

**Central Alberta Soccer Association**  
**TECHINCAL/BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
(Draft only not ratified)

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 13, 2024

**LOCATION:** Virtual

Meeting Called to Order: 7:05 pm

Roll Call taken – 16 of 17 members present.

**PRESENT:**

**Bashaw Soccer Club**- Michelle Hilderman, **Bentley Minor Soccer** – Michelle Lundy,

**Blackfalds**- Lyndsey Greer **Camrose & District Soccer** – Glen Williams, Scott Harvey

**Clive Soccer Club**: Jake Kallos, **Innisfail** – Amy Adam

**Lacombe Soccer Club**: Cecelia Mena-Metro, Jeff Mason, Jacqueline Belbin

**Penhold Minor Soccer** – Scott McNabb, **Ponoka Minor Soccer** – Matt McArthur, Christoph Dittmar

**Rimbey Minor Soccer** – Christine Beerman, Kimberly Rode **Rocky Knights Soccer**– Olivia Atwater

**SC Central** – Kobi Okoye **Spruce View Minor Soccer** – Rolf von Bentham,

**Stettler Minor Soccer** – C.J. Oprea, **Sylvan Lake Blizzard** – Julie Maplethorpe, Tammy Muhlbeier

**Wetaskiwin Soccer Club**: Simon Kelm, Les Sherrer

**EXECUTIVE-STAFF:**

**CASA President** – Jon Mulder **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President /Technical Director**– Lonny Behm

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**- Alvaro Pina **Treasurer**- Darla Preston, **Director** – Rob McArthur

**Executive Director** – Tammy Olson, **DRA** – Philip Ignacio **Past-President** – Tracy Everett

**ABSENT:** Central Alberta Men’s League

1. Review Minutes of Technical Planning Meeting-February 23, 2023  
Errors or corrections – Bentley Representative – Michelle Lundy not Juanita Bender.  
*“Bentley (M. Lundy) motioned that the minutes be accepted as presented with the correction. Seconded by Bashaw (M. Hilderman). CARRIED*
2. Business Arising from minutes of last meeting. No Business from the previous Technical Meeting.
3. Technical Program Presentation (L. Behm-Technical Director)

**A. U9 Development League**

Indoor U9 Development Program was a success with 5 teams. Will be ending with a U9 Festival at the Dome March 3, with Alberta Soccer Technical staff. Outdoor U9 Development Program will continue. It runs independently from associations with house league. Associations with numerous teams in their house league can create a team(s) to add to the program. (\$100/team). 2023 Outdoor Development League was successful, the few glitches that were noted will be fixed moving into this season. We will continue with, no tryouts, no stats, no standings.

Please register Gender specific so that, if possible, Clubs can create Girl’s teams wherever possible.

- Boys’ division, Girls division, Co-ed. We will create zones for minimal travel. For clubs who have their development teams participating in House League as well to ensure adequate team numbers
- We can play games on the weekends festival style where mini games are played and teams play multiple games against multiple communities.  
CONS - REF COST, HOME GAMES LOWERED, HOW TO SPLIT REF COSTS, MINI REF DEVELOPMENT could be a positive if we can get on the same page.
- Communities register House League and Development League separate.  
CON: we don’t want to decimate associations program U9DL is to help enhance.
- We make a tentative schedule, coaches contact each other “OK” the schedule, or reschedule amongst themselves.

Proposed Game Formats: 6v6 vs 7v7 - CSA Standard is 5v5 with GK or 4v4 NO GK

Discussion on format preference

Technical Director (L. Behm) made a motion "The U9 Development League will be played on the 6 v 6 format" Seconded by Bentley (M. Lundy). **CARRIED**

### **B. Travel League Divisions (U11 TO U17-19)**

U11 - U19 PLEASE REGISTER GENDER SPECIFIC we can create a co-ed league if numbers warrant it. There are no coed provincials. Provincials are gender specific co-ed teams will play in the boy's division. We want to ensure that our girl's have teams to play on specifically geared to them. This is a key in increasing our Girl's registration numbers. Whenever possible please assign female coaches and assistant coaches. This is also a key component.

- U11 Division

Leagues are either Boys or Girls, please try for gender specific teams, this will help with player development and long-term player participation. If needed a co-ed league may be set up.

- U11 8v8 (7 and a keeper) max roster size should be 12-15 - CSA Standard is 7v7

CASA will offer Boys Tier 4A and Tier 4B as we did last season.

