

Weston AYSO Region 644



July 28, 2005

Welcome to the eighteenth 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- Lawrence Fine, in his NSCAA article titled "Serving Balls Early" discusses that by serving the ball into the middle of the field sooner rather than later can put a great deal of pressure on the defense by playing the ball behind the defenders and forcing them into tactical mistakes.

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 tryouts and what to look for in a club and what questions to ask to make sure that you are getting the right "fit". In Section 4 titled "The Overlapping Run" we enter a discussion as to how to defend an overlapping run by an opposing defender. Section 5- Soccer Activities- there is a fun activity that you may want to try with your team which will combine practice in through and short passes as well as offside traps. Section 6 is titled "What Type of Player Are You". This article asks the question- are you the type of player who makes a play and, if not successful, gives up or are you the type who continues to plug along and has the attitude that "the next one is mine"?

Section 7 is our Soccer News Articles From Around the Country. The first article is from PittsburghLive.com and is titled "Boys Take Stand in T-Ball Case". A Fayette County (Pennsylvania) boy testified Thursday that his T-ball coach offered him \$25 if he would hit an autistic teammate in the face in an attempt to sideline him from a playoff game. The second article is from the Tuscaloosaneews.com and is titled "Three high-school football players died of heatstroke in 2004". Each year, the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injuries produces reports on deaths and severe injuries from amateur and professional sports. Reports are based partly on newspaper stories, along with information from the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the National Federation of State High School Associations. This article indicates the findings for the year. The final article from the Dallas Morning News "Play dough: At PSA, fun and games are big business". Just ask the people of Plano Texas, youth sports are a business....big business. Read this article just to see how large the Plano Sports Authority has grown.

Section 8- Today's health and youth sports development article is from JoinTogether.com and is titled "NCAA Recruiting Young Audience For Beer Ads". The article points out that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is actively building brand loyalty among young people in order to get them interested in sports and to boost the attractiveness of NCAA telecasts to advertisers. But those recruitment efforts may deliver more and more young viewers to Anheuser-Busch and other beer marketers which advertise heavily on college. Read this article and see what you think.

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.

The Mission of Laser Metals Inc:

*To meet our present and future customer's needs
for high quality steel delivered on time*



Laser Metals Inc.
1300 N.W. 65 Place
Ft. Lauderdale Fl. 33309
Office (954) 935-5565
(800) 783-9443 Fax (954) 935-5565
Email info@lasermetals.com

Laser Metals was founded in 1991 in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The owners have extensive experience in servicing the Florida market since 1975.

Our commitment to our customers:

- * *prompt, personal support*
- * *immediate response time*
- * *quality products*
- * *customized service*

We specialize in:

- * *Galvanized*
- * *Galvannealed*
- * *Acrylume (galvalume plus)*
- * *Cold Rolled*
- * *Hot Rolled P&O*

Sheets	HD Galvanized	Acrylume	Galvannealed	Cold Rolled	Hot Rolled P+O
Gauges	12ga(.097) thru 32ga(.010)	24ga(.024) and 26ga(.019)	12ga(.097) thru 26ga(.019)	14ga(.070) thru 26ga(.035)	12ga(.095) thru 16ga(.056)
Width	36" thru 60"	36" thru 48"	48"	36" thru 48"	36" thru 48"

Lengths available in 96", 120", 144" or to customer requirements

Section 1- AYSO 644 Roundup

We know that you are signed up for AYSO Soccer for this fall.....but are your children's friends? Help get the word out that registration for the fall 2005 AYSO soccer season is still ongoing. Last fall season we had 2,575 children playing AYSO soccer here in Weston with about 100 more on the waiting list. Please don't have your friend's children wind up on the wait list and possibly shut out of the most popular and energetic program in South Florida. You can register online at www.eayso.org or you may download a registration form from our website at www.ayso644.org. You may also pick up registration forms from the Weston Regional Park Community Center and from Soccer Max on the corner of Flamingo Road and Sunrise Boulevard in Plantation, Florida. The registration fee is \$135. You will need to mail the registration form (three copies) along with a check payable to AYSO Region 644 and a copy of the child's birth certificate if they did not play with us last season to: AYSO 644, 1112 Weston Road, #225, Weston, Florida 33326. For further information please visit our website at www.ayso644.org, you may call us at 954-349-9786 or send an email to Strikersoccer1@aol.com.

Are you interested in playing soccer? We have both men's and women's leagues here at AYSO Region 644. Both leagues play on Sunday mornings at the Weston Regional Park in Weston, Florida with the season beginning on Sunday September 25, 2005 and running through mid May 2006. We will be posting registration information both here in upcoming issues of the AYSO 644 bi-weekly newsletter as well on our website at www.ayso644.org.

