

Discussion document concerning the future of youth soccer in our communities

**Current situation**

There are four organized soccer clubs in the Greater Waterville Area. Three travel clubs: Winslow Comets, Waterville Novas, and the Fairfield Bulldogs and one Premier club, Terriers.

During the fall soccer season, the respective municipalities manage their own travel and recreational soccer clubs. Typically, the players are on the team in which they reside.

During the winter and spring seasons, the Terriers offer their premier program and the travel clubs offer their programs in the spring.

**ADVANTAGES OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM:**

- Fall season players represent their town
- Players from other communities can play for the town of their choice if their town doesn't offer travel soccer.
- Recreational soccer programs are strong and they allow new and beginning players an opportunity to play the great sport of soccer
- Continuation of these programs keeps the youth active and become better team players
- Continual development of players skills with peers of the same skill strength
- Allows the natural progression of quality players to further develop their skills

**DISADVANTAGES OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM:**

- Fewer players want to participate in winter and spring, leaving many teams short and can't field a competitive team come the spring.
- Some players want to play on a team that plays up to their level; which means leaving their travel and recreation teams
  - this leaves the spring travel teams short of their most talented players. In addition as a number of players don't want to play spring soccer anyway the Fall travel team is often left too short of players to field a team.
  - Our local clubs lose the opportunity to develop these most talented players locally, in some cases losing those players to Southern teams even for Fall travel.
  - Attempting to find players from other communities in order to field their own local spring travel team
  - tension can develop between the Premier and spring Travel clubs, which can lead to bad experience with the players and their families.
  - The tension is often so severe that players and families decide to seek Premier soccer opportunities outside of our local communities to avoid the pressures they face from clubs and team mates. Many would prefer to remain in our local communities to seek this opportunity in a low stress environment. And not have to travel long distances to play.

- Four clubs means four different boards with the same fundamental philosophy
  - four sets of volunteers
  - duplication of effort and tasks
- Community often confused on which club does what

### **Current Solutions**

This season we offered a single spring tryout. This was a very significant development which demonstrates increasing goodwill between our local clubs. This led to the following situations:

1. a boys travel team was created which otherwise would not have been formed.
2. a girls premier team failed to form because the players who were going to play travel couldn't understand why they would play for one travel club in the Fall and another travel club in the spring.

### **Future Solutions**

The Terriers board have consulted locally with representatives of the Comets, Novas and Bulldogs, and with soccer players and their families in our local communities. We have come up with a proposal which attempts to find a solution for all our local players which builds on the advantages of the current system (as outlined above) and attempts to overcome the disadvantages of the current system (as outlined above).

The current situation represents a pyramid with the biggest participation at the rec level which then feeds into the travel teams (which have fewer numbers participating) and then the very best players often seek the chance to play at the premier level. There are many tensions at the transition from the middle tier of the pyramid (travel) to the upper tier of the pyramid (premier), which are already covered earlier in this document.

To overcome those tensions and problems we propose the following:

1. Run a single winter and spring program.
2. Dissolve the Terriers board and re-launch the club with a new name. The intention for this new club is to organize winter and spring soccer in our area. This club already has 501(c)(3) (charitable non profit organization) status which is advantageous in terms of fundraising and eliminates the cost and effort of filing for 501(c)(3) status with another organization.
3. Create a board for the new club with representation from all three local travel clubs. The board to have equal representation from each town club with perhaps a rotating presidency. The new board will be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of each of their clubs and their communities.

### **ADVANTAGES OF THIS PROPOSAL**

- No confusion in the community as to where to play soccer in Winter and Spring.

- The new club will find a place for any player, at the level of play to suit their ability, who comes to tryouts to play.
- An end of the situation of playing for one town in the Fall and another town in the Spring.
- Local ownership by our town travel clubs and their associated rec soccer programs of the pyramid of soccer.
- Creation of a new club board which harnesses the enthusiasm of our local clubs, avoids duplication and ensures representation of all our local communities at board level.
- Preserves the strength of the Fall programs.
- Allows our players to be developed locally at the level they are best suited without them being exposed to the tensions involved in leaving their Fall teams.