

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dear Players and Parents:*

Welcome to our Fall 2007 season! For those of you who are new, we welcome you to the Pinelanders Family. We have served thousands of children during our 36-year existence and we hope you have a very enjoyable experience. To those returning players and families, welcome back—we hope you have had an enjoyable summer and are ready for another exciting and fun season!

We apologize for the delay in starting our season, but we're delighted that the fields, which tend to become a desert late in the Spring season, will finally have an irrigation system that will help us to maintain them properly.

We have another great season planned, with many key dates shown on our Web site. I encourage you to check it often for updates, especially when we are anticipating inclement weather. Other key dates and events are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter—for example: our mid-season **Coaches' Meeting and Team Pictures**. **Trophy Night** is planned for **Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>** at Middle School North (unfortunately the weather at that time of the year does not allow us to do it at the fields); this event is when we recognize all of our players.

We have been disappointed in the drop in on-time registrations we received this season; this does not allow us to plan properly and provide the best possible experience for your kids. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to put teams together, especially getting coach volunteers and ordering the correct number of shirts. We've also seen a big drop in older players this season that has forced us to consider realigning certain divisions to afford an opportunity for all who signed up to play. We hope this re-alignment meets with everyone's expectations, and we are confident that it will. Please insure that you sign up early for each season and tell your friends to do the same. Beginning in the Spring season we will have an absolute cut-off date after which we will not accept any more registrations, so we have time to plan. Your anticipated cooperation is very much appreciated.

As always, we are in need of volunteers in all categories. All Board members serve as volunteers and just can't run an organization this large without your help. When you signed up your child you committed to volunteer as a condition of membership. For the first time this season we have deferred assignment of players from families that did not volunteer during the Spring season, and this will be our policy going forward. How can you help, you may ask... there are many opportunities each weekend at the fields, and occasionally some that can be carried out in your own time. Please watch for the information and sign up as early as you can—**WE NEED YOU!**

We will once again have Board elections in November—if you are interested in running for an office or an appointed slot please let Kim Brown know ([Kim.Brown@pinelanders.com](mailto:Kim.Brown@pinelanders.com)). We have been working to bring more people on-board in the active management of the club to make it run even more efficiently than it does today, and to get more folks involved. If you have an interest in getting more involved, would like things changed, or are just interested in serving your community, please let any Board member know... we would love to have you, and we have lots of committees that need active volunteers.

I hope you all have a very enjoyable season, but please remember that our main goal is to teach the game of soccer through skills development, with sportsmanship being paramount, **not** winning games by overwhelming scores. We all need to be fair and let the children play and encourage them with **positive** comments. Too often, we hear comments from parents and coaches that are extremely negative, and we will not tolerate it! Remember, let the coaches coach and let the refs referee and ensure the safety of your child through enforcement of the laws of the game. We are all here to have fun and provide for the best positive experience for our children.

See you all at the fields!

Sincerely,

— Ken Kinelski, President

## TEAM CLINICS

We are fortunate to have a very active Education Committee whose members last season organized mid-week team clinics aimed at improving the skills of coaches and players. The committee plans to repeat these events this season—please watch for announcements, and encourage your coach to sign your team up for these opportunities.

## FROM THE SECRETARY'S NOTEBOOK

### Team Pictures

Team pictures will be taken on **Monday, October 8<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>**. We have a professional photographer come in each season to take pictures of the kids, and the photos are available for purchase in a number of packages. You can get a picture to keep on your coffee table or desk; wallet-sized photos to send to grandparents or aunts or uncles; photos in a keychain, on a trading card, or on a banner.

Teams will be assigned a specific time for their appointment.

Watch for an e-mail from Lynn Hoenig with more details as we get closer.

### PinelandersWear

Our popular line of *PinelandersWear* apparel will be back this season—look for a table near the big trailer on selected weekends. You can buy t-shirts, sweat shirts, sleep pants, hats, and jackets—all with the Pinelanders logo.