If you have been selected as a coach or assistant coach for the fall season and did not attend the coaches clinic in May, you will need to attend the upcoming clinic to be held on Saturday September 10, 2005 from 9am until 4pm at the Weston Regional Park Community Center. At this clinic we will help you learn the game of soccer, teach you the fundamentals and show you age specific activities to instruct the kids as well as make you safe haven certified, a requirement by AYSO.

What team is your child on and what are their practice days and times. We will be putting up our player/coach search engine around August 25, 2005 as well as the practice schedules. Please go to our website at WWW.AYSO644.ORG to view.

Important upcoming dates are: First day of practices Monday August 29, 2005, Regular Season begins on Saturday September 24, 2005 and Picture Day is Sunday October 2, 2005.

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 2,575 children and families from AYSO that will see your banners, website listings, t-shirts, newsletter designations will greatly appreciate it.

Section 2- Serving Balls Early

It creates the potential for the attacker to receive with goalward momentum

By Lawrence Fine

Serving an early ball simply means that, instead of getting the ball out wide, then taking it all the way to the end line before crossing it back out, the ball is sent out wide and served much sooner, so it is served behind the defenders instead of playing in front of them.

The reason serving balls early is an effective method of attack is that the attacking players are receiving the ball with their momentum going toward the goal. Even if a defender gets to the ball first, he or she also would be receiving the ball while facing the goal they are defending. This presents the defender with a difficult set of choices and challenges: receive the ball, then turn it (probably while under pressure), kick

the ball over the end line or play the ball back to the keeper while under pressure. In each case, it puts the defending team under a great deal of pressure.

Another advantage to the early serve is that it forces the keeper have to make a quick decision as to whether or not to come off of his or her line to try to win the ball. If the decision is made to come off of the line, the keeper now has to fight both the opponent and his or her teammate for the ball, since this would have to be a quick decision that frequently isn't made in time for the defenders to get out of the way.

The only negative to serving the early ball is that it's somewhat of a hit or miss situation. If it works, it creates a great scoring opportunity. If it doesn't, it causes a loss of possession and can lead to frustration. An example of this is if the early-served ball is hit too high and hard. The ball then sails over the goal and people start yelling "get your hips turned" and other nonsense. What they may not realize is that this might have been the correct ball to play, but it simply was poorly struck. As long as the server is willing to take a chance and also deal with the consequences, this can be an extremely effective ball to play.

Editor's Note: Lawrence Fine produces FineSoccer.com, an online resource for a variety of tips, ideas and newsletters related to soccer coaching. A member of the NSCAA Website Development Committee, Fine also serves as volunteer assistant coach for an NCAA Division I men's team.

Section 3- Keepers Corner

Welcome to the Goalkeeping Newsletter. The subject of this newsletter will be tryouts. I know that in many states, this is the time of year when the clubs are conducting their tryouts for teams. It's a very anxious time and one that can either be enjoyed or dreaded.

The first thing I want to mention is that from a coach's standpoint, this is not an easy time of the year. The idea of cutting players, recruiting players, figuring out what is the best combination of players are things that most people in a position to make these decisions despise. As a player, what you have to do is first decide what you want to be doing and then how are you going to accomplish it.

When looking for the proper team for yourself, there are many things you have to take into consideration. Unfortunately, these things are not always considered and this will make for a terrible experience. Some of the factors to consider are location (especially for the younger players who don't drive), practice times (too often players commit to a team and then realize they can't make the practices, check ahead), coaches background (not every coach really did play for the national team, don't just accept what a person says. There are way too many coaches out there whose main qualifications are made up, check them out. Also realize that just like in looking at an investment, the disclaimer holds that past performance does not guarantee future success. If a coach has been successful with a team in the past, find out how long he was with them and how much of the coaching he actually did), trainers (same concerns as with the coaches, plus how often will the be attending the training sessions and matches. Any trainer that says they don't have to attend matches or tournaments in order to train a team is either lying or stupid. Having said this, I admit that I have trained teams without attending all of their matches. However, I am always upfront in telling people this is not the optimal way to train a team. There are times when this is the best alternative out there). Also, find out what tournaments the team will be attending. This is important for a couple of reasons. You want to compete at the level that you are best suited. Some teams go to real low-level tournaments so they can always win and claim to be special. This accomplishes absolutely nothing for the development of the team. Other coaches take their teams to tournaments that are over the team's capabilities. All this does is force the team to get humiliated and lose all confidence they might have had (however the coach can brag about all of the big tournaments they go to). Choosing the correct tournaments for a team is a real art and finding a coach who can do this properly is very important. The other part of the tournament factor would be making sure the team isn't doing things that you can't afford to do. Find out the costs of everything in advance and it will help prevent problems in the future. Facilities are another factor to take into consideration.

