

Dear Soccer Families,

A number of people have asked for information regarding the upcoming Special Meeting of the San Francisco Youth Soccer (SFYS) membership. The meeting was called by a few clubs (who refer to themselves as the Alliance) who a year ago unsuccessfully tried to replace the SFYS Board with their own representatives. The Alliance is again trying to replace Board Member Po Bronson, who was elected seven months ago.



When the Alliance unsuccessfully tried to replace the SFYS Board with their own representatives, the SFYS Board worked with these clubs to calm the rhetoric by providing them representation. This was accomplished by both expanding the Board and two existing Directors stepping down so that four parents from these clubs could be appointed.

Over the spring and summer, we worked dutifully, meeting and conferring with the special consultant from US Club Soccer whom the City had engaged. Planning the fall annual meeting and election appeared to be going smoothly; a recommended slate of directors was informally agreed to by both sides. Two days before that election, Alliance leaders launched a surprise attack in an attempt to increase their board representation. They sought to prevent two agreed upon directors from being elected and instead nominated representatives from their own clubs.

Despite this ongoing conflict, the SFYS Board and staff has made significant progress since the October election:

- We worked with the Recreation and Parks Department and a special consultant retained for the purpose of making recommendations to the City to devise a blueprint for moving soccer forward in the City.
- We built a new, fully transparent software system that has allowed travel teams to select their own home game fields, view all available SFRPD-allocