

Good evening HVSC parents, players, coaches, and trainers!

As we come to the end of another great (albeit quite different) year of soccer, we as the board have felt it necessary to assess the current state and the future of our club.

For many, the current state of soccer in the Heber Valley is better than it's ever been. For others, not so much. We've seen many changes relative to soccer here over the past eight years or so. Some monumental and seismic, some much smaller, but equally impactful. Some for the better, some for the worse.

But all in all, it's fair to say where we stand today is, in the aggregate, a better place.

As the board, we have spent the past twelve months working to improve the staff, the organizational structure, the training methodologies, the practices, the policies, and the behaviors amongst ourselves as guiding representatives of the club as well as within the club itself.

All that said, as we look to the future of the club and soccer in the Heber Valley (and along the Wasatch Back), we are still faced with many significant challenges to address.

Staff

We have made great strides in the past three years working to blend our historical parent-coaching model with a professional-trainer model. We have been incredibly fortunate to have found many skilled and influential trainers to supplement our dedicated parent coaches.

However, as everyone is aware, we still don't have enough trainers to dedicate enough time to every team. Partially due to the available pool of qualified trainers in our area (or those willing to travel here) and partially due to the funds we have to pay trainers.

Additionally, we have many amazing parent-coaches who lead and grow their respective teams. But we often hear about teams that still don't have a dedicated parent-coach to lead and guide the culture and development of their teams. While the parent-coach is a critical role in the club, there are many reasons why it has not been filled for every team: lack of confidence, lack of time, lack of training, lack of passion, etc.

We need more parent-coaches and more professional trainers.

Funding

HVSC is still a lower-cost option for competitive soccer (and any sport really) in the valley and the state. That isn't to say it's cheap, we all know that's not the case, but relatively speaking it is cheaper than the alternatives.

But two realities are converging:

1. There is more demand for quality training (either from a parent-coach or a professional trainer) than we have supply.

2. Even if we had supply, there are not enough willing parents nor funds to support more paid trainers at this time.

Historically, HVSC has run our finances at break-even, supported mostly by volunteers. With the increase in paid professional training we are running a slight deficit this year and will have to dip into our reserves. Clearly that is not sustainable over the long term.

Due to this reality, we are exploring many options to remedy this including: fund-raising, gear sales, hosting our own tournament, unification, and even fee increases.

We need more volunteer support, consolidated expenses, and revenue.

Organization

The club itself —the size of it, the structure of it, the operation of it —has evolved and grown such that the current bylaws are not in alignment. We have roles in the organization that are not stipulated in the bylaws, we have roles defined in the bylaws that are no longer in use or necessary. Further, the current bylaws do not contain the necessary safeguards for running an organization of this size.

The bylaws need to be updated to further protect the club and to accurately reflect how the organization is currently being operated.

Growth

As the valley population grows, there will be more players moving in and wanting to participate. We hope those players also come with parents willing to help as coaches, team managers, committee members, and volunteers. But even with the support we receive from parents today, it is not enough. A small percentage of parents in the club are shouldering a disproportionate share of the responsibility.

We need more parent volunteers, professional trainers, and qualified parent-coaches now, not just as the valley grows.

Alignment

This past November a measure was placed on the ballot for a second high school in the valley. While it did not pass then, at some point there is strong likelihood that there will be a second high school.

Our club, and historically many of the youth clubs in the valley, have been connected in ideology, brand colors, coaches, and as a community to Wasatch High School. We all love Wasatch High School, it's part of who we are in this valley. It's one of the endearing aspects of our "small" town (even though this is quickly becoming quite a bit more than a small town, much to the chagrin of our long-timer's).

Eventually, we will need to consider the club's ties to more than one high school. As such, for a couple years now, the board has been proactively working through what that might look like and

how we will work collectively to connect with however many schools we end up with in the valley.

HVSC and Storm have been strong and recognized brands in the valley for decades and the performance of our teams over the past few years has strengthened that brand outside the valley as well. But they say three things in life are certain: death, taxes, and change.

Considering all of this, a rebrand of the club is a proactive, appropriate and important step as we move into the future.

Community

Due to the number of participants, soccer plays a very large role in the community.

It's been many years now since the "great divide" with the launch of a new club in the valley. Some of us were involved with the club when that happened. Many of us weren't here when it happened, but have been significantly impacted by it. And some of us don't even know what is being referenced.

There is no doubt that division impacted the community, for good and bad. Relationships changed amongst parents, players, adults, and children. While some may still hold grudges or convictions relative to those days, it's safe to say that most everyone has moved beyond them. We can, and should, do a better job of uniting the community via soccer and embrace the good that comes of it.

Unity

As we on the board and the executive committee have considered how to move towards the future of soccer in the Heber Valley, addressing these challenges relative to growth, staffing, operating, funding, branding, and our impact on the community, we see the need for a significant step forward.

As such, we've met many times with other clubs in the valley, along the Wasatch Back, and outside of the valley to discuss one form of alignment or another. We've been close to an agreement of some sort a number of times, but have fallen short because of one thing or another.

Over the last seven months, we've increased the pace of dialogue, discussion, and debate about bringing the Heber Valley soccer community together. We've thoughtfully considered what is best for the kids here and how we can align that goal with a united effort relative to soccer philosophy, operations, funding, and ultimately growth for the players and the community.

Recommendation

Therefore, to meet these challenges and accomplish our goals for the club and community, we the Board (including the Executive Committee) of the Heber Valley Soccer Club recommend the following:

- Unite the two soccer clubs in the Heber Valley (HVSC and Celtic Rangers East) under a new brand (new brand TBD)
- Create a new united club bringing together the assets, training staff, players, and members of the two clubs
- Begin the unification with tryouts for the upcoming 2020-2021 soccer year (to be held in June)
- Create a new non-profit entity representing the new organization
- Create a new five-person board to oversee the new organization (the board will consist of three members from HVSC and two members from Celtic Rangers East; Russ Smith will remain as the president of the new club and represent one of the three HVSC roles on the board)
- Create a new seven-person executive committee to support the board in the operations of the new club
- Write new bylaws to better align with current club operations and better structured to protect the organization

Ratification

This unification of the Heber Valley clubs will be the primary topic of our Annual General Meeting to be held via Zoom call on Saturday, May 30 @ 6:00 PM. Ratification of this proposal will be held during that meeting.

Any questions or feedback prior to this meeting may be sent to board@hebervalleysoccerclub.com.

Conclusion

We hope the changes that have been made this past year to the organization and the members operating it have increased your confidence in our leadership and our recommendation for our future.

Thank you for all you do to make the club great, now and in the future.

Sincerely,

The Heber Valley Soccer Club Board and Executive Committee