Does the team have access to lights for training? How much space do they have to train on? Is there a keeper trainer for the team or club (it's amazing to me how many keepers never find that out and later on realize that having some parent throw balls to them is not making them a better keeper)? Does the team attend camps together and if so when, where and why? It's funny that I would write this even though friends of mine run team camps at different universities but why exactly should a team attend a certain camp together? Does the coach believe this is the best way to make his team better? Or does he get to attend camp for free and socialize with the coaches if 8 or more players from his team attend? Not to get too far off of the subject but if you have 15 players on a team attend a camp that costs \$400 per kid you just spent \$6000 for a week of training. Instead of doing that, a coach can get a really good coach to come to the team's home field for approximately \$100 per kid and give that team more personalized training. In theory, you could do this for 4 straight weeks and see some tremendous improvements in a team although in reality, you would probably do this for a week or maybe two and then use the rest of the money for tournaments. Another factors to consider are the players on the team. Is their level of playing the same as yours? Can they help you raise your level or will they bring you down? Is the style of play what you are looking for? These are some of the factors that have to be considered in choosing a team.

Once you choose which team you would like to try out for, the next step is to make the team. First of all, be in shape. When I am involved in evaluating players, one of the first things I look for is conditioning. This might seem unusual since I can always help a player get in shape later on but the way I look at it, if a player is not willing to get in shape for a try out, then he isn't serious anyway so why bother. Of course, there could be extenuating circumstances, which should be discussed ahead of time. Next I look for athletic ability; this is the one factor that really can't be taught so it is something that as a coach I will look for real early. Other factors that I would look for (in different order depending on the age group of the team) would be technical skill, tactical knowledge, and the ability to understand what is going on around them. However the absolute first two things I look for at tryouts are attitude and passion. If a player thinks he knows everything then I have no need for him (I like teaching too much to have that type of person around me). Be a positive person who wants to learn and works hard and you will have a good chance of making most teams. The big one though is passion. When I see a person who plays because they love to play, not because they want a scholarship, or they want to be able to say they are on a certain team or anything like that, but simply because they want to play and they enjoy it, I will almost always find room for that person on my team. Be the first one at a try out, the first one on the field, the first one back from water breaks and the one who is playing hard yet playing with a huge smile of his face and you will almost always make the team. That is how you stand out the right way. I have a player on a youth team I am coaching who has almost no skills, and has such a limited understanding of the game that I asked her to play center midfield for a short time on Saturday and she asked if that was the person in front of the stopping person. She is also a year younger than the rest of my team. The obvious question is why is she on my team. The answer is that she has such a joy for the game that she works harder than anyone else on the field. She wins the ball almost every time (and then has to win it again and again since she loses the ball on her first touch so often) and plays with the most genuine enthusiasm I have seen in a long time. Right now, she doesn't help my team any but she doesn't hurt it either because of her effort. However, 2 years from now, if she continues to show this enthusiasm and effort, I will guarantee that college coaches will be interested in her and no one will believe where she came from. I don't believe I am unique in the willingness to take chances with players with great attitudes and a love for the game. I don't care if a parent tells me their child loves the game or even if a player says it. It's the action that impresses me. If you have something to tell the coach, then you do it, don't have your parents do you talking for you. As a coach, I will spend as much time as needed with the players but quite frankly have very little time for the parents (I coach the players and not the parents). Take the initiative.

The other thing is to not be intimidated by a coach. If a coach tells you that you must make a decision right on the spot and you don't feel comfortable doing this, then DON'T DO IT! The absolute worse thing you can do is be put in a spot where you are forced to make a decision that is wrong for you. Explain this to the coach and explain your reasons for not wanting to commit right then. I admit that I have a different attitude about this than many others since I don't mind players going to other team tryouts. I have enough confidence with myself that I know if a player gets all of the information that is out there, they will most likely make the right choice (and

luckily for me, I know that for many players the right choice ends up being me). If a player chooses to go elsewhere then that is fine. As a coach, I truly want what is best for the player (besides if it was the wrong choice, I know they will correct this mistake the following year). If a coach tells you that you can't go to any other tryouts before deciding, maybe you should start to wonder what they are so afraid of. Is this coach worried you will find something better out there? If so then go find it. Some coaches truly will not give you a chance if you don't commit right then and there, if that is the case find another team. Do what is best for you. However, don't prolong the decision unnecessarily since there will be other people whose team choices might be dependent on you.

If you take all factors into consideration, get in shape, play hard and have fun, I believe most people will end up on a team that is in their best interests.

Section 4- The Overlapping Run

Today's topic deals with defending the overlapping run.

