

Weston AYSO Region 644



February 17, 2005

Welcome to the sixth edition of the AYSO Region 644 bi-weekly newsletter.

In this week's edition, Section 1 is designated as the AYSO Region 644 roundup which will highlight what has been going on in our region over the past two weeks and what is up-coming.

Section 2 has an article written by Dr. Michael Klausner and Dr. David Hoch titled "Creating Team Chemistry". In this article, Drs. Klausner and Hoch delve into the importance of team chemistry and how a coach can exude the importance of creating the proper team chemistry in order to meet success..

In Sections 3-6 we have four articles outlining different aspects and activities related to the game of youth soccer. In the Keepers Corner we discuss that the Keepers biggest attribute on the field iscommunication. They need to be the leaders on the field and after reading the article you will know how and why. In the article titled "Clockwise vs. Counter-Clockwise Runs" we give you a big "hmmmmmm I never thought of that" Soccer is a very fluid game with a lot of nuances. The art of the game of soccer is creating space and making "runs" off of the ball. How do you do it? Read section 4. Section 5 is our activities section and this week's activity provides help with breakaways and conditioning. Finally Section 6 discusses the art of heading the ball, both the proper technique as well as proper tactics.

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around The Country. The first article from the Winston Salem Journal is titled "Sights Set High- U.S. Soccer Team Gets Ready To Resume Cup Qualifying. The article discusses the opening game of the final qualifying round for the U.S. Men's National Team. The second article is from the London Free Press and is titled "Women's Soccer Group Up In Air" This article is about a new women's division in the CPSL (Canadian Professional Soccer League) and the trials and tribulations of trying to get the league off the ground for the 2005 season. The final article "Should Women Be Allowed to Play on Men's Teams?" is from the ContrCosta Times. The article analyzes the abilities of women to compete against men in the highest professional soccer league levels. With the recent signings of women in the Mexican league and the Major Indoor Soccer League it is a timely debate and a must read.

Section 8 we have an article titled "Being Cut From a Youth Sports Team". Dr. Keith Wilson discusses the trauma that a child can go through when they are not selected for a particular team. Dr. Wilson describes that the best answers given by parents are no answers at all, just listen to your child. Acknowledge their disappointment and help them design a plan to deal with the disappointment.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the AYSO 644 Newsletter. Everything we do here in AYSO is ever evolving. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to email to me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com.



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Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

Registration dates for the fall 2005 season have been set and as a subscriber to our bi-weekly newsletter, you are the first to receive word. Registrations are all at the Weston Regional Park at the soccer pavilion by soccer field #4. Dates and times are as follows: Saturday April 23, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Saturday May 7, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Wednesday May 11, 2005 from 6pm-8pm, Saturday May 14, 2005 from 9am-12pm, Tuesday May 17, 2005 from 6pm-8pm and Saturday May 21, 2005 from 9am-12pm. Other important dates are: First day of practices Monday August 29, 2005, Regular Season begins on Saturday September 17, 2005 and Picture Day is Sunday October 2, 2005. We will release our coaches clinics and referee clinics dates and times in our next newsletter.

Did someone say summer soccer camps? In the coming weeks we will be announcing a summer soccer camp run by the Weston Fury Soccer Club during the summer of 2005. We will post the information once it becomes available, but remember to make the Weston Fury Soccer Club Camp a must do over this summer.

On Saturday February 26, 2005 AYSO Region 644 will be inducting a new member to our hall of fame. This person will join five former volunteers in a very special ceremony at our annual volunteer dinner. In 2003 we inducted Steve Ziegler, Ken Sandbank and Don Roberts and our 2004 inductees were Penny Scheff and Dan Rossano. We will announce our Hall of Fame inductee in our March 3, 2005 newsletter.

The 2006 AYSO Florida State Games will be held in Ocala, Florida next January. Tryouts for the state games teams will be held during the fall season and will be announced in the Dribbles and Kicks Newsletter as well as on our website at www.ayso644.org.

