

2016 Annual Report

HALIFAX CITY SOCCER CLUB

January 12, 2017

2016 Annual Report

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Janet Cullinan	President
Matt Houston	Vice-President
Nikki Keating	Treasurer
Mary Thibeault	Secretary
Colin Bryson	Past President
Tim McLaughlin	
Bill Dolan	
Luke Elliot	
Bill Chernin	
Lesley Gaum	
James Foley	
Dan Fournier	

STAFF

General Manager	Cathy Hope
Co-Technical Directors	Jonathon Cooper
	Matt Holton
Technical Staff	Darrell Cormier
	Patrick Davis
Bookkeeper	Kathy Dolan

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A question that I am asked in all spheres of my life is how do you measure success? As President of this wonderful club, how do I know that we are successful? Is it winning Provincials? Is it understanding the financial situation and adapting to all the changes in organized soccer? Is it operating within our budget and our means? Is it fielding multiple teams for both girls and boys at multiple age groups and skill levels? Is it having qualified coaches for all of these teams?

Those are things that we can measure, and by all measurable accounts we have had a successful 2016. Our U18 boys team won Provincials, and at Nationals were acknowledged as the winners of the Fair Play Award. We had many teams of all ages enter tournaments, and many of them won medals. Cathy Hope, Kathy Dolan and our amazing and brilliant club treasurer Nikki Keating have tortured the financial data to reveal its secrets, and are confident that we have the systems in place in our office to be financially aware and fiscally responsible.

All of the Tier 1 teams had coaches who met the SNS qualifications, and most of our Tier 2 coaches have met, or are in the process of meeting, the qualifications. Our co-Technical Directors, Matt Holton and Jonathon Cooper, received their National B coach designation this summer, joining Darrell Cormier in bringing our complement of National B coaches at the club to three. Some metro clubs do not have any National B coaches, so we are lucky to enjoy such a richness of quality with these three talented and devoted gentlemen.

Soccer Nova Scotia introduced new Long Term Player Development guidelines this past year, and we at CITY have worked long hours to incorporate these guidelines into our programs.

Measurables are great, but to me, success is more than that.

Success is seeing the mini kids flock around Patrick Davis like the Pied Piper. Success is the Syrian Refugee Soccer Program, championed by Cathy Hope, supported by all of our staff, and seeing the Syrian girls literally kick off their shoes and run. Success is the esteem in which our technical staff are held throughout the province, and success is a dressing room full of players eager to hit the pitch and reluctant to leave after their game, whatever the result. Success is finally to me a full car of players reliving in hilarious detail every moment of their recent game, on the drive home from wherever, with the music blaring and the French fries hitting the floor.

We are lucky at Halifax City Soccer club to have an engaged and active Board. My husband states that all I do is go to soccer meetings, and although it feels that way sometimes, I am always eager to hear what my soccer colleagues have to bring to the table. The Board has many committees, and I urge anyone interested in joining us to answer the call and step up, join in and have your voices heard. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization, and we have so many wonderful and committed volunteers in our organization, that for the past two years the SNS Volunteer of the Year award has gone to a City parent!

We are blessed with wonderful staff members, who value each and every player in our organization, are always ready and available to discuss anything with our parents, and treat all of our members with respect.

George Bernard Shaw famously stated “the single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place” but our communication with our parents, players and community at large has been crystal clear with our GM Cathy Hope in charge. Cathy’s knowledge about governance, policy and all the various players and factors in the soccer world have been invaluable to me as President.

Thank you for the opportunity for being involved as President of this wonderful club!

Go CITY go!!

Janet Cullinan

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GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

In the 2015 report, we identified four focus areas for improvement – communication, accountability, staffing, and relationships.

Our communication strategy of returning phone calls, emails, and other messages in a timely manner has met with success. Office hours have been extended, and every effort is made to answer questions and provide accurate information on the phone as well as on our website and social media. When our members are educated in how the club and leagues function, and they are able to speak directly to someone either on the phone or in writing, we all benefit.