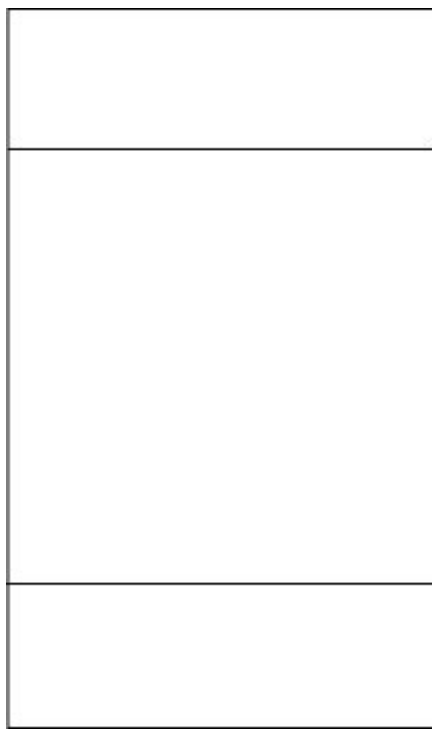
This explanation makes the assumption that it's the right back overlapping around the outside right midfielder for the opposing team but this applies anywhere else as well.

As the ball is played to the right midfielder, the defending midfielder will step to the ball. If the attacking player does what she should do and takes her attacking touch towards the goal in order to create space for the overlapping runner, the typical response defensively is to try to force her back toward the sideline. However, since the overlapping runner becomes the support, the defender actually should force the outside player towards the center of the field and away from her support (I am assuming this is taking place around the midfield line). As a defensive player, you are typically taught to force the opposing player toward the sideline but the real reason for this is to force them away from their support and toward your support (your support in most cases being the sideline). Since the overlapping runner is the support and is wide, push the player toward the middle away from her support.

The purpose of an overlapping run is to create a 2 vs 1 situation where the defender has to make a decision between the player with the ball and the runner going forward. Normally, if the defender goes with the runner, the player with the ball keeps it and goes toward goal. If the defender goes with the outside midfielder, then the ball gets played to the overlapping runner who can either go to goal or serve the ball. By overplaying the outside midfielder to go toward the middle (but not giving her a free path to goal, simply denying the passing lane to the runner) the defender can control who has the ball and where they go. In this situation, this will allow the defender to dictate play and in the long run, the person who dictates play normally wins.

Section 5- Soccer Activities

The last drill in this progression is actually quite simple. Set up a field like an American football field with 10-yard end zones. (See diagram below)



To score a goal, a team has to receive a ball in the end zone they are attacking. A player can NOT dribble into the end zone and the thing that makes this extremely interesting is that off sides does apply in this game.

Both teams will be encouraged to try an offsides trap and this will allow players to see the advantages (and disadvantages) of this

After a goal is scored, there is a kick off just like in American Football.

Some variations on this drill includes not allowing any players to dribble forward at all. Or you can put a limitation of 2 touch to eliminate this problem completely.

It's extremely important to have someone calling the offsides from the sidelines as this becomes an important part of the game. You can play to a certain score (first team to 5 wins) or for a specified time period.

Some of the things this works on are through passes (one and two hole passes, click [here](#) for an explanation), offsides traps, beating offsides traps, communication, conditioning, short passes, support and much, much more. An added bonus is that it's a fun game and the players will have no idea just how hard they will be working.

Section 6- What Type of Player Are You?

Today's topic asks the question "are you a one and done player or a one more time player?"

Are you one of those players who makes one run, doesn't get the ball and says, "well I made a run and it didn't get me the ball so I am done". Or are you one of those players who makes a run, doesn't get the ball and says "well I will do it one more time and maybe I will get it then". The next time the one more time player makes a run and doesn't get the ball, she simply says "I will do it ONE MORE TIME".

Another example of the one and done player is the person who loses possession of the ball, and rather than working hard to win it back (which the one more time player would do), she simply says "well I did my job, I will let someone else do it now"

The one and done player ends up being unsuccessful in the long run while the one more time, is more likely to end up being a big time player.

Be willing to do things one more time and you will find that the game of soccer is much more fun

Section 7- News From Around The Country

Boys take stand in T-ball case

By [Chris Foreman](#)
TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Friday, July 29, 2005

A Fayette County boy testified Thursday that his T-ball coach offered him \$25 if he would hit an autistic teammate in the face in an attempt to sideline him from a playoff game.

Keith Reese Jr., 8, was one of two children to speak from the witness stand during a preliminary hearing for Mark R. Downs Jr., 27, of Dunbar. Downs was ordered to stand trial on charges of two counts of criminal solicitation to commit aggravated assault, and one count each of corruption of minors, criminal conspiracy and recklessly endangering another person.

Downs' attorney, Thomas W. Shaffer, maintains the case, filed by state police at Uniontown, is a misunderstanding.

Breaking a season-long routine, Downs asked Reese Jr., one of his better players, to practice with Harry Bowers Jr., who is autistic, before a June playoff game, according to prosecution witnesses.