AYSO Region 644 is proud to announce that in September 2005 we will be beginning our initial VIP program. AYSO VIP Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. VIP Teams may include those who are blind or visually impaired, amputees or conditions that impair mobility, mentally or emotionally challenged, autistic, downs syndrome and cerebral palsy. Kids with special needs are estimated to make up approximately 10% of the school-age population. Special schools and classrooms can isolate these children so the VIP Program has been structured to integrate the children into the rest of AYSO by using "buddies" to help the player both on and off the field. Our goals for every participating player are: 1) Have fun playing soccer, 2) Understand the fundamentals of the game, 3) Learn teamwork and fair play, 4) Increase positive self-esteem, 5) Become more physically fit, and 5) Meet and be comfortable with new people.

The VIP program helps more than just the players. Buddies and other volunteers increase their appreciation and understanding of individuals with special needs. They find their lives greatly enriched by their involvement with their new VIP friends. For parents thinking that they would never see their children playing a sport or making new friends, VIP gives them joy and hope. They are able to relax and enjoy watching their children having fun like other kids, perhaps for the first time.

It is our goal to make this program free of charge beginning in September, 2005. We will be looking for sponsors to offset the costs of the VIP program. Please contact our AYSO Region 644 hotline for further details and sponsorship opportunities. Our hotline number is 954-349-9786 and ask for Valeska.

Coaches, do you want to lock in your practice times and days? Avoid the long lines for picking your practice days at the coaches meetings and don't get locked out of coaching next year by not getting your volunteer application in on time by just emailing me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com. Please indicate your

child's name, birthdate and the days and times you would like to schedule practices for. I will email back to you a confirmation of the time and field location, and you are all set. It is that easy.

Our region has grown to an amazing 2,475 players. But with this growth is a need for more volunteers. If you have the time or can make the time available and want to help the children in our community, please contact me at Strikersoccer1@aol.com and we will get you on the road to the most satisfying thing you can do in your life....volunteering.

Finally, we are always looking for sponsors. Our sponsors help defray the cost of running the program. Everyone in our region is a volunteer, however there are a lot of costs such as instructional books, uniforms, trophies, medals, city fees, etc. Please consider being a sponsor. Sponsorship packages can be sent to you if you are interested. It is great exposure for your business and the 3,000 children and families from AYSO and Weston Soccer Club that will see your banners, website listings, t-shirts, newsletter designations will greatly appreciate it.

Section 2- Creating Team Chemistry

Creating Team Chemistry

It can be the difference between an ordinary season and an outstanding one

By Dr. Michael Klausner and Dr. David Hoch

Many ingredients go into the making of winning teams, such as talent, size, speed, strength and coachability. All are important, of course. But the intangible that often binds them together is known as "team chemistry." It can make the difference between an ordinary season and an outstanding one.

A baseball team may possess five players with above-average talent, but they may never go anywhere without that certain bonding of spirit and purposefulness that will enable them to work together harmoniously, dovetailing all their skills willingly and unselfishly for the common good.

Team chemistry may be described as follows:

- The ability of the players to get along with one another, to work smoothly and unselfishly under the leadership of the coaching staff.
- Each player's recognition of the specific role that he or she has in the team approach.
- Mutual feelings of loyalty and empathy for one another.
- The ability of the players to anticipate one another's moves and to blend their efforts into the team pattern.
- A strong sense of team identity coupled with total commitment to the program and coaching staff.

Given the importance of team chemistry, what can coaches do to develop and enhance it? First, they must be totally fair, motivating and clearly show their trust and liking for the players.

While some teams will come by their chemistry naturally, most will not. It will be up to the coaches to develop this crucial dimension through specific activities and practices. The following approaches may help enhance the team chemistry by fostering a sense of pride, loyalty, respect and cooperation.

