did!

Scot Van Airsdale

Canton News

The GRASA Girls U11 White team recently traveled to Canton Michigan to participate in the Canton Cup Tournament. There were 387 teams participating. Canton was bursting at the seams with soccer players!

GRASA's U11 girls team was one of the 30 teams participating in the U11 age group. The GRASA girls came home the winners of the Red Division. The girls won both of their first two games, defeating Saginaw Impact 2-0 and Portage Lightning 3-0. The third game of the prelims was a 1-1 tie with Canton Quest Premier. Both teams had no losses, and the same points including bonus points. However Canton had one goal scored against them, while GRASA had none. GRASA advanced to the finals.

GRASA played the Farmington Flames with no goals scored at the completion of regular play. Two 5 minute overtime sessions were played, still with no score. The determining factor was left to penalty kicks. GRASA won the PK's with 4 to Farmington's 3. The girls were thrilled to bring home the title of champions under the direction of Hamdi Rammal, Kevin Jones, and Dennis Hammond.

The GRASA Boys U13 team also won their division. They defeated Marshall 3-0, defeated Fraser 3-1, and tied Metro United 2-2. In the final game, they defeated Plymouth 2-0 for the championship. In their excitement, they emptied the contents of a nearby cooler over their coach, Alberto Chavez! (The ice water, that is, not the pop.)

Much thanks is due to Mary Brandon for all her work on the Canton tournament, as well as the upcoming Petoskey tournament.

Family Fun Showcase

Family fun night was a great success. We had over 100 players participate in the first annual 4 vs.4 GRASA showcase. Each registered player was able to show off their skills in three different games. Thanks to the Soccer Spot staff for their enthusiastic support for the event. Fun was had by all!

Thanks to Bonnie Desrosiers for the donation of the awesome clothing prizes. Bonnie's donation allowed us to raffle off prizes every hour. The door prize winners were:

Nikki Canepa – Blanket
Kelli Sprenger – Warm-up jacket
Sarah Hammond – \$50 tournament expense certificate
Brooke Prouty – Soccer ball
Chris Bowman – Umbrella
Maggie Renfro – Sweatshirt
Ryan Buchmaier – \$50 gift certificate
Sarah Lewis – Sweatshirt
Jamie Devine – \$50 gift certificate

Check out Bonnie's great GRASA apparel at the Soccer Spot store!

A big thanks goes out to Bob Dykstra and Dan and Bonnie Phillips for the use of their radar guns. The players had a blast measuring their power kicks. The fastest shots that we clocked by age were:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>mph</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>mph</u>
7	Ryan Buchmaier	25		
8	Peter Weirsma	39		
9	Collin Wolff	39	Sophie Rammal	36
10			Rachel Sprenger	42
11	Jack Duivan	27	Madeline Martin	39
12	Ben Van Airsdale	49	Brooke Prouty / Olivia Rammal	43
13	Jonah Stacy	54	Mekyla Spraggins	41
14			Sarah Lewis	45
16	Evan Martin	49		

We are still trying to locate the owner of a watch that was found on Family Fun Night. Please contact Sheila Schlosser or Ken Coviak to claim it.

We would also like to send a huge thanks to our sponsors: Boar's Head, Forest Hills Foods, Champion Windows, and Physicians Care. Their donation of food and beverages helped us out considerably.

We really want to thank all the parents and coaches who participated in the evening. Team work is what makes GRASA great!

Laura Bowman

Goalkeeper Training

To continue to develop our players, GRASA offered a goalkeeping clinic this spring. A series of five sessions was run by Carl Whitehouse. He has been the goalkeeper for the Kalamazoo Kingdom for several years, and prior to that he was goalkeeper and coach for the Grand Rapids Explosion. In his earlier years, he played soccer in the English leagues.

The sessions were well attended by all age groups. We thank Carl for a job well done. We also want to thank Sue and Jim Williams for graciously hosting the training at their "home" field.

Photos

We would love to include photos here in the newsletter, but doing a decent job would significantly raise the production costs. Instead, we invite you to visit our website Albums page, where you will find pictures of the Family Fun Night, goalkeeping clinic, some team photos, and action photos of a number of teams.



PO Box 232
Ada, MI 49301

Tryout Issue!

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To Our Friends:

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(open)	Fundraising/Sponsorship Coordinator		
(open)	Try-Out Coordinator		

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Referee coordinator: John Corbett JSCsails@aol.com 245-4858

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