



SCVAA

NEWSLETTER

www.scvaa.org

February, 2016

Welcome to the February, 2016 edition of the SCVAA Newsletter. St. Croix Valley Athletic Association (SCVAA) is a recreational sports organization serving families of the St. Croix Valley for 49 years. SCVAA or VAA for short runs eight sports for our youth from kindergarten through high school. In the following pages some of our volunteers provide short articles on these sports. VAA is an all-volunteer organization with hundreds of volunteers serving over 3,500 youth participants each year. VAA would not be possible without our volunteers. A sincere thank you to all of them.

SCVAA is a non-profit organization. Every year VAA plays on hundreds of fields and courts located throughout the St. Croix Valley. I want to

February 27, 2016
Basketball End of Season
Tournament, 3-6 grade boys

March 15, 2016
Baseball & Softball Registration
Closes

March 19, 2016
K-6 Jaycees State Wrestling
Tournament

April 22, 2016
Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

May, 2016
Registration opens for
Soccer, Football, & Cheerleading

acknowledge our strong relationship and like-minded commitment to the families of the St. Croix Valley with municipalities and other organizations: Afton, Bayport, Baytown Township, East Ridge, Grant, Hugo, Lake Elmo, St. Croix Beach, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Mahtomedi, Marine on the St. Croix, Maplewood, May Township, Oak Park Heights, St. Mary's Point City of Stillwater, Stillwater Township, West Lakeland, Withrow, Woodbury, School District 834, Belwin Foundation, and Washington County. I must recognize Dave Callahan, SCVAA Administrative Director (admin@scvaa.org), who is contracted to manage VAA access to sports facilities. Dave manages scheduling of hundreds of teams, hundreds of fields and courts, with tens of municipalities and organizations. This is a truly monumental task. I express my appreciation to Dave. With emphasis on sports now open for registration, I acknowledge Dick's Sporting Goods for their consistent and generous support to VAA baseball and softball; Suzanne Block and Youth Advantage (youthadvantage.org) for financial and equipment support to children of the St. Croix Valley; Tim Obr who is contracted to groom select fields for VAA baseball and softball; and Steve McRunnel who is contracted to train and schedule umpires for all baseball and softball games throughout the season and end of season tournaments. Thank you to all.

Registration is now open for baseball, softball, and mountain biking on our website, www.scvaa.org. The photo on the cover of this issue shows the 2015 VAA Rock Hounds, a 9th grade baseball team, holding their two trophies for being regular season champions and runner-up in the end of season tournament. Tim Schroeder is our baseball commissioner. I thank Tim for his service. Enclosed is a nice article by Nancy Baker, our softball commissioner, who has done a great job improving the level of play for VAA softball. I am very grateful to Nancy. Our mountain biking club have commissioners entering their second year, Patrick and Wendy McKellips. We welcome the McKellips and thank them for serving. They are off to a great start.

I hope you find the newsletter worthwhile and learn of new opportunities to participate in SCVAA. It is a great organization and a valuable asset to our community. I hope you also find a renewed appreciation for our volunteers and their service to our community. Perhaps you may even be motivated to volunteer. Feel free to contact me anytime. Please take a minute to REGISTER AND VOLUNTEER! Thank you.

Peter Condo
SCVAA President
president@scvaa.org

SCVAA Softball

Commissioner: **Nancy Baker**, softball@scvaa.org

Season: May - July

Registration Opens: January

Some great softball games were had by all age groups in 2015. It was great to see such improvement throughout the season. Girls grew as a team, as well as individually. Many conquered new skills that were taught to them by their fabulous coaches.

Speaking of coaches...Thank you to all who volunteered their valuable time to teach, mentor and coach girls from the St. Croix Valley area last season. Without all the volunteers, the girls wouldn't have the opportunity to play softball with their friends. We hope you consider coaching again this season, as it is very much appreciated by all.



Softball registration opened January 1st. You'll notice our website, scvaa.org, has been updated since the 2015 softball season. Navigation of the site should hopefully be straight forward. On the site you'll find all pertinent and important information regarding all sports your child may play with SCVAA.

Do you have an 8th grade or older daughter interested in summer employment? Please contact the Umpire Coordinator Steve McRunnel at smcrunnel@yahoo.com, for further information on summer employment opportunities.

Let's have a great season! Remember to respect each other, the players, coaches and umpires. See you on the field!

Nancy Baker
SCVAA Softball Commissioner
softball@scvaa.org

SCVAA Baseball

Commissioner: **Tim Schroeder**, baseball@scvaa.org

Season: May - July

Registration Opens: January

Welcome to St. Croix Valley Athletic Association Baseball.

The purpose of SCVAA Baseball is to encourage youth development by providing opportunities for personal and athletic growth. The SCVAA Baseball program promotes sportsmanship, self-esteem and the development of team work through engaging youth in team baseball while providing a safe, positive environment where the youth of our community can learn the fundamentals of the sport. The SCVAA Baseball has about 1,100 kids from Kindergarten through 12th grade. It is all run and organized by Parent Volunteers along with Community Volunteers.