Keith Reese Sr. testified he was surprised to see his son playing toss with Bowers, 9. Reese Sr. said he mentioned the unusual pairing to his wife as they sat in the bleachers awaiting the start of the game in a Fayette County youth league.

"Harry can't even catch that well," Reese said. "I thought right away there was something wrong with that."

Both Reese Sr. and his son testified that after the game, which Bowers missed because of injuries he suffered during the practice, Reese Jr. told his stepmother there was an explanation for the pairing. The boy said Downs offered him the money to hit Bowers in the face so the older boy would be unable to play the required minimum of three innings in the June 27 game.

Although R.W. Clark Youth Baseball League officials found no evidence of wrongdoing by Downs, Magisterial District Judge Deberah Kula, of North Union Township, ruled that there was sufficient evidence for the case to be bound over for trial. She continued an unsecured bond for Downs, who faces arraignment in county court Sept. 15.

Downs is the father of three daughters, including 8-year-old twins who played on the Falcons team this season.

During an interview, Downs' attorney said it was three games before the alleged incident when the volunteer head coach jokingly offered any player \$25 if he or she struck an umpire with a batted ball. Shaffer said the umpire is a friend of Downs, and the joke referred to a rule change during the season in which coaches were prohibited from entering the field to instruct a player.

However, Reese Jr. testified yesterday that Downs made him feel "not very happy" when the coach asked him to throw a baseball at Bowers. After a first toss bounced off the grass and struck Bowers in the groin, Bowers began crying, Reese Jr. said.

Jennifer Bowers, Bowers' mother, said her son told her about the injury. Bowers then returned to the field with Reese Jr.

"He (Downs) told me to go out there and hit him harder," Reese Jr. said. "So I went out and hit him in the ear."




Reese Jr. testified he never received any money from Downs.

Witnesses could not agree as to whether the second throw caused bleeding from Bower's ear. Under questioning by District Attorney Nancy Vernon, Jennifer Bowers had difficulty remembering which of her son's ears was struck.

Photo Gallery

Mark R. Downs Jr.

Tools

-  [Print this article](#)
-  [E-mail this article](#)
-  [Subscribe to this paper](#)

[Larger](#) / [Smaller](#) Text

"The one with the earring in it," said Bowers, of South Union Township. "I think it's his left."

Bowers said her son, who appeared in court with an earring in his left ear, will be entering the fourth grade this fall. She said the oldest of her two sons has mild mental retardation, autism and apraxia, which is a speech communication disorder. Bowers said her younger son, who is 8, also plays on the Falcons team.

The mother said Downs advised her that her older son should sit out the game after he was injured, and she agreed.

"He (Downs) said, 'The balls must be after him,' " Bowers said.

Reese Sr. said he had conversations with Downs in which the coach complained that the Bowers boys "bring the team down." Before the June 27 game, Reese said Downs even asked him to tell Jennifer Bowers the contest had been canceled if she called him.

Harry Bowers provided one of the lighter moments during the hearing. After he stood to be sworn in, he sank into the witness chair, leaving all of his body concealed behind the judge's bench except for his short blond hair and wire-rimmed glasses. Kula asked him to stand for the remainder of his testimony.

Later, the boy had difficulty picking Downs from the crowd of 27 faces looking toward him. Three times, after requests from attorneys, he failed to identify Downs in the courtroom.

"I can't find him," Bowers Jr. said after the third time.

The only defense witness, league president Eric Forsythe, said league officials conducted an investigation after they were contacted by Darlene Reese, Reese Jr.'s stepmother. Downs was not suspended for the final game of the year because league officials could not prove his guilt, Forsythe said.

Downs left Kula's office without speaking to the media, which included reporters from Sports Illustrated and ABC Television's "Good Morning America." Jennifer Bowers also declined to comment.

The alleged incident at the T-ball field in North Union Township happened while Downs was free on \$3,500 bond in a case in which he was accused of assault, county court records show. Downs was arrested in early June and charged by state police at Belle Vernon with terroristic threats, simple assault and harassment.

A 25-year-old woman told police that Downs punched and choked her more than once on June 1 and June 2 at a home in Bitner, Franklin Township. She contacted police on June 3.

The woman also told police Downs threatened to kill her while he held a knife. Fayette County Judge Ralph Warman granted a protection-from-abuse order on June 6, but dismissed the order a week later at the woman's request.

Shaffer, who also represents Downs in that case, said the woman has told him she doesn't want to testify at the Aug. 30 preliminary hearing in the case scheduled before Magisterial District Judge Mike Defino, of Redstone Township.

Study: Three high-school football players died of heatstroke in 2004

The Associated Press
July 29. 2005 5:01PM

- [Email this story.](#)
- [Print this story.](#)

Three high-school football players died of heatstroke in 2004 after none had died of the ailment in the previous two seasons, according to a study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Four high-school players and a youth-league player died from on-field injuries, according to the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injuries. A total of 10 players died from indirect causes such as heatstroke and heart conditions.