- Have the team participate in a community service project, such as helping at a Habitat for Humanity site, assist in the construction of a neighborhood playground, volunteer for youth reading programs or serve with the Big Brothers and Sisters organizations, just to mention a few. Participation in such community projects can help athletes develop a special bond through a common and worthy experience.
- Practice sessions during holidays and breaks present an opportunity to create a “boot camp” kind of environment. They provide the athletes with a background of similar experiences and stories and draw the athletes together.
- Team travel, particularly overnight, has always been great for bonding. Kids have great fun sharing an adventure, eating together, learning more about one another and getting close. There is nothing like camaraderie based on shared experiences and memories.
- A coach-sponsored pretzel or pizza and soda party to watch a televised game or a video is a surefire winner. The get-together may be as simple as a meeting at the coach’s home or in a school lounge. Spending time together is a key factor in the development of team chemistry.
- Have the players write down what they believe are their teammates’ good points and those aspects of their person that need improvement. These statements, which do not have to be signed, should be collected by the coach and relayed to the individual players who need them. Many players are quite perceptive about both themselves and other people, and the exercise may often help boost their teammates’ self-esteem and enhance team identity.
- Ask each player to perform an anonymous “random act of kindness” for a different teammate each week. Players may create their own acts of kindness or may be guided by suggestions. Their efforts can contribute much to the development of a positive feeling and cohesiveness within the team.
- Utilize a participative approach in your decision-making process. Have the athletes help you establish the team rules, penalties and rewards. Also ask them for suggestions on the choices and parameters that you have to make for the team. This will give your athletes a stronger sense of “ownership” of the team, since they helped set the rules and guidelines.
- If someone on your team needs extra help or tutoring in an academic area, assign a teammate to the job. Helping one another in nonathletic areas will have a carry-over value in terms of team chemistry. Such chemistry grows out of new-found appreciation and increased understanding among teammates.

While not all of these suggestions may work or even be suitable for your situation, they generally will do much to enhance team chemistry. As the coach, you are obligated to take advantage of anything that will promote common experiences and an understanding and appreciation for one’s teammates.

That can go a long way in the development of the essential ingredient of team chemistry.

Editor’s note: At the time this article appeared in Soccer Journal in 1997, Dr. Michael Klausner teaches at the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and Dr. David Hoch is the athletic director at Eastern Technical High School in Baltimore. The article was reprinted with permission of Coach and Athletic Director magazine

Section 3- Keepers Corner

This past weekend I was at a tournament and watched a number of games of various age groups both male and female. I saw a pattern and quite frankly, it is quite disturbing because it shows a clear misunderstanding of what it means to be a goalkeeper. When I first became involved in coaching, I used to refer to a certain type of keeper as the “fat kid in goal” (yes I have always been politically correct). This particular type of keeper was typically the kid who didn’t want to run at all and simply saw the role of goalkeeper as being someone who stands there and tries to stop balls from going into the net. This type doesn’t understand the importance of leading the team’s defense or initiating the attack. Their only function was that of a shot blocker. Gradually, I started seeing keepers move away from this and start to understand the importance of leadership. Unfortunately, I am now seeing the trend going in the other direction.

First of all, I would like to discuss what I see as the important functions of a high level keeper. The most obvious one is to be a shot blocker. This simply means keeping the ball out of the back of the net. While it might seem

like this is really all that matters to be a successful keeper, this is really all that it takes if your goal in life is to be a successful “fat kid in goal” The next function is that of leadership of the attack. Rather than relaxing and watching as your team has the ball, this is when you have the opportunity to really make a difference when it comes to having a true affect on the outcome of the match. How valuable are you as a keeper if you stand back on your goal line and simply watch as your team attempts to attack? The real answer is you serve no purpose at all. A real keeper is involved in the attack by supporting her teammates at all times in terms of positioning herself in a spot where she is always available for a back pass. Yes this does mean leaving the 18 to be in proper support! The other way the keeper can “support” her teammates is by telling them what to do. This means letting teammates know when there is a “man on” or when she should pass it back etc. Be as specific as possible. Do not yell, “Make runs” rather tell Jill to check back to the ball or Lisa to go diagonal. You as the keeper has the best view of anyone (and that includes the coach) so take advantage of it by supporting your teammates at all times. One of the things keepers must be aware of is saying unnecessary things to the point of irritating their teammates so they get ignored. In my opinion, as a coach, I want the keeper speaking for me so when a keeper tells a field player to do something, it should be taken as if I, the coach, have said it. In order for this to work, the keeper must refrain from being a cheerleader or criticizer and only say things that are important at that time. The more a keeper can use concise clear statements, the more effective they will be

The next part of being a keeper is leading the defense. Let me start by saying the next keeper who yells “mark up” or “who has #10” should be shot and put out of my misery. Who should mark up? It is the keepers responsibility to say “Steve, you have #10”, Bob, you have #2”etc. Be specific and very firm. Real keepers don’t have to make spectacular saves very often because if they are doing their job correctly, they are preventing the shot rather than saving the shot. This is one of the big differences from being a keeper as opposed to a “fat kid in goal”. Making the decision for the defender regarding whether to force an opponent to the side or to the middle will make your job and your teammate jobs so much better.