Don't see your size at the table? In most cases, an item can be ordered for you—and it will be here within a couple of weeks. Contact Lynn Hoenig ([Lynn.Hoenig@pinelanders.com](mailto:Lynn.Hoenig@pinelanders.com)) for more information.

### Parking at Hoffman Fields

As always, we ask you to park courteously and safely at Hoffman Fields. There are two parking lots at the complex. The main parking lot is located to the left of the brick building, as you face it from the road. A smaller lot is located to the right. Always park only in marked space, and please never block in another vehicle.

Parking is very limited. If you can't find a space, please drive to the Memorial Middle School and park in the lot at the rear of the building. It's just a short walk to the gate in the fence between the school and our fields.

Do **not** park on the grass in front of the brick (Revenue Administration) building, or **you will almost certainly get a ticket**. Never park at the Social Services building across the street; it's a very dangerous crossing point.

### Board Election

Pinelanders is an all-volunteer organization administered by a 20-member Board of Directors. Twelve of the Board members are elected to two-year terms, and they appoint the other eight to one-year terms. Half of the two-year seats are up for re-election each year. The election is held at Fall Trophy Day in November. The Board is always looking for younger members to help run the club—and bring in some new ideas. We need you! If you think you can help, please consider running for a two-year elected seat in November, or applying for appointment to a one-year seat in January. You can contact Board Secretary Bob Hoenig for more information.

### Coaches' F-License Class

Pinelanders will be hosting a New Jersey Youth Soccer F-License class for coaches on **Friday, January 11<sup>th</sup>**, and **Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008**.

All coaches are required to obtain a license. Our club gives coaches two seasons to meet this requirement.

The class runs 9 hours (3 hours on Friday, 6 on Saturday). There's a \$30 fee. The F-License is good indefinitely.

Registration for this class will open soon. Coaches who have already completed two seasons, or who are entering their second season, are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to obtain their F-License locally. Contact class coordinator Bob Hoenig for more information.

## Stay In Touch

A club the size of Pinelanders depends on good communications to run smoothly. We have Board members on duty at the fields on every game day, but they can't be everywhere at once. If you see something that concerns you, or if you have a problem or a question while you're at our fields, please contact the Board Member on Duty – or any other Board member at the facility. We can't address a situation unless we know about it. The sooner we find out about any situation, the faster we can deal with it.

Communication, as they say, is a two-way street. You'll be hearing from us often. Most e-mails you get will be from Jem Treadwell, our Registrar; Ken Kinelski, our club President; or from me. Coaches can expect to hear from Commissioner Mario Guarino as well. We also ask your coaches to stay in touch with you. They'll tell you about practice times and locations, game schedules, and special events like Picture Night and Trophy Day. If the weather forces us to cancel or reschedule games, you'll hear from Ken or me; and from your coach.

If you need to contact the club, here are some key e-mail contacts:

- **President** Ken Kinelski [Ken.Kinelski@pinelanders.com](mailto:Ken.Kinelski@pinelanders.com)
- **Vice President** Lynn Hoenig [Lynn.Hoenig@pinelanders.com](mailto:Lynn.Hoenig@pinelanders.com)
- **Secretary** Bob Hoenig [Bob.Hoenig@pinelanders.com](mailto:Bob.Hoenig@pinelanders.com)
- **Registrar** Jem Treadwell [Jem@pinelanders.com](mailto:Jem@pinelanders.com)
- **Commissioner** Mario Guarino [Mario.Guarino@pinelanders.com](mailto:Mario.Guarino@pinelanders.com)

Not sure who to contact? E-mail me, and I'll make sure the proper Board member gets your note.

—Bob Hoenig, Board Secretary

## VOLUNTEER REPORT

We're now entering our second season using our new volunteer management system, in which every member family has a traffic light status:

- **Red**, meaning the family hasn't yet volunteered for anything;
- **Yellow**, meaning that they have volunteered but haven't yet completed the activity; or
- **Green**, meaning that they've completed an activity.

