

THE EYE OF THE STORM

PONOKA STORM NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 | 2026



TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

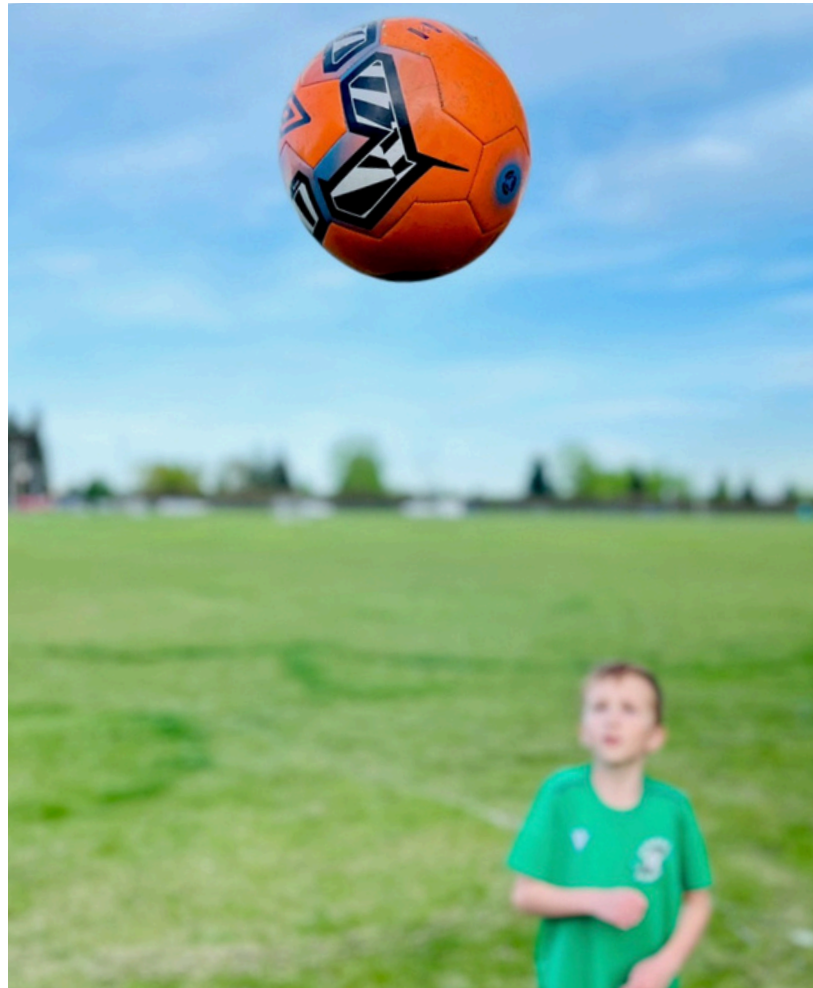
BALL BLOW UP

2026 Ball Blow Up:
Join us on April 11 at our Lucas Heights Fields at 1 p.m.
Let's 'pump it up, pump the jam...'
We mean, pump some balls!
The more hands, the quicker it goes! We'd love for you to get these balls rolling so our soccer players can 'kick it' on the field



BOTTLE DRIVE

We invite everyone to start collecting bottles from friends and family and set them aside in preparation for our upcoming event!
On May 19, 2026, we'd love for you to join us for the door-to-door bottle drive starting at the Lucas pitches. A table will be set up to provide you your map for the drive. While we'd really appreciate your participation in the door-to-door effort, if you're unable to attend, you can still contribute by dropping off your bottles at our trailer on-site.



THE OUTDOOR SEASON IS UPON US!

We are kicking off the 2026 Outdoor Season with many of our teams hitting the pitch mid-April.

Our programs will be starting a little earlier this year (weather permitting) with U5, U7, and U9 starting the week of April 20th.

For U5 we anticipate 8 sessions, and 16 sessions for U7 ending the week of June 8. If you haven't received an email from Temple, our board director, detailing start dates and season details, please check your junk mail, or email admin@ponokasoccer.ca

FUNDRAISING

We're thrilled to kick off this year's fundraising efforts for new soccer equipment.

The \$50 fundraising fee each participant paid at registration contributes to this cause.

Stay tuned - the date for the raffle ticket pickup will be announced soon.

See PAGE 3 for more fundraising information.



President's message

by Lonny Behm

In our soccer world, the end of Easter weekend means we're getting very close to the start of another exciting outdoor season. We'd like to thank all of you who have registered your child to play – we're looking forward to a fantastic year ahead.

We are still looking to fill a few grassroots coaching positions. It's one of the best ways to spend time with your child, learning and enjoying the game together. If you're interested, we would love for you to join our team. As mentioned in our newsletter, there are some great opportunities to get involved.

With this being a World Cup year and Canada being one of the host nations, there will be exciting activities and events happening. Be sure to keep an eye on our social media channels for updates and more information.

If you're new to the game, I want to welcome you to our soccer family, and if you've been with us, thank you for your continued support. We are excited to build another memorable season together, both on and off the field.

We can't wait to get back out on the field!



Get in touch with us!



