



“Soccer for Life”
2023 August League Meeting
August 8, 2023
Natick, MA

Housekeeping items:

- *Imperative we have valid email from all teams*
- *Please ensure you are muted at all times unless speaking(if joining virtually)*
- *For items requiring a vote, only 1 team contact can cast a vote if more than 1 are present at the meeting*

Meeting called to order at 7:07 P.M.

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of February 2023 meeting minutes

Peter motion to approve the February 2023 minutes, Patti second. *So moved.*

3. Reports from the Board/field:

a. President (Becca Brooke)

- Becca introduces herself. Thanks to everyone for their support and input as Becca makes this transition. Very excited for what there is to come for the league. Happy to hear from any of you. Happy to hear your thoughts (or you can connect with your Divisional Director).
- Summer: congrats to other division winners Azzuri/Dynamis went to PKS.
North Reading and Purple Haze, congrats to NR.
Good
- New teams: EMFC (Becca’s new team) joined the league. It was interesting to see that perspective of the league (onboarding a new team).
We are also welcoming Suburban Lightning as new Fall/Spring team (they were previously a Summer only team).
We are always looking to expand and grow the league!
- Struggles this summer:
Weather was a huge issue that we cannot control. This was one of the worst summers that we can recall (from a game play perspective). There was lots of rescheduling and adjustments we needed to make. Thank you for your hard work and helping each other find fields to play

makeup games. We ended up with a few games not rescheduled. We obviously want to get the games played but it was hard to find available days to play.

Team sizes: There were lots of injuries and pregnancies that made teams unexpectedly short.

Continue to fill up your rosters to full capacity to try and avoid these challenges. Dick continues to send out players so give them a try.

- **Soccer Fest:**

8 Teams went to Soccer Fest. O70 won the National Title, O65 came in 2nd!

This is a great event with teams traveling from all over the country. We are hoping to add more players to our O30's team for those of you that have players looking to play.

- **Team Management/Behavior:**

You need to actively manage your team. We've seen a lot of misbehavior the past couple seasons. Please have an active role in controlling your team. We had players reviewed by the disciplinary committee that resulted in suspensions. We really want to encourage and support our players. We are all adults and need to act as such. Need to set expectations for those players on your roster. Please deescalate in these situations.

b. Vice President (Liz McQuilken)- no update

c. Secretary (Tricia Carroll)

Thank you to those who voted on the bylaw update.

Becca: want to make a comment. Accommodating with the virtual option due to the date mix-up but we'd like to go back to the onsite option in the February AGM. Please plan accordingly.

d. Treasurer Report/financial Update (Jim Livingston)- refer to Jim's T report distributed in the meeting.

We are in good shape. Summer is all paid except for one team.

Accepting deposit checks for the Fall season at the meeting.

e. Divisional Directors:

i. Division 1 (Peter Counsell)

Summer was a lot of work due to the weather. Great competition. Congrats to Dynamis and all the teams that made the playoffs.

Want to thank Joe – the refs did a wonderful job.

It was a fund season. Looking forward to having 8 teams in the Fall.

ii. Division 2 (Patti DiNeno)

Congrats North Reading for winning the final. Mill City and Mavericks will be playing tomorrow.

Schedules went out. There was some realignments of teams but that should be good.

iii. Division 3 (Jeanene Vounatsos)

- Jeanene will be sending out schedules. We hope Veterans will be open.

- Please get your fields lined up early.
- D3 summer, 1x week, not super balanced but good for teams that just want to get out there. Still think it's a good option but you need to be ok with the imbalance. If anyone wants to play 1xweek, we'd love to have you.
Wayland would love to play 1x, Soccer Sistas, could we get more traction with this?
- 3B: Will discuss at new business. Would like to discuss O40 league, brought from the Suburban League,
Breakers: would like to have the ability to work on offence and have balanced competition.

Harry: do we want to take a look at Ottawa (CA) tournaments? They have a lot of tournaments up there.

That would be nice as the Soccer Fest competitions are always in hot states.

f. New Player Coordinator/Game Scheduler (Dick)

- New players- 41 new players in the last 3 weeks. I try to follow what they're asking for but that doesn't already work. PLEASE tell Dick after you've picked up a player.
The last batch of 25 took 9 days. If you're struggling for players, take a chance,
Rose: Can we consider doing a living document for players? She will volunteer to do this.
Danielle: I reach out to players and then they don't respond. I added one to my roster last year, and she didn't show up once. But kept telling me she would be there. We might add another, but we haven't had luck actually getting players who sign up.
It's mixed. It's gone both ways.
Pick up and assume some will fall through.
- Schedules are out. Need you to update your field and game time.

g. Referee Assignor (Joe D'Amico)

We're in competition for OTH games. When teams can't get a field until a day before the game, it's hard to schedule a Ref. Please try to get a field as soon as possible so we can schedule before OTH. I know it's hard but please work on this.