CASA would like to try to also expand the Girls Division to include Tier 4A and Tier 4B. Our numbers have grown in this division for a potential division.

CASA will also offer Coed League where required and viable.

- CASA has successfully offered Tier 3 in the past, U11 to U15. Rebuilding this program is important to our future. It offers within CASA better opportunities for more highly skilled players without having to leave us for another District. If we create a tier 3 program, there could be more parity at tier 4.
- Concerns that CASA teams would not be at the same level as SC Central and RDCSA if they joined us. It is not Tier 1 or 2 teams that will be sent but those who could not make those teams. RDCSA U11 Boys were not any more skilled than the CASA teams.
- It can be part of your registration process as well for those with more than one team – ask for interest in a higher level of play.

U11 - CASA United make a team(s) early and have players play in their Local Club Tier 3 or 4 league/community and then play a couple tournaments during the CASA season. Once CASA season is over team can continue to play tournaments.

- U13 Division

UPCOMING POTENTIAL GAME FORMAT CHANGE 11v11 to 9v9 - More discussion needed when more information is available, globally best for the game and player development, what does it look like for CASA Communities.

- Requirements when the change occurs: new sized nets, different field sizes, new rules.
- We are working with the Alberta Soccer Technical team to ensure that when this happens is as smooth a transition as possible.
- When this change occurs Leagues can still run with 11 v 11. Districts can run their leagues in a way that works best for them, however once the change happens Provincial competitions will be held as 9 v 9.
- There are several logistical issues with a change such as this. For example, Clubs that have only 12 players, this may be the perfect change, however if you have 20 players there is not enough to create two teams so we end up with inadequate numbers for two teams. These are all things to consider.
- We will have more information following the Alberta Soccer AGM next week.

CASA proposes with adequate registration that we can now offer Tier 3 Boys in U13. There will be these divisions at U13 as well Tier 4 Boys, Tier 4 Girls, and Tier 4 CO-ED

Concerns that Clubs who create Tier 3 teams will have their Tier 4 teams not as competitive against Clubs who have not created Tier 3. It could mean losing players into the next season.

The hope is to also have CASA United teams at this age group for this summer.

- U15 Division

The following Divisions will be offered, Tier 4 Boys/Coed - 6 (some coed teams) and Tier 4 Girls  
OPTION FOR A CASA UNITED TEAM(s)

- U17/U19 Division

The following divisions will be offered:

U17-U19 Boys/Co-ed Tier 4

U17-U19 Girls Tier 4

- We have been working in conjunction with other Rural Districts surrounding us to ensure that these divisions are successful. We have discussed possible creating weekend double-headers if needed to ensure there is a League.
- All the Rural Districts are facing the same situation as we are.
- One of the pressures for this age group is playing in a League that has two games per week, this can lead to lower registrations, therefore struggling to create that league.
- The High School league in Central Alberta can also hinder the number of players. They start at the same time but finish the first week of June. Players struggle to play both, although some do. There is no restriction for playing on both a High School League team and a Community League team. We are open to scheduling around the high school games as well.

OPTION FOR A CASA UNITED TEAM(s)

### C. Player and Coach Pathways

- CASA UNITED – Is a Summer Tournament Program with players recommended by their local Club Coaches to participate. It does not in anyway affect their standing with their Club team. For 2024 we will once again have Tier 2 with potential to have a Tier 1 group, open to having as many groups form different age groups as we can.
  - Need volunteers, contact our Technical Lead, Alvaro Pina at [casavp2@central-alta-soccer.ca](mailto:casavp2@central-alta-soccer.ca)
  - 2023 was a very successful season, we had both Boys and Girls teams at U11 who attended tournaments and exhibition games. They played and trained until September.
  - Some players who were recommended were never contacted. L. Behm will investigate this situation. For 2024 the plan is to have better communication, with the Club coaches for their recommendation of players to participate in the program and start the process earlier.
- SUMMER CONTINUATION LEAGUE - We have been trying to get this off the ground the past 2 years. It allows players and communities that wish to play more soccer an opportunity to keep playing.
  - This may be in a league format, or possibly a few festival style tournaments on weekends.
  - May be modified to allow a maximum number of participants and communities.
  - Smaller sided games, 4v4, 5v5 etc. would be incorporated.
  - Offer a 2<sup>nd</sup> Summer registration period – Players could register through CASA for a “Clinic or Camp”. Any player who registers for Spring Soccer is eligible to play until the end of September.
  - There would need to be a nominal team fee to cover the cost of referees and or field rentals if applicable.
  - Recommended that clubs bring this possibility up at their AGM; s or as part of their registration so parents may plan.
  - Wetaskiwin (L. Sherrer). The Wetaskiwin club automatically extends their season with registration, it is optional for players, but ensures everyone knows and is able tot participate. He recommends that it made more clear what Clubs would like to participate so games can be organized.
- CASA Summer Games Participants
  - Our Zones, which consists of CASA and RDCSA players sent to teams to the Alberta Summer Games, U14 Boys and Girls.