Pete DeCorsey
SCVAA Baseball Vice Commissioner
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SCVAA Mountain Biking

*Commissioners: **Patrick & Wendy McKellips**, mountainbiking@scvaa.org*

Season: February - September

Registration Opens: January

We had a great year with the cycling club. We efficiently transferred the leadership from Mark Franz. We still retain Mark as an adviser to the club. We had good participation at the rides, with 15-20 typically showing up. This year we included some informal interaction with the Stillwater High School Mountain Bike Team. The events really helped get the kids excited about being on bikes. We have several of our club riders that have now joined the high school mountain bike team, very glad to see that transition. We had our full course of mountain bike rides at Carver Lake and Whitetail Ride. In addition we had special rides at the Velodrome and an indoor BMX track in Isanti. The kids really come alive at these events. In fact we are planning a January ride at the BMX bike track. Overall a great year and looking forward to the season next summer.



Patrick & Wendy McKellips
SCVAA Mountain Biking Commissioners
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SCVAA Soccer

Commissioner: **Sachin Gore**, soccer@scvaa.org

Season: August - October

Registration Opens: May

Soccer had another strong season with over 1,250 players participating on over 111 soccer teams. New for 2015 was the addition of a 10th-12th co-ed division. This older division was a grass roots effort led by both parents and players who wanted the opportunity to keep playing recreational soccer beyond 9th grade. While we had a relatively small group of players for this inaugural year, we look forward to growing this division and incorporating some competitive games against neighboring associations. During the coming year, we will begin planning a major realignment of the grade levels in each division based on the upcoming change in the school district of 6th graders moving to middle school and 9th graders moving to high school.

We had a number of newer commission volunteers this year that did a great job managing their divisions and we look forward to welcoming additional volunteers to the commission for next season. We appreciate the efforts of the soccer commission volunteers and the over 200 parent coach volunteers that are needed to plan, organize and play each season!



In closing, I want to share a story of why having your child play soccer is a good thing. On a recent trip to India to visit family, my 11 year old son found numerous opportunities to play pickup soccer in the various communities we were staying. While he couldn't easily



communicate with other kids due to language, he could interact with them through soccer. These kids didn't know anything about hockey or lacrosse or baseball. But they knew soccer, or as they refer to it, football. He also learned to appreciate the pure joy of playing, as he kicked a beat up ball around in the urban jungle of a developing country on asphalt and dirt "fields" with rocks to mark goals. Knowing how to play soccer could be a useful skill for your child in our increasingly global world.

Sachin Gore
SCVAA Soccer Commissioner
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SCVAA Cheerleading

*Commissioners: **Angie Rowe & Julie Ligday**, cheerleading@scvaa.org*

Season: August - October

Registration Opens: May

This year we offered cheerleading through SCVAA. This community prides itself on sports with football being a big part of it - we wanted to offer the total package cheering the boys on while involving the fans. We strive to instill tradition, honor, commitment and pride in our cheer teams and each cheerleader. Basic skills taught this season included, basic cheers, dance, and cheer routines, cartwheels, round offs, basic jumps, back and from walkovers, and beginner stunts. The cheerleaders were taught about 30-35 sideline chants and a half time routine to excite the crowds.

Overall, it was a great experience!!! We had 38 girls participate. We were able to perform for every grade level for football. We participated in the VAA football night for the Ponies. With such an outpour of support from the community we returned to cheer at an additional Ponies' game. The crowd and the girls loved it!! We look forward to another great year of cheer in the 2016 season. Our hopes would be to eventually have enough girls to have a cheerleading squad for each grade level to cheer at all the football games. We will continue to build skill level for those that return and present the basics to those that are new. We are thankful for the support of the cheer families, football families, and coaches!! Cheerleading was greatly perceived and embraced this first year and we look forward to many more within this community.



Angie Rowe & Julie Ligday
SCVAA Cheerleading Commissioners
cheerleading@scvaa.org



SCVAA Football

*Commissioner: **Matt Simcik**, football@scvaa.org*

Season: August - October

Registration Opens: May

2015 was a great year for football in the St. Croix Valley. The biggest development was the participation in USA Football's Heads-Up Football. SCVAA football is now a Heads-Up Football organization. This means that our coaches have been trained in the Heads-Up techniques for tackling and blocking, heat preparedness and hydration, concussion recognition and response, sudden cardiac arrest and proper equipment fitting. Every head coach, and many of our assistant coaches went through the training, and safer techniques were evident on the field of play.

Another huge development was the addition of cheerleaders on the sidelines of many SCVAA games. The girls made it to at least one game of every team in the league, and they were well received.