Keep trying to get new referees. We got some new ones this summer that did a good job. We have a good group of Divisional Directors that help with all the challenges we have. Thanks to the directors.
Pet peeves:

Uniforms with no numbers. Youth games, high school, OTH...THEY ALL HAVE SHIRTS WITH NUMBERS. This falls on the manager. Your team can afford the uniforms. What's the most frequent complaint from Refs? There is no consistency in the uniforms, colors, numbers, etc.

Jewelry: we know some refs are serious about no jewelry. Some refs will not ref our league due to pushback they receive at the games. Please follow the rules.

From chat: What about players that join and take your uniforms?

Becca: Keep a small # of extras, buy pinnies with numbers, collect the shirts after the game. We have a discount with MA Soccer.

Becca: Respect the referees please. We can't play without referees. They might miss a call or you might disagree, but we need to respect their calls. They are allowing us to play the game. If there are issues that need to be addressed, please work with Joe. He takes our feedback and makes changes.

Ref asked for a physical player card. Is this still a thing? No

Harry: Some refs come in with impressions already made about the league. Some don't respect the competitiveness of the league. Sometimes when teams have physical college players, the referees don't call the play. The number one responsibility is the safety of players.

h. USASA and Mass Soccer Update (Liz & Lisa)

i. Field Committee

Please let us know right away if you are playing on a field that is not ok for play. Let your Divisional director know. We are responsible for the safety of all the players.

Jim: contact your Divisional Director and they will contact the field committee to go out and evaluate the field. This is also true for new fields yet to be played.

j. Competition Committee (Rose)- some things were moved around from D1/D2 but the teams were notified and no issues.

How do teams move from divisions?

-relegation is Spring/Fall for the top and bottom teams in the Division.

-Requests through the Div Directors based on roster changes and unbalanced.

-We also need even number of teams to avoid byes

k. Outreach Director/social media

We have social media accounts. Think about players on your teams. Those that can take on some of these sights.

How do we use Social Media to promote these accounts?

4. New Business:

a. Scheduling Make-Up Games

There were a number of games that needed to be rescheduled. Some were elective reschedules (which are in the rules) but rules are a bit vague. We want to clarify the language.

Dave Amidon proposed 3 new rules and we'd like to review these at the February meeting.

We are notifying you now that we are looking to vote on these at the February meeting.

b. U17 Age Restrictions

Becca: currently players 17 and older are permitted in D1. 3 Players are allowed in the other divisions. We are looking to change this to Over 18.

Safe Sport regulations that pertain to anyone under 18. So anyone on a team with a player would need to do the training (players and coaches).

This is a women's league and adult league, what is the benefit vs. risk?

Dick: Only reason a 17 yo should be playing in D1 or D2 should be for college students looking to play in college that Fall. Those players are missing out. It's not a big deal.

Safe Sports makes sense but doesn't make sense for our league.

Joe: 10 years ago there were mother/daughter teams in D3. The soccer landscape has changed. USA Gymnastics changed this landscape. Congress passed a LAW. This says if you have a player 17 or under, EVERYONE needs to take the course which is a 2+ hour course. This is not right for our league.

We want to make sure our rules match what we want for the league.

5. Open discussion

D3B- bring a lot of players in through the website. It's really hard to bring players on that haven't touched a ball in 10 years. Have we considered doing clinics for the league? Commenter joined the league when she joined a clinic at Teamworks years ago.

Breakers hosts clinics but wouldn't be able to absorb all ages.

Is there something we could do for the masses? It would be a lot of work but think it would be worth it.

Website: Dick wants anything you'd like to add to the website, send his way.

Roster printing: Can we use an electronic roster instead of the printed roster.

For now we need the rosters for the referees to update the roster. But will continue to consider.

Trouble fielding a full team with a 30 player roster. Would we consider having a league sub list? Could we have a communal list so if a team is in need, you can grab a player.

MA Soccer does have a \$10 pass. Can't be on more than one roster.

6. Elections:

Per our By-Laws, elections are at the AGM meetings in February. For 2024, the following positions are up for election:

Vice President

Secretary

Division Directors

7. **Adjournment**

8:28