



Greetings BENSC Soccer Families,

As a matter of introduction, I am Terry Landes, the Bennington Soccer Club (BENSC) President. Each year, the end of summer means the beginning of another soccer season. The Board of Directors (BOD) has been hard at work preparing for another busy season. As many of you may have noticed the BOD has made several changes over the past few months. These changes will be outlined in e-newsletters you will begin receiving each month moving forward. Today I want to address three of the most pressing changes and explain the rationale behind each of them.

BENSC has experienced unprecedented growth over the past handful of years and 2019 looks to be among the largest growth to date. As of this email, 545 players have registered for the Fall, an all-time high. While this growth is exciting and signals great promise for our future, it does require changes in policies, procedures and structure. Three of these changes include; Team Assignments, Player Assessments, and Fees Structure.

#### **Developmental Age (4U-7U) Team Assignments**

In the past, teams were assigned in a variety of ways; randomly assigned, coaches requested players, players requested coaches, parents requesting to have their child play with another child, etc. This system worked well for many years and the club was able to accommodate most requests so players could play with their favorite coach, relatives, friends and/or neighbors. The rapid growth of BENSC has now made the management of those requests incredibly challenging. Additionally, it has become apparent to the BOD that by accommodating these requests we are inadvertently creating “select” teams. On a few occasions, players were even being recruited. The recruitments came in the form of player, parent and coach requests. Many of our volunteer coaches and soccer parents pointed out the lack of objectivity and favoritism (perceived or actual) in that system.

To resolve the “select” team assignment issue the BOD made the decision to remove the coach/parent request from the registration process starting Fall 2019. Players will now be assigned to teams, randomly. Two obvious exceptions to that policy include; 1) the Head Coach’s child(ren) and one Assistant Coach’s child(ren) will be assigned to play for their parent(s), 2) siblings in the same age group will be placed, should they request it, on the same team. To reiterate, the purpose of making this change was to maintain our goal of creating a transparent and level playing field for all players. It is clear BENSC has out grown the old policy.

#### **Player Assessments (9U+)**

While assessing players is not a new concept to BENSC, the way we are doing it has changed significantly over the years. Like the Team Assignment challenge above, the purpose of the change in assessments, was to create an objective system, void of favoritism (real or perceived).

This summer, we began using a professionally developed assessment tool called TeamGenius. This tool allows our Director of Coaching Development to create objective scoring criteria on many of the skills being assessed. It also ensures, all players in each particular age group are being assessed using the same methodology. If possible, several coaches were used to assess each team/age group to keep the results as unbiased as possible.

A bonus feature of TeamGenius is that it allows assessment scores to be shared with parents and players. Furthermore, a record is kept from year to year of each player’s assessment. This will allow players, parents and coaches to see the progress of each player from year to year and outlines the areas a player should work to improve.

**Fees Structure**

This is the area of change I'm certain nearly everyone noticed. BENSC has not increased fees in any significant manner for several years, despite the large increases the club has occurred from the organizations with which it is affiliated. The past several years the BOD made the decision to absorb the cost increases from our affiliates in order to keep the costs as low as possible for BENSC families. Even with BENSC's increased fees we continue to be among the most affordable soccer club in the area. The fee for Spring 2020, will remain the same as Fall 2019. There will be no coupon code for a full year discount. This is necessary for BENSC to help offset the increase of fees we are incurring.

Our goal is to keep BENSC an affordable option for all families. To that end, the BOD continues to set aside money to help families who may need assistance with fees due to a variety of circumstances.

As a final note, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank each of you for your support of BENSC. We are always humbled by the number of children who, with so many choices in youth sports, choose to play soccer and we are as equally humbled by the families who commit to getting them to and from practices and games. Thank you!

Should you have questions regarding the policies listed above or the BENSC in general, please feel free to contact me directly at [president@benningtonsoccer.org](mailto:president@benningtonsoccer.org). I will do my best to answer each question in a timely manner.

Respectfully,

Terry Landes  
BENSC President