By the end of last season around 100 out of 700 member families had not completed an activity, and were in danger of having their children suspended in the next season. I tried hard to get all of these families to help out between the seasons, and the number is now down to 43—a pretty reasonable number by many standards, but still not acceptable, because it means that 43 families reneged on their promises to help out while the other 657 families did all the work. As you saw in Ken's article, we **have** suspended several players this season—that's something we certainly never wanted to do, but we said all season that that's what we would do.

This season we'd like to see **zero** families in the red zone!

We learned a few things last season, and we'll be improving the system in a few ways. Here are a few of the things we're doing:

- We'll only open up activities a few weeks ahead of time. Last season a many members signed up early for late-season slots—leaving the early weeks unfilled. So we'll start by opening three weeks, and as the early slots get filled we'll open more weeks.
- We've eliminated the two-hour snack-bar supervisor slots. Now all snack bar slots are one hour, but we'd like to make sure that we have at least one experienced person in each slot. So you'll see slots marked for *veterans* and *rookies*—if you've worked in the snack bar before and you know the ropes please take a vet's slot if there's one open.
- On-line teams roster pages now show the volunteer status of each member family, so that coaches and team parents can encourage their members to help out.
- Last season several families withdrew their children without me knowing, and subsequently ignored our e-mail messages reminding

them that they needed to volunteer. That led us to write some new rules into the policy. In short, if your child drops you **must** let the Registrar (me!) know, and late-season withdrawals do not change your status from red if you haven't done anything. We ask you to volunteer for something as early as possible in the season, and don't ignore e-mail messages. If they're wrong, please respond so we can fix the error.

- We'll try to contact people who need it by phone earlier in the season, and we'll try to make better facilities available at the fields for sign-up.

Several people have asked me why we don't allow our members to pay a fee instead of working, as some other clubs do. This is something that has been discussed many times, but it simply doesn't make sense. Here are a few reasons:

- The objective is to spread the work fairly across our membership. Fining people or allowing to buy their way out of their obligation doesn't accomplish that—in fact it makes matter worse, as it reduces the number of people available to help. And of course it means that people who can't afford to spend that money would end up doing all the work, which is just not fair. If we needed more money we would raise the fee or hold a fund-raiser, but we don't—we need to get the work done.
- Somebody would have to administer the system—taking money up front, refunding it (or tearing up the check) when the work is done, and dealing with disputes. This is a waste of time and effort—why should anyone have to do all that just because some members don't want to put a few minutes of their time into helping out?

Our new policy is available on our Web page—it's a bit long, because it has to cover a lot of different situations to be fair to everyone. But please read it, and let me know if you have questions or you spot any typos.

You should rest assured that we're **not** trying to make life difficult for anyone. Read the policy and you'll see that it includes an allowance for families that have genuine problems involving health or other family emergencies. We did give waivers to a number of families last season, simply because it was the right thing to do. If you have a genuine reason for a waiver (or you know of someone else who does) you just need to let us know.

But we need to be clear that we **won't** give a waiver just because you tell us that you don't have time—some people did ask, and we consistently refused. Last season we offered a broad range of activities to enable people to do things in their own time or away from the fields if they needed to. Some took them, and others ignored them until it was too late. All we ask is that you consider your circumstances right now, and consider what suits you. Be creative if you want to: look for things that can help the club. But don't just watch those "opportunity" e-mail messages go by, or you may be disappointed next time you register with us.

And don't assume that everything takes an hour. Snack bar slots are about the only activities that are timed. Grounds setup and cleanup generally take less; other things can often be done in less time. We're not looking to micro-manage anything, and we'll be glad of your ideas and enthusiasm.

As always, we thank you for your support!

— Jem Treadwell

## PLEASE KEEP YOUR INFO CURRENT

If you've moved or changed your phone number, or if you aren't getting e-mail from us, please check your information on your My Pinelanders "My Family" page. Please use the Change buttons to let me know of any changes or errors.

— Jem Treadwell