The website is constantly being tweaked and updated to ensure that information is clear and concise, and the addition of Global Coach and Fitness Results sites provide more information for coaches, parents and players.

We increased our accountability to our stakeholders this year, reducing unnecessary banking and online fees, improving member service, and continuing to follow the best practices models laid out by SNS and the CSA.

We have presence on the CISL and MISL boards, helping to ensure the best interests of players as well as coaches and managers. We continue to work with District and SNS to make our players' experiences the best that they can be. Time and energy on both technical and administrative levels was put in to the upcoming, and now existing, new competition structure from SNS, in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Our staff, both full and part time, was second to none in 2016. Matt, Jonathon and Darrell continued their quest for excellence on the field, and remained accessible to parents, players, and coaches for mentorship and guidance. Patrick Davis did a stellar job with our summer and winter mini programs, and our summer part-time staff outdid themselves in providing quality, consistent programming not only to our mini and youth players, but as part of our refugee partnership with the YMCA.

Our technical staff continued to attend professional development sessions, and passed these on to our coaches in the form of club-sponsored sessions. We are looking to offer more and varied sessions not only for coaches, but players and parents as well.

This fall we said goodbye to a core group of U18 players with a fundraising event at Ela!, and we plan to continue these types of events, in addition to a club awards night, in the new year. We also held a well-attended and successful coach appreciation evening, and look forward to more sponsored fundraisers in upcoming seasons.

Moving forward, sponsorship and fundraising continue to be our top non-technical priorities. Many of the issues that are faced by parents, players and coaches are not intrinsic to the club, but rather a

product of the bigger landscape of leagues and SNS directives; club presence on boards and committees, and even in the political arena, remains crucial to growing the game for the benefit of players.

As demographics and expectations for sports programs change, City is positioning itself to be responsive and responsible to its members, and grow the game of soccer.

Cathy Hope

General Manager

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TECHNICAL REPORT

Soccer in the province has taken on some mass changes in 2016. We have seen the rebranding of the Tier 1/Tier 2 programs into the AAA/AA/A etc. programs. We have also seen the drastic change with the switching of age brackets from U14/16/18 to U13/15/17.

These changes have presented a host of challenges at both the club and provincial level, but these are challenges we have been prepared to meet to ensure that Halifax City continues to provide a valuable service to all of its members. We want every player at the club to play at a level appropriate to their ability and commitment, progress players through the system and continue to play at the university and collegiate level if that is their intention.

Throughout these changes we've continued with our belief that it is a player's understanding of the 11aside game that will have the greatest impact on them achieving their goals (making a higher team, playing at university, representative teams). While we want to win every game possible, more important to us is that during the winter season we develop all of our players, and give them fair opportunity to play and learn, rather than having players sit on the bench for significant portions of games.

On the Field

Tier 1 (AAA/AA)

Boys

Our boys program continues to produce top quality teams and top quality individual players. Our U18 Tier 1 boys went unbeaten during the regular season, claiming the Provincial Championship and a trip to Vaughan, Ontario for the last ever U18 Club Nationals. Tough competition saw them win 2 games and lose 3 (all by a single goal) and leave with the Fair Play award for least number of cards accumulated throughout the tournament.

We have again had a strong representation in High Performance programs. 5 players (*Jabu Deng, Mykeo Parker-Christmas, Kyle Routledge, Ethan Marshall-Harris and Max Bodurtha*) are part of the new Vancouver Whitecaps program for players ages U14-U17. A further 8 players from our U16/18 teams (*Jack Harvey, Ayoub Al Arabi, Damon Robinson, Blake Fenton, Cian Toussignant-O'Siadhail, Arjun Sethi, Kieran Baskett, Ahmed Abokar*) have been selected for the Canada Games winter team and will hope to make the final squad come April. Meanwhile we have 9 players on the U13 provincial team.