Can anyone be a leader in goal? No. Can anyone become more of a leader in goal? Certainly. A long time ago, some idiot made the statement that “you have to be crazy to be a keeper” This has been one of the major reasons that the art and science of being a keeper has been so undeveloped. Stupid coaches assume that their keeper has the right “attitude” to be a keeper so that part of the job of coaching is taken care of. The truth of the matter is high level keepers have to have a much better understanding of the game in order to be successful. They have to be able to let their teammates know whom to mark, when to mark, when to tackle, when to attack, when to balance, when to pass, when to shoot and 1000’s of other things. Not only does a high level keeper have to know how and when to do these things but also how to communicate them to their teammates. Choosing the proper words and the proper tone is so important. One of the things for keepers to remember is that the lower the pitch of the command, the more definite the command sounds. This is one of the hardest things for female keepers to overcome because in the course of the match, voices tend to rise and thus they must make a concerted effort to be loud without being squeaky.

Hopefully, what you will come away with after reading this issue of the Keeper Newsletter is that there are many things a keeper must do rather than just sit back and save shots. It isn’t a surprise that a high percentage of coaches are former keepers. These are the people who realized that while it is true the keeper must be courageous, it is also true they must be intelligent and a quick decision-maker

Section 4- Clockwise vs. Counter Clockwise Runs

Today's subject is quite specific and something that most people do not consider. It deals with whether the second run up front should be a clockwise or counter clockwise run.

When I talk about the second run, I am assuming the first run from a target player (assuming a 4-4-2 formation) is a checking run back towards the ball. Most people agree that the second run should go towards the space created

by the first runner. The question is how does this runner get into that space?

Lets start with the assumption the ball is on the left side of the attacking teams field. If the first run is coming toward the ball from the center of the field, the second run (also coming from the center of the field) will be away and counter clockwise. This will enable the second runner to increase the angle in which the ball can be played to her as well as decreases the amount of time where her back is toward the player with the ball. When the ball is on the attacking teams right side, the second run will be away and clockwise which will accomplish the same thing.

As an outside midfielder who has the ball and sees these two runs being made, you would have to make two decisions. The first is to play the ball to the first runner who is checking to you. However, it is in your best interests to look far first in this instance and find the second runner who is making a run into the space that has been created. If the run is made in the correct direction, this will allow for the ball to be played toward the correct foot and into open space, which is leading toward goal.

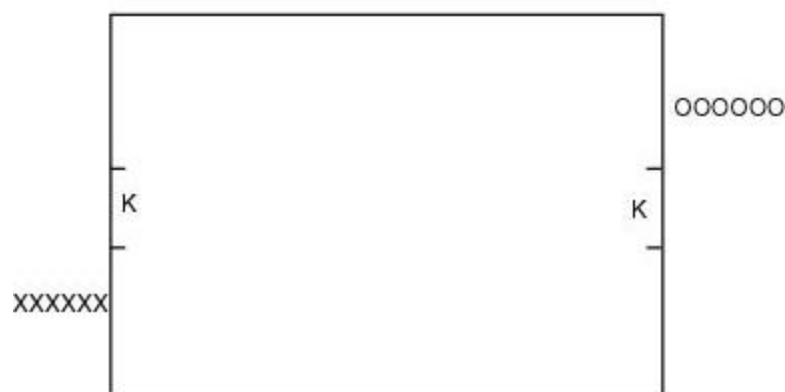
In summation, when the ball is on the left side of the field and the run is coming from the middle of the field, the second run should almost always be counter clockwise. When the ball is on the right side of the field and the run is coming from the center the second run should almost always go clockwise. The reason I say almost always is that soccer is not a game of absolutes and different circumstances might dictate different choices.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

The first drill in the finishing progression is one of my favorites because it combines finishing, defending and an incredible amount of conditioning. I simply call it the breakaway drill.