Frederick Mueller, chairman of exercise and sport science in UNC-CH's College of Arts and Sciences, said that in addition to heatstroke he was concerned about injuries that caused permanent paralysis.

There were 12 such injuries in 2004, mostly among high-school players, the study found. That was the first year since 1990 when they were more than 10 such injuries.

Each year, the center produces reports on deaths and severe injuries from amateur and professional sports. Reports are based partly on newspaper stories, along with information from the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the National Federation of State High School Associations.

About 1.5 million students in junior high school and high school play football in the United States each year. Colleges and universities field about 75,000 players.

Play dough: At PSA, fun and games are big business

03:50 PM CDT on Saturday, July 30, 2005

By GARY JACOBSON / The Dallas Morning News

Youth sports are about kids, fun and competition. Increasingly, they are also about dollars. In the case of the Plano Sports Authority, millions of dollars.

PSA, one of the largest youth sports organizations in the nation, expects to reach \$6 million in revenue this fiscal year. Since opening its \$10.8 million StarCenter in early 2002, PSA has seen its annual revenue increase more than 2 ½ times, most of it from player registration fees that can run \$110 for a basketball season. Construction of a second PSA building of about equal size could begin next year.

"Our numbers have grown at monstrous, monstrous rates," said Mary Margaret Taylor, executive director for the nonprofit organization that serves, primarily, kids who live in the Plano Independent School District. A few teams also come from as far away as Denison, Duncanville and Highland Park.

SportsDay

Youth Sports: Money Matters

Part 1: Youth baseball: A lot to play for | Series of championships chart (.pdf)

- Peewees to prospect: a family investment
- Cities super-size facilities for youth athletes

Part 2: Play dough: At PSA, fun and games are big business

- What coaches make
- D-FW area youth sports groups revenue
- How the research was done
- Audio: Gary Jacobsen on the growth of youth sports centers
- Interactive tour: PSA's StarCenter at Carpenter Park

Coming soon

Part 3: Youth soccer

Part 4: Velocity Sports Performance

[Complete series](#)

About 2.5 million people will pass through PSA's StarCenter at Carpenter Park this year. That's as many as attended Rangers games at Ameritrust Field in 2004.

Though it is the largest local youth sports organization, PSA has plenty of company. *The Dallas Morning News* found 22 nonprofit area youth sports groups with revenue of more than \$500,000 and 105 with revenue of more than \$100,000. Combined, the groups account for \$46 million in annual revenue – about as much generated by Calloway's Nursery Inc., which ranked 97th on *The News'* recent list of privately held area firms.

The News also found 19 individuals, many of them soccer coaches, who earned more than \$60,000 a year from their youth sports organizations.

The News' analysis included groups focused on youth sports that are tax-exempt. The analysis is based on Form 990 reports filed with the Internal Revenue Service. It did not include for-profit operations, leagues run by municipalities or groups that include sports as part of a broader mission.

Most of the largest local nonprofit youth sports groups focus on a single sport and the development of competitive players, often with paid coaches rather than volunteers.

But whether the kids are chasing college scholarships or playing just for fun, youth sports are big business and getting bigger.

PSA, which focuses on the fun, earned \$163,000 just for the advertising signs and banners placed around the 143,000-square-foot StarCenter in the fiscal year that ended July 31, 2004. It sold \$430,000 worth of concessions and spent \$650,730 on officials and referees.

SMILEY N. POOL / DMN

A basketball tournament fills the courts at the Plano Sports Authority's StarCenter.

Taylor, a former flight attendant, started volunteering at PSA in 1978, when her children played sports. She assumed her current paid position in 1993, when PSA offered 11 sports. It offers only youth competition – currently, 20 sports for kids ages 18 and younger. Taylor says the strength of the organization has always been its volunteers, which number more than 5,000.

"We may look sophisticated, but I want you to know we are still a mom-and-pop store," she said.

Literally.

Mary Margaret's husband, Jerry, is PSA's sports director. They are two of the organization's 17 full-time employees. There are also six part-timers.

"She does pretty much all of it," Jerry Taylor said. "I just answer the phone and drive Miss Daisy," he said, referring to his wife.

PSA anticipates that a second building will receive city approval later this year and could be in operation in 2007. The building would be on city land at Enfield Park and share a parking lot with Clark Stadium, which is used for high school football games.

As with its current facility, the organization expects a long-term lease arrangement from the city on the Enfield land. For the Carpenter site, PSA pays \$10 a year for 30 years with options for two additional 10-year periods.

Through all the growth, the PSA philosophy has remained the same. "We're in the business of recreation," said Bill Wadley, chairman of the board. "We're not in the business of building select teams."