2015 also marked the second year the SCVAA has taken over 7th and 8th grade football. Once again we participated in the Northwest Suburban Football League. In support of that program,

the SCVAA along with the Ponies Touchdown Club purchased one-man lev sleds, two-man drive sleds and blocking chutes for each practice location, as well as sheds at each Jr. High to house this and other equipment during the season. A new opportunity arose this year as we fielded a 7th/8th grade weight limited team. This team consisted of players of both grades below 130 lbs. The team made it all the way to the Championship game.

At the 3rd through 6th grades we again saw decreasing numbers at each grade level. A decision will be made very soon as to whether or not we can continue as an in-house league. Look for an email to get your feedback on the past season, and proposed changes in an online survey.

Go Ponies!

Matt Simcik
SCVAA Football Commissioner
football@scvaa.org

SCVAA Wrestling

Commissioner: Julie Dauffenbauch, wrestling@scvaa.org

Head Coach: Jay Junker, wrestling@scvaa.org

Season: November - March

Registration Opens: September

The SCVAA Youth Wrestling program has been evolving in recent years. Our program used to specifically target only beginner wrestlers to prepare them for other wrestling opportunities as they grew older. Now, our program introduces the young wrestlers to duals and tournaments that offer exciting and yet age appropriate wrestling experiences.

Coach Jay Junker has returned this year as our Head Coach for the 2015-2016 season. Jay has a strong track record of successful participation in Stillwater wrestling. A 1976 Stillwater graduate and Wrestling Alumni, he posted a 24-4-2 record his senior year. In 1987, he successfully restarted the Stillwater Jr. High program when it had been shut down for a number of years due to the lack of a coach. He built up that program to as many as 32 wrestlers before moving to the High School in 1995 to become the first ninth grade coach. He continued as an assistant to the High School Varsity staff until after the 1999-2000 season when the demands of his career conflicted with his coaching availability. Outside of wrestling, from 1993 - 1996, Jay architected the very successful True Sports Baseball league which eventually gained national attention with endorsements from FCA Baseball and former major league baseball player and hall of famer Paul Molitor. As the VAA coach, Jay is eager to bring new and fresh methods to our program, teaching basic skills to beginner wrestlers and ensuring that they and their families fall in love with the sport and feel a welcomed addition to the Stillwater Pony wrestling family.



We also have many parent volunteers that are just as dedicated as the kids are to learning about wrestling. This year we are fortunate to have some former MN Gophers in our room as assistant coaches and parent volunteers. Tim Hartung, former Gopher wrestler, is assisting Coach Junker this year. Tim hails from Durand, Wisconsin, he went on to wrestle at the University of Minnesota, where he became a two-time NCAA champion, three-time All-American, and helped put the Gophers on the collegiate wrestling map. He became the first Gopher in 51 years to win back-to-back NCAA crowns. After his collegiate career, Hartung went on to have a successful freestyle wrestling career. He was an alternate on the 2004 U.S. Olympic team. In 2002, Hartung won the U.S. Nationals and was a World Team member. He also placed several times at the U.S. Nationals and World Team Trials.



Last year the boys participated in the Jaycee State Tournament up in Albany, MN. Our Stillwater team took 1st place and many of the boys placed in the individual portion as well.

Julie Dauffenbauch
SCVAA Wrestling Commissioner
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SCVAA Basketball

Commissioner: **Rob Cherry**, basketball@scvaa.org

Season: November - February

Registration Opens: September

The VAA Basketball Commission is excited to welcome our new commissioner Rob Cherry. Rob brings many exciting ideas to the commission along with his many years of coaching experience. Rob served on the basketball commission as a boys 5/6 grade coordinator prior to this new position.

This year's VAA Timberwolves clinic was a HUGE success. Around 400 players from 2nd to 6th grade attended the clinic taught by the Timberwolves Basketball Academy. Players spent time learning new drills and playing games. Each player also received a ticket to a 2015-16 season Timberwolves game.

Along with the Timberwolves clinic, all players in 2nd - 12th grade are getting newly designed jerseys. The jersey design is similar to what the professional players wear and features the Timberwolves and Lynx logo on the back.



Congratulations to the 5/6 girls' Spurs (see photo) who won the championship in the VAA/WAA/ERAA combined league! Our 3rd - 6th grade girls program again joined the East Metro Athletic Association Girls Basketball League which is comprised of Woodbury Athletic Association (WAA) and East Ridge Athletic Association (ERAA). In this league, teams are placed in two different tiers based on season performance. This allows those teams that need a higher level of competitive play to have it, along with keeping teams of the same skill level playing each other.

As always, the Basketball Commission is looking for volunteers. We are especially in need of an equipment coordinator, a K/1 coordinator and a girls 3-6 grade coordinator. These positions involved attending commission meetings (usually 3-5 per year), communicating with parents and coaches and coordinator teams/equipment needs. Please contact basketball@scvaa.org for more information.

Kim Fransway
SCVAA Vice President
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