The set up of the field is quite simple. If available, use a full field with two full sized goals. The minimum number of players needed for this drill is 10 with two keepers although 12- 14 is ideal.

Split the team into two groups. One group should be 10 yards outside of one goal with balls and the other group should be 10 yards outside of the other goal (opposite post). See the diagram below to get a better understanding of this.



Each player has a ball. The first player in the X line takes off on a full field breakaway at full speed (consider having a coach or player chase her from behind to put pressure on this one player). As soon as she finishes the

breakaway, the first player in line O takes off on her breakaway. The X player who just finished her breakaway then becomes the defender and must chase the O player down to pressure her on her breakaway. As soon as the O player finishes her breakaway, then SHE becomes the defender and the next person in the X line takes off. This drill can be done for 8-10 minutes and while it might seem like there is a lot of standing around while waiting for a player's turn, the truth is that the players are making TWO full field sprints in a row and need the time to recover.

Players will try to cheat in this drill to make it easier for themselves. One way will be to take off on offense before the opponent finishes her breakaway. If necessary, the coach can be the one who says "so" before is allowed to take off. Another way to cheat is for the player who is on offense to shoot from a far distance so she can get back quicker on defense. If this starts to happen, make the players touch the goalpost that they are finishing on before they are allowed to get back and defend (I admit it, I was the kid who was always looking for ways to cheat so I could win).

The great thing about this drill is that it works on finishing breakaways in a game like situation (under pressure of lack of time as well as while suffering from exhaustion) and it is a great way to end a training session instead of doing something that involves plain conditioning. It has been my experience that after doing this drill a few times, teams have become much more comfortable with finishing in actual games.

You can turn this drill into a competition between the two teams although if you do that, you really must guard against players starting early to cheat.

Section 6- Heading

Today's subject will deal with proper heading.

Many young players are afraid to head the ball and the main reason they are afraid is that they don't know how to head properly. Then when they finally learn to head properly, they don't know when or where to head and thus they decide that since heading hurts and doesn't work anyway, why do it?

Let's start with the basics. The part of the head to be used to head the ball is actually the forehead (if you head with the absolute top of the head, it will HURT!). However, before the ball actually makes contact with the forehead, you have some other things to deal with first. The absolute first thing is to get your body in the right position to head the ball. This requires moving your feet to get behind the ball and preferable far enough behind the ball so that you can come forward to head the ball. Once you get in the proper position, you want to prepare to head the ball. The first thing to do is to tighten the neck muscles (which will help to prevent injury) and tuck your chin down toward your chest.

Since most of the power on a header comes from the abs, you want to lean back slightly so that when making contact, you can come forward with force from the abs. Let's actually start with one foot slightly in front of the other. Rather than standing flatfooted, have the weight on the balls of the feet with most of the weight on the back foot. As the ball approaches, you want to come forward to meet the ball (simply by transferring the weight to the front foot as you make contact with the ball). By coming forward hard like this, if the momentum is created with the abs, you will have force behind the ball as you make contact. With the forehead making contact with the ball (and hopefully with the eyes wide open) you will find that rather than the ball hitting you, you will be able to successfully head the ball.

When you first start off learning to head (or maybe I should say when you first learn to head properly) it's important to choose a good ball to work with. Be careful not to use a hard, inexpensive plastic soccer ball. There is nothing wrong with using a rubber playground ball. They are extremely inexpensive and are a great way to

work on proper technique without worrying about getting hurt. Even before going with the playground balls, real young players can even start off heading a beach ball that is the same size of a soccer ball. By starting with a softer ball, you can work on technique without risking injury.

The next thing to consider is what part of the ball to make contact on. There are two very different answers, which I am always surprised when coaches don't address. If you are looking to head to score a goal, you will usually want to get over the ball and head the ball down toward the goal line (this is the more difficult ball for a keeper to save). If you are in the defensive third of the field, you will usually want to head the ball up and over the oncoming players so you want to make contact with the lower half of the ball in order to get elevation on the ball.