That's just fine with Wendy Blessing, mother of twin 7-year-old boys and a 3-year-old girl. Her husband, John, is PSA's director of football. She served on PSA's soccer board for a couple of years and is now the director of cheerleading.

For Wendy, it's not the size of PSA that makes it special, but the family feeling.

She tells of driving home from her boys' PSA baseball game. Benjamin and Nicholas, who began playing PSA sports when they were 3, wanted to stop to watch PSA arena football at the StarCenter. In the back seat, Jennifer, the youngest, was cheering, "P-S-A! P-S-A!"

"We're a PSA family," Wendy said. "I'd rather them be there than almost anywhere else as they grow older."

Wadley remembers his introduction to PSA in 1973, just three years after the organization started. When his own kids wanted to play football, he said, he was determined not to get involved.

But when the team formed and no one volunteered to coach, he eventually raised his hand. "And that's how we got started," he said.

In the 32 years since, he has run the baseball program, headed public relations efforts, served as president and then as chairman for the last dozen years. All are unpaid volunteer positions. His paying job is as director of design for SHW Group, an architectural and planning firm specializing in schools.

Wadley designed both the existing PSA building and the proposed building. SHW donated his time.

Elite company

Nationally, PSA is a giant among the 1,200 organizations in its peer group, as determined by GuideStar, which collects and makes available information on nonprofit organizations. Revenue of just over \$700,000 a year, less than one-eighth the size of PSA, puts an organization in the top 10 percent of that peer group.

In revenue and asset size, PSA resembles a metro-area YMCA more than a typical youth sports group. It generates more revenue than the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Dallas and roughly the same revenue as the Arlington YMCA, according to the organizations' annual returns and GuideStar reports.

MELANIE BURFORD / DMN

"We are still a mom-and-pop store," says PSA executive director Mary Margaret Taylor, whose husband, Jerry, serves as sports director.

In Plano, the Plano Youth Soccer Association and the Plano Baseball Association are also among the largest youth sports groups in North Texas.

PYSA has 8,000 players and expects about 550 teams from around the country at its Labor Day tournament, said president George Ostrander, who helped found the group in 1976.

"PSA is a good organization and the people, probably, are not going to be screaming on the sidelines like ours are," he said, adding that his group is very competitive.

In the early 1990s, soon after some baseball volunteers left PSA to form PBA, the two groups battled over the rights to fields. There were even accusations of padding rosters to get more favorable field allocations from the city.

"We have very good relations with PSA now," said Keith McDonald, president of the PBA. "We even share fields sometimes."

Don Wendell, Plano's director of parks, said PSA, which originally formed to bring together all of Plano's youth sports programs, has strong community support.

Not everyone, though, is happy. Jeff Smith, president of the neighborhood association closest to the PSA StarCenter said that the facility is good for kids but that PSA has not kept promises about parking and landscaping made to neighbors during negotiations for the building.

"It's not quite as much traffic as we thought it was going to be, but it's more aggressive traffic," Smith said. "Lots of SUVs."

Mary Margaret Taylor said that Smith was part of the negotiations on landscaping and that PSA is looking into replacing some plants that have died.

Much of the traffic comes from PSA's most popular sport, basketball, which has about 20,000 participants a year, Taylor said. Basketball is offered in four seasons; 9,000 play in the winter league.

"Basketball was the engine behind it all," she said of PSA's growth. She thinks the popularity of basketball was aided by non-Texans who moved to Plano from other parts of the country. The numbers grew strongly, Wadley said, when PSA began offering leagues for older kids not involved with school teams.

Combined, PSA sports attract more than 40,000 participants a year. Soccer has 10,000, baseball 3,000, girls' volleyball 2,500 and softball 2,000. If a kid plays more than one sport or the same sport in more than one season, he or she is counted each time.

Wadley thinks there is growth potential in coed and boys volleyball. He said that with the new building, PSA will have a total of 26 courts for basketball and other indoor sports. Currently, the organization has to rent more than 20 other gyms around town in addition to the StarCenter courts.

Wadley and Mary Margaret Taylor expect PSA's main partners in the new building to be Coca-Cola, which donated \$1.5 million toward the first building, and the Dallas Stars, who financed the ice rink in the first building.

In addition, the U.S. Taekwon-do Federation and a private company, Impact Martial Arts Academy, are ready to contribute \$2 million for 20,000 square feet of dedicated space, said Scott McNeely, who heads both organizations. The space would include a 7,000-square-foot taekwondo museum. McNeely's Academy currently offers a small program at the existing StarCenter.

Other sponsors are likely, Taylor and Wadley said. Acme Brick, for example, donated the brick for the first PSA StarCenter.

Jim Lites, president of the Stars, calls the PSA-Stars relationship a "really, really good marriage." The Stars pay PSA a monthly fee (more than \$16,000), which finances about \$3 million of original cost. He expects a similar arrangement for the new building.