Girls

On the female side, we are continuing to see big signs improvement. After a strong season the U16 girls finished 3rd, losing in the Provincial semi finals. The U14 Development girls ended the season strong, claiming a Provincial Bronze Medal, beating a strong Valley United team in the medal game. We did not field a U18 girl's team due to a lack of players, but those who would typically play of this team found a team to play on in our senior program. Our Premier Women finished 3rd in the-regular season before falling in the semi-final in play-offs. While this was disappointing, the fact remains that we were without several key players who were already away at school on soccer scholarships. It is disappointing to see our program weakened by such events, but ultimately it shows that we are providing an environment where players can flourish and go on to further their soccer careers.

For the first time, we have female representation in the REX program-the highest level for females in Atlantic Canada. Talia Friesen, Annika Leslie and Gabby Laaouan are now in the program on a full time basis. We are also starting to see higher representation on provincial teams, with 4 players making the U13 provincial team.

Tier 2

Results in our Tier 2 program varied greatly. However, what we have seen is that teams with high attendance and commitment invariably have greater success than those without. Our U18 Tier 2a boys were the pick of the teams, representing the club at the Provincial Championships.

This summer our Tier 2 teams were provided with the same technical support as the Tier 1 team (one practice per week) and typically speaking, attendance this summer was increased from previous year. However, the issue still remains that some players opt simply to show up to games, leaving coaches in a difficult ethical decision about their playing time.

Off the field

We have continued to work extensively off the field with 'Coach Development'. Our Technical Directors, Matt and Jonathon, joined Darrell in achieving their National B license; meaning that as a club we now have 3 nationally qualified coaches, the most of any club in Nova Scotia.

We have continued with our Coach Mentorship program, focusing primarily at the U11 and U12 level, as we move into the future this will open this up to the club as a whole. On top of Matt and Jonathon achieving their National B, we have supported 40 coaches achieve a total of 55 new coaching licenses ensuring that all of our players are being coached by an appropriately qualified coach. While this comes at an expense to the club it is an investment that is a direct benefit to our membership.

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MINI REPORT

CITY's Mini Program has seen lots of change this year. Led by Patrick Davis in the summer, we embraced the Long-Term Player Development ("LTPD") model championed by the Canadian Soccer Association - a program is centered on individual player skill development utilizing a station approach to training. CITY is proud to be among the early adopters of this renowned model promoting maximum player retention for athletes at all levels.

Taking into account feedback we received from parents, we added a monthly game day for our U8 and U10 players. We found this to be a positive addition to the program as players were able to test themselves in a game-situation without the stresses of it being an official game where there is a win-lose mentality.

The club continues to work to provide a balanced quality program to its membership. At the mini level, the need to support different athletic levels, and parent expectations makes for a large and complicated program. The mini program runs a separate gender program at U6, U8, and U10 in an effort to retain female players in the sport. City's Mini Program continues to benefit from the expertise of our technical director and enthusiastic mini staff that together are ensuring the best soccer experience possible for its members. With this committed staff and the valuable feedback that we receive through the end of season parent surveys, we are well posed to continuously improve the mini program.

A mid-season assessment of the Mini Program from SNS Director of Coaching, Mike Whyatt, highlighted huge positives of the program, praising our station based approach-allowing kids to learn and have fun in a stress-free environment.

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NOMINATING REPORT

The following have agreed to allow their names to stand for election to the Board of Directors at our AGM January 12, 2017:

John Bodurtha
Sharleen Nielson
Brian Power

The following members are re-offering for another term:

Colin Bryson
Bill Dolan
Luke Eliot
Nikki Keating

The following members are mid-way through their term:

Janet Cullinan
Lesley Gaum
Mat Houston
Tim McLaughlin
Mary Thibault

The following members are at the end of their term, and are not re-offering:

Bill Chernin
Dan Fournier
James Foley

The following members have resigned part-way through their term:

Mark McFarland
Carolyn Townsend

Submitted by Janet Cullinan, Nominating Committee Chair