Now that you know the proper technique for heading, and the proper time to head up or down, the next thing to do is to go out and practice

Section 7- News From Around The Country

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Sights Set High: U.S. soccer team gets ready to resume Cup qualifying

By Chris Cowles
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

CORAL GABLES, Fla.

Nearly four years ago, the United States national soccer team opened the final round of qualification play for a berth in the 2002 World Cup Finals.

On that frigid night in Columbus, Ohio, the U.S. took an emphatic 2-0 victory against arch-rival Mexico. The outcome sent a message to regional opponents: the Americans meant business.

Nine months later, after a series of highs and lows, the U.S. had punched its ticket to the World Cup, where it eventually advanced to the quarterfinals, thus erasing the memories of a last-place finish in 1998 while gaining additional respect on the world's stage.

On Wednesday, the U.S. will open the final round of qualification play for the 2006 World Cup as it sets its sights on joining a select few nations to play in a fifth consecutive finals. The U.S. will take to the road to tangle with Trinidad and Tobago at 3:30 p.m.

"Anytime we play," forward Brian McBride said, "it doesn't matter if it's a World Cup qualifier or any game we play, every game is important, and we need to play to win. We have to be prepared for whatever comes up, on the field or off the field."

The Americans will play 10 qualifiers - five at home and five on the road - as they square off against the likes of Mexico and Costa Rica. A resurgent Guatemala hopes to make its first foray into the finals, and Panama could play the role of a spoiler in the six-nation group. The top three countries automatically book passage to Germany 2006, and the fourth-place country gets a chance to advance if it wins a two-leg playoff against an Asian opponent.

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"Expect the unexpected is the best way to describe it (qualifying)," said Coach Bruce Arena after he put his team through a light training session Sunday evening at the University of Miami. The U.S. trained yesterday morning and then departed for Trinidad in the afternoon.

Arena's squad is in the midst of a 13-game unbeaten run, the best in the team's history, and has not lost to a regional opponent in 31 games dating to a 2-0 loss against Costa Rica on Sept. 5, 2001.

Even with his past successes at the collegiate and professional level - five national championships at the University of Virginia and two Major League Soccer crowns with D.C. United - Arena has focused on bringing out the best in his players. He has had a knack for making the right decisions when it comes to putting the right personnel on the field.

An extended labor dispute between the U.S. national-team players and the United States Soccer Federation forced Arena to hastily assemble a replacement squad in the event that the two sides could not reach a bargaining agreement by Feb. 1. Cooler heads prevailed, but valuable time was lost. The U.S. has not played since Nov. 17 when it drew 1-1 with Jamaica in their last semifinal-round match.

"There are a lot of different events going into this game," said Arena, comparing Wednesday's match to the opener four years ago against Mexico.

"This game is on the road; the last one was at home," he said. "We had more preparation before the last round, obviously a longer time together before Mexico. We had preparation games, but obviously we're a little behind the eight-ball now."

McBride, however, is not fazed by the distractions leading up to this game.

"The mentality now is to win," he said, "and it's been that since he (Arena) came here. Now, it's something that is definitely achievable. The coach has prepared us to do that, we're aware of our surroundings and we feel comfortable in the fact that we can play soccer."

Note: Goaltender Brad Friedel announced yesterday that he is retiring from the U.S. national soccer team, leaving Kasey Keller as the favorite to be in goal through the 2006 World Cup.

Women's soccer group up in air

The Canadian Professional Soccer League is ready to kick off its new women's division. Better make that sort of . . . maybe . . . perhaps.

Well, at least Harry Gauss of London City has his women's team ready go this year.

He'll have to wait and see whether the CPSL decides to begin operating the division this year or next. The league is awaiting approval from the Ontario Soccer Association for the women's division to be recognized.

Confused?

It's soccer. Expect to be confused.

"We're ready to go," Gauss said before heading to Toronto to discuss the women's teams and other soccer business. "We need someplace to showcase these women players. These are women who can play at the highest level of the game."