The Stars, in turn, manage PSA's ice program. About three-quarters of PSA's revenue comes from indoor sports and one-quarter from outdoor sports, Mary Margaret Taylor said. About 20 percent of the StarCenter's revenue comes from the ice program, she said.

Whereas Dr Pepper is a partner with the Stars on other StarCenters around the area, there is no mention of Dr Pepper anywhere in PSA's StarCenter, nor is it available at the concession stand. That's because of PSA's exclusive agreement with Coke.

Rick Gillis, a vice president in Coca-Cola's west central region, based in Dallas, said his company likes to support positive youth programs, like PSA. "It's been a wonderful partnership for both them and us," said Gillis, whose sons play basketball, soccer and baseball at PSA. He coaches basketball.

Factoring out the Stars' share of the debt, PSA owes about \$5 million on the first building, Mary Margaret Taylor said. Wadley said a primary goal is to pay off that debt. Then, PSA could cut its participation fees substantially, he said.

"What an endowment we've done for the kids," Wadley said.

E-mail gjacobson@dallasnews.com

Second in a Sunday series on the money involved in youth sports

Section 8-Health and Youth Sports Development

NCAA Recruiting Young Audience for Beer Ads

7/28/2005

Press Release

Center for Science in the Public Interest
Alcohol Policies Project
1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20009
cspinet.org/booze

CSPI Says Alcohol Advertising Incompatible with Outreach Efforts that Target Kids as Young as 6



The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is actively building brand loyalty among young people in order to get them interested in sports and to boost the attractiveness of NCAA telecasts to advertisers. But those recruitment efforts may deliver more and more young viewers to Anheuser-Busch and other beer marketers which advertise heavily on college sports. In a report released July 27, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), which has been waging a Campaign for Alcohol-Free Sports TV, said the NCAA's otherwise-admirable youth outreach efforts should continue, but the beer ads on its telecasts should not.

"The NCAA can play a positive role in society by getting kids interested in athletics and physical activity, and by getting kids excited at the prospect of continuing their education at a college or university," said CSPI alcohol policies project director George A. Hacker. "But beer advertising is totally inconsistent with those youth recruitment efforts. We're all for the NCAA expanding interest in its brand. But it shouldn't be serving up potential underage drinkers to Anheuser-Busch and other brewers."

The NCAA executive committee will consider the issue of alcohol advertising at its meeting in Indianapolis on August 4. Current NCAA policy purports to exclude those ads that "do not appear to be in the best interests of higher education." The policy prohibits alcohol ads but makes a specific exemption for beer.

"What kind of crazy policy would promote beer drinking to young NCAA fans, among others, when drinking problems--violence, unwanted and unprotected sex, alcohol poisoning, school dropouts, and property damage--are the most pressing issues on college campuses?" asked Hacker. "You don't need a college degree to understand that hawking beer to young fans is not in the best interests of higher education."

Each year, 500,000 students suffer alcohol-related injuries, including 70,000 students who are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape. Some 1,400 college students die each year in alcohol-related deaths.

In 2003, beer advertisers spent \$52.2 million on televised college sports. Bud Light led the way with \$11.4 million, followed by Miller Lite, Budweiser, and Coors Light. That year the NCAA tournament concentrated \$21.1 million in beer ads into three weeks of games watched by more than 6 million children and teens.

"While beer advertisers claim that they're targeting only consumers of legal drinking age, the NCAA is reaching out aggressively to widen its audience of teens," Hacker said. "Some of its programs are designed to attract kids as young as six. Again, we'd have no problem with those programs, if only they weren't drawing millions of children and teens to clever and seductive enticements to drink beer."

CSPI's Campaign for Alcohol Free Sports TV has aligned some 228 NCAA-member schools against the current policy. One of the coaches who leads the Campaign for Alcohol-Free Sports TV is Dean Smith, who coached the University of North Carolina men's basketball teams from 1961 to 1997, including two NCAA championship teams. "We need to understand that children start following athletics at the age of nine or ten," Smith said. "These beer ads are highly appealing to them. When beer companies say their ads aren't directed at young people, I find it hard to believe."

The NCAA runs at least 10 different youth recruitment programs at the national level, including a kid-friendly web site with games; an all-ages fan festival called Hoop City; a take-a-kid-to-a-game program, and a cartoonish mascot named J.J. Jumper. The NCAA promotes sportsmanship through contests and classroom materials, and runs various education and mentoring programs geared to young people.

CSPI had previously raised concerns about the NCAA's coziness with Anheuser-Busch, notably several large donations the brewer gave in the 1990s, and the hiring of a former Anheuser-Busch marketing executive to oversee the NCAA's educational programs. CSPI said that when the NCAA executive committee's review of alcohol policy is conducted in August, it should reflect the values of its member schools.