- RDCSA was the Zone Rep this year, it alternates for every Summer Games between CASA and RDCSA. There were many logistical problems this season. CASA will be the Rep next time and we hope to have more representation both on the Player and Coach side.
- There were 7 CASA Boys, and 7 CASA Girls participating, however except for two boys and 4 girls all the players were from the Renegades program. All the Coaches except for Lonny were from the Renegades as well.
- The coaching obstacle we have always faced is that we have not had enough CASA Coaches with a C-License. In 2023 we did certify 2 Male Coaches and 3 Female Coaches at the C-License level so that should help in the future.

- Player Call-Ups

This is very important for a few reasons. Allowing a younger player to play up an age division. (full explanation is attached presentation). This is an incredible opportunity for players with higher skills to receive a competition level that might be better suited to them. It also ensures that a team who may be short players has adequate players for games.

- Question – “Can Tier 4 players of the same age group be called up to play Tier 3?” The answer is yes that is considered a higher level of play – please refer to the CASA Rules and Regulations for the full rules.
- Question – “If we have a policy that with board approval, can a player permanently be assigned to an older age group?” The answer is yes, however you must be careful as to the number you allow, as the more underage players on a team, the less likely the team will be able to commit. It is a common practice to combine age groups to create teams in this manner where registration numbers are low. Players can only move up “ONE” age group. For example, U11 to U13 or U13 to U15, if a League is a combined League U15/U17 a U13 player cannot play in that division because of the disparity in the age of the players.

- Coach Education and Player Development Spring Sessions

**Formal Coach Education** - Alberta Soccer Association, and Canada Soccer Association certification. We have piloted where players show up and have a skills session, once coaches are done with their formal classroom session, we go to the field and use those players for the on-field portion.

- Our Technical Director will once again be setting up field sessions within CASA for Coaches to receive their full Certification.
- In 2023 we hosted more field sessions than any other District in Alberta. ASA has recommended that we try to centralize these clinics as much as possible. The other issue is that we only have one instructor, and we have 16 Youth Clubs needed these certifications. It is impossible for him to hold them in every community.
- If we have more than 20 Coaches registered for a session, an additional Coach Educator may be assigned by Alberta Soccer
- Spring sessions will be set up well in advance of the confirmed dates.

**Informal Coach Education**- CAVALRY Skills Center, CASA player clinics we have been offering informal coach education, which has been well received.

- This was a successful program during the winter season, where coaches attended with the players at our Player Development Sessions and assisted in the program. A great learning experience.
- When Player Clinics are run, they are posted on the CASA Website under Player Development, registration is open to players and Coaches.
- Each Club needs to submit the name of a Technical Lead from their community. The person Lonny contacts regarding Coaching. He hopes to have virtual meetings with the technical leads. Better communication is always an asset.

Details for all levels of Coach certification and education in Appendix A

- Summer Camp – CASA hopes to offer a Summer Camp for players either in July or August. Please stay tuned for details on that. There has been plenty of feedback requesting more opportunities for the kids during the summer months.
- Cavalry FC Partnership- Cavalry FC is Alberta’s Professional Men’s Soccer Team playing in the Canadian Premier League (CPL)
  - Cavalry FC hosted Spring training last February at the Dome, over two days. It was well received. Over 200 players from CASA and RDCSA participated in the training. They were given access to players and Coaches. They played an intersquad game as well.
  - They are committed to Grassroots Soccer
  - Open to players 9-14 at all levels of play
  - Includes 16 training sessions, Cavalry Fc kit (T-Shirt and shorts, for additional sessions which include Sport Science, video analysis, Pathway Club Program and Player visit. 20% discount on Cavalry FC Home games in Calgary
  - Coaches are welcome to attend.
  - Opportunity for young athletes to experience Cavalry FC and develop core principals.
  - Hosted by Ponoka Soccer

Closing Remarks- Technical Director (L. Behm) says “We need to start applauding good play from the opposition. CREATE A POSITIVE SAFE EXPERIENCE AND ATMOSPHERE FOR PLAYERS, WE NEED TO GET AWAY FROM UNHEALTHY RIVALRIES AND GRUDGES. We have no idea what players are going through or coming from, their play may dictate their life etc. Let’s be role models and mentors. WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR SOCCER ECOSYSTEM - parents, board members, coaches, kids, and REFS.”