Gauss has a coaching staff, with Tonino Commisso as head coach.

Women's soccer is growing at all levels, particularly at the minor level. At various age groups, our national women's teams have had far more success than men's programs. With so many quality players, the CPSL thought it would be a natural for any city with a CPSL men's team to establish a woman's program.

The league was also concerned about the advent of the W-League, a North American professional women's league. The W-League has several Canadian franchises but is administered in the United States.

Twelve CPSL women's teams were expected to take to the field as of June 13, one for each CPSL men's franchise. But Gauss says six are scheduled to participate in a home-and-home schedule. Joining London will be Windsor, Oshawa, North York, Vaughan and Toronto Supra.

Stan Adamson of the CPSL said yesterday there are some issues to resolve.

"In principle, the CPSL set up a women's division for this year," he said. "It's got some hurdles because there's already a women's structure in Ontario, so the CPSL has to apply to the OSA. The first consideration was to have (a division) in 2005, then, because of the things to be done to satisfy the OSA, that was changed to 2006.

"It's now still an attempt (to get it going) for 2005. It's very much at the planning stage, very much in the works. Whether it's 2005 or 2006 . . . if you ask Harry, he says 90 per cent for 2005, but realistically my numbers are a 50-50 proposition for 2005. It could go in 2005 but it may be put back to 2006 because there's a lot of work to be done."

If you work through that carefully, you can come up with this translation: No one knows what's going on and there hasn't been enough preparation done. What hits you is that even though the CPSL made an announcement last May about the women's component, here it is February and it still has no approval from the OSA. In fact, only six of the teams in the CPSL have decided to enter teams in a women's division.

No translation needed for that number.

"I think (the OSA) likes what the CPSL has and what they can do," Adamson said.

"Their inclination is to say, 'These people are in the business of soccer at a professional level but it has to go through a process.' "

Gauss has always been a progressive sort when it comes to soccer. If something is good for the game, it should be implemented. But anyone who follows the game or has been involved in it also knows how difficult it is to change anything for the better.

"It's a culture shock for some people. They still can't believe that women are out of the kitchen," Gauss said.

"The numbers tell us this is a growing product and it's a good product. It can be entertaining."

Now that's something to look forward to this year. Or is it next year?

Better make that whenever.

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Next article from ContrCosta Times

Should women be allowed on men's teams?

By Mike McGreehan

STAFF WRITER

Coaches' view

Despite ongoing struggles for equality in some places, women have made great strides in recent decades.

Today's world sees increasing numbers of women in science, law, business and government. Women have made great inroads in sports, too. Still, the teams, leagues and events having the highest profiles worldwide tend to remain the domain of men.

In December, Maribel Dominguez -- a Mexico women's national team and former WUSA star -- made news by signing with Celaya, a team in Mexico's First-Division-A, a notch below the country's top division. Celaya, specifically, is a men's team.

Reaction was swift. And most opinions expressed on Spanish-language radio soccer programs in the Bay Area (seemingly the only radio soccer programs in the Bay Area) were those of disapproval. The general consensus was that women should play among women and men among men. FIFA, soccer's world governing body, ultimately turned thumbs-down on Dominguez's contract.

Still, questions remain: Can women compete on men's teams? Should they be allowed to?

Certainly, levels of competition and styles of play are major factors. The 26-year-old Dominguez, a 5-foot-4 forward, would have been outweighed by as many as 65 pounds by some of her male opponents, we are told.

But at the high school and youth levels, things change a bit. At the youngest ages, boys and girls compete on the same teams. But as children grow, the differences between the sexes become more pronounced. By the under-10 levels, most youth leagues have split the players by gender.

Could one imagine, then, girls playing for boys teams on the Bay Oaks Soccer Club or the Alameda Contra Costa Youth Soccer League? And as for high school competition, could a girl survive on teams otherwise consisting of boys?

"It would definitely take a strong individual, and it will depend on the coach, too," says Alameda High School girls coach Dave Wilkinson, a former goalkeeper who grew up in Piedmont and played at Bishop O'Dowd High School, Cal and St. Mary's College.