@ponokastormsoccer



admin@ponokasoccer.ca



Ponoka Soccer



www.ponokasoccer.ca

FUNDRAISING [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Stay tuned - the date for the raffle ticket pickup will be announced soon. The best part? You keep all the proceeds from your ticket sales! If you prefer, you can put your own name on the tickets for a chance to win. Ticket Return Date: Please remember to return your sold tickets on May 19 at the Lucas parking lot and attend our bottle drive.

Extra Ticket Packets Available: If you'd like to sell more tickets, additional ticket packets are available upon request. Please note that any money from extra ticket packets must be returned along with your tickets on May 19, 2026.

The big raffle draw will take place on June 1, 2026, with the following prizes:

- * Prize 1: Paddleboard, Cooler with liquor, and \$1,000 cash
- * Prize 2: \$1,000 cash

Let's rally together and make these fundraisers a huge success! For more information regarding the fundraisers, please contact Kate Johnson at dux_k@hotmail.com or call/text 403-783-9967.



WORLD CUP EXCITEMENT

Ponoka Minor Soccer Association is looking at hosting festivities that the whole Ponoka community can take part in to coincide with the 2026 World Cup.

Board members are currently in talks with our amazing recreation partners at the Town of Ponoka.

This could include watch parties when Team Canada plays and a "community mini World Cup" where our community members play three versus three in a fun tournament.

The World Cup is June 11 to July 19 and we want to garner the excitement and bring soccer to the forefront right here in Ponoka.

More information to come but plans are in the works to host events that bring that soccer spirit alive in our community.



STORM at Provincials: Great experience

It was a monumental showing of Ponoka Storm teams in the Alberta Soccer Provincial Championship March 13-15, with Ponoka's U13 Girls Tier 2 taking home a bronze medal.

"So proud of these girls," said Coach Holly Portfield, noting that this was a first experience for this group at Tier 2 Provincials.

The U15 Boys Tier 4 placed ninth in the province, and the U17 Girls Tier 1 placed sixth in the province, which are fantastic results at a provincial tournament.

"Overall, it was a fantastic experience and something the players and our community can be very proud of," Coach Lonny Behm said.

In addition to the great showing of teams at Provincials, Rob McArthur, along with Keane McArthur, refereed at the tournament. Keane was the youngest referee at Provincials this year.

"Keane showed up his old man," Rob said, noting that it was a huge deal and great accomplishment for Keane to be refereeing at such a high level.

U9 fun on the run!

For players under the age of 12, many of whom are lacing up their cleats for the first time, our goal at Ponoka Soccer is simple: Get our kids to fall in love with the game.

That is why at the U9 level we are modelling what Soccer Canada has put forth at the FUNdamentals stage.

This stage focuses on a player's ability of getting lots of touches on the ball, fun competitions which motivate players to use different techniques, and opportunities to make fast decisions, with plenty of positive feedback.

This year, Ponoka Soccer has already signed up two U9 teams (one girls team and one boys team) to the Juanita Bender U9 Memorial Soccer Tournament in Bentley on Saturday, May 23.

For those players who are eager to participate in tournaments, a sign-up sheet will be posted at the Lucas Heights field at a later date and will be at a first come first serve basis.

Please note that joining a tournament comes with an additional fee for each participant. This will also depend on qualified coaches available. There will also be further tournament and game-centric opportunities for our U9's as the season progresses.

With the concentration of some of these opportunities, in combination with our FUNdamentals focused experience, we trust that our U9's will have double the fun this outdoor season!



STORM APPAREL ONLINE STORE OPENING SOON!



Want to get the latest Ponoka Storm looks?

Our TEAM STORE opens on April 8th! Look for the TEAM STORE tab on our website (www.ponokasoccer.ca) and you can order an assortment of soccer swag! From hats, jackets, hoodies, pants, backpacks, the TEAM STORE has it all. Our team store only stays open for ordering for 10 days so don't wait to order your swag when the store opens on April 8th!



We will have approximately 20 referees in Ponoka this Outdoor Season.

This number has steadily grown over the past five years.

"Our young (and old!) officials are finding confidence in their ability and knowledge of the game," said Matt McArthur, Ponoka Soccer's refing coordinator.

"We have great mentors for our equally great youth officials who are doing a fantastic job."



Most age groups for Outdoor Soccer need appropriate footwear--soccer cleats. Kids at the U5/U7 level can get away with outdoor running shoes but soccer cleats (not football cleats) are advisable.



All of our players are required to have shin pads. Unfortunately, if shin pads are not worn underneath socks for both practices and games, your little player will not be able to participate. Please ensure shin guards are in place for your child.



MOTHER NATURE IS UNPREDICTABLE

Our soccer sessions can be subject to change or cancellation depending on weather, air quality or field conditions.

Ponoka Soccer follows the lightning and severe weather policy put forth by Canada Soccer, which outlines when we need to pause or cancel a game for the safety of our players, coaches, refs and spectators.

If there is thunder or lightning 30 minutes prior to the start of the session, the session will be canceled.

"Please keep a lookout in your emails when the weather isn't the best," said PMSA Board Director Temple Pineo.

"Last year, the air quality reports did not update on the website around 45 minutes after the hour.

"We will try to provide as much notice as possible when a session is going to be cancelled," Temple added.

Further, parents must remain at the field with their child at all times to assist with bathroom breaks. Coaches are not permitted to take children to the bathroom.

In case of emergency, a FIRST AID kit is available in the Lucas Heights field shed.