- We should consider Referee Liaisons at games. They are there to keep an eye on unruly fans. The referee has the right to remove unruly fans, but it always good that they have someone to back them up.

4. Macron Partnership – CASA entered an “Official Teamwear Partnership” with Macron Pacific for uniforms and equipment. There is a direct link to their site on the CASA Website.
  - We believe that this partnership will be beneficial to CASA as it is a one stop shop where we can purchase jerseys, apparel and soccer equipment which will be shipped from one source.
  - Macron has become a very popular brand within Alberta since the inception of the CPL, they are also the third highest kit provider in Europe behind Nike and Adidas.
  - There is no obligation for any club to use Macron, but we thought it would be beneficial to have a partner who will look out for our association’s needs, while offering very competitive pricing on all products soccer related.

#### 5. Referee Program

The Search is still on for:

Club Referee Mentors – they do not need to be active referees; former referees are great mentors Referee Committee Members.

CASA is growing at an amazing rate; we can no longer be just five people running this entire organization with only one full-time staff member. Reach out to retired referees in your community and others, CASA will be forming other committees as well.

Please contact the DRA – Philip Ignacio and Head Referee and assistant DRA Tracy Everett, with names for both

- Any club wishing to host Certification Clinics please contact the CASA office to get these set up.
- We also need a host for Refreshers required for all Youth and District Level Referees, every year.
- Tammy has emailed all last years referees asking them to confirm if they will be returning. Request that Clubs do the same.
- Clubs, please send a list of your current Referee Pay structure to the CASA office so the on-line assigning system can be updated.

- If you would like one of our Head Referees to attend your Club meeting and discuss Referee Recruitment, please contact us with the request.
- Online Social Media campaign for recruitment will continue. Career nights at High Schools are a good opportunity, credits are often offered at the high school level advertising locally. You do not need to be a Soccer Player or Coach to become a referee.
- Congratulations to Ainsley McArthur, a 15-year-old referee from Ponoka who has had amazing Officiating opportunities including AYSL (Alberta Youth Soccer League – Tier 1). See Facebook Post.
- DRA (P. Ignacio) requests that teams nominate someone within that team, parent player or coach to take a referee course. Invaluable knowledge for teams to have. We cannot have games without referees.

6. Deadlines / Registration Procedures

- Registrations need to be Gender Specific for U9 and up. This is in alignment with SQS. A major factor for losing girls is having only Coed teams. Coed Teams MAY be formed when needed. We will be reaching out to neighboring Rural Districts to create leagues for the oldest age groups.
- **April 1** – Pre-Declarations for League Play – this does not mean you must stop registration. This is just to give us a preliminary view of teams for planning purposes.
- **April 22** – Final League Declarations- U9 Development to U19
- **May 6** – Tier 4 League Starts
- **June 21-23** – Tier 4 Provincial Qualifier – U11 Challenge and U9 Development Season end Fun Fest  
A host is needed for this event. A minimum of 3 full size fields, 3 – U11 fields – 3 U9 fields are required to host.  
All information will be sent out from the office.

7. Additional information

- a. Question – We will be splitting genders starting at U9? Yes, CASA will do their best to make separate groups, Boys, Girls, and Coed. There is such a large drop off from U9 to U11 especially in the girl's division. Will break League into Zones to limit travel.
- b. Question – If girls prefer Coed are they allowed to register on a Boy's team? Yes, we will not stop that registration. We are only requesting that you create your registration system to separate the genders but allow when requested for girls to play on a Boys team. Our goal is to increase female participation, at one time we had full leagues of girls, now by the time we get to U15 we have one or two teams, that identifies a problem.
- c. Thank you everyone for all your hard work on SQS. If you need any assistance, Tammy is available to work with you. Remember not every single Coach needs to be certified. Head coach in all groups needs to be full certified. Everyone needs Respect in sport and a Police Check
- d. If you wish to be a part of our committees please reach out to our Director Rob McArthur, Referees – Philip Ignacio or Tracy Everett. Technical – Lonny Behm Everyone's email addresses are on the website.
- e. The Technical presentation will be forwarded to everyone.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:18 pm