"If a player is strong-willed -- I always thought Mia Hamm could have played in any guys' league. If she's got the ability, why not? Talent will tell at the end of the day."

Other high school coaches concur.

"I have coached both in college and high school," says St. Mary's High boys coach Teale Matteson. "Where they have women on the team, they contribute a little something to the team."

"If girls can play, they should play," adds St. Mary's boys assistant Michael Pallas.

Soccer pundits often speak of various playing styles: Latin, British, Continental European and "Total Soccer," among a myriad of other monikers. Perhaps unintentionally, players and teams sometimes get pigeonholed based on nationality or ethnicity. Gender stereotypes can creep into the mix, too. That said, Bay Area boys high school matches tend to have a more physical edge than those of their female counterparts, who are more likely to depend on finesse.

Pete Belanger knows. The Bishop O'Dowd boys coach also has coached girls, including a Bay Oaks Soccer Club under-14 team in the fall.

"The game at the men's level is a lot faster," Belanger says. "It's a longer game (in terms of passing) and it's more physical, though that is not necessarily true. There are muscle mass and pure physiological differences that set males and females apart. Guys can send a ball over a longer distance."

Still, there are scenarios, Belanger concludes, where a girl could play on a boys team -- or moving up in age -- a woman on a men's team.

Belanger could possibly see a female player fitting into the midfield role of former Colombia national and ex-MLS star Carlos Valderrama.



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Section 8- Being Cut From A Youth Sports Team By Dr. Keith Wilson

Recently, I consulted with a high school athletic program the day that team selections were announced. As would be expected, the disappointment was obvious on the faces of players who did not receive good news. They were not selected to the team they wanted to be on. There were tears, harsh words, and, mostly, the desire to be left alone.

It is very disappointing not to be chosen for the team for which your child has tried out. Whether your child has been cut from a school, club or league team, it is just plain painful not to be selected.

It is a little easier when your child does not make a team that she wants to play for but there is another team for which she can play. At least for the player who wants to play there still is an option to develop her skills and try again at the next opportunity.

Empathize With Your Child

If your child is cut or not selected to be on the team of choice, you most likely will know how they feel. You will probably hear bad language; see sulking behavior and probably tears. For most kids these painful responses reflect the significance for them of not making the team.

Here are some suggestions for helping your child through this painful time.

1. Listen, listen, listen:
 - Listen to the pain your child is experiencing
 - Listen to the disappointment they are feeling
 - Listen for the anger they may feel towards the coach
 - Listen to the anger they feel about the way the team was selected
 - Listen to what they think is unfair
2. Do not offer easy answers
 - Children do not want to hear answers
 - They want to vent and have their feelings heard.

If a child feels that you have listened, and understand and feel their pain, they will be more open to creating a game plan for moving forward.

Learning A Lesson

For some children being cut will be a positive challenge and for some a major disappointment in their lives.

For some, being cut will be viewed as the end of road for this sport. They may come to recognize that they do not have the skill to play the game at the level they want to. They may choose to try other sports or activities which better fit their skills and personality.

Some children, however, will view being cut as a reason to challenge themselves to work harder to get better at their sport:

- They will take the opportunity to play with whatever team they can in order to get better.
- They will develop a sense of determination to show the coach that they really do have the skills to play at the level they tried out for.
- They will seek out individual coaching instruction to accelerate their skill acquisition.
- Where there is more than one team, they may set their goal to do the best they can at the B level so that they will be selected to move up to the A level when the coach believes they are able to contribute.

Your job as a parent is to be supportive when the disaster first happens. If your child knows he has your support, you can work together to develop a strategy that meet his needs and goals. Because you know the skill level and temperament of your child, you will be able to make suggestions that your child will find reasonable and constructive.

Talk To The Coach

If part of the plan is to try harder, then make an appointment with the coach to find out why your child was not selected and find out what they need to improve on. Do not make this conversation with the coach hostile or you will not find out the information that can be most useful for your child.

Being cut after tryouts is a disappointment for all involved. It can become an emotional disaster if the parent overreacts and creates a crisis. When the parent and child can express their pain and create a positive response, then the child has taken one step forward in learning how to deal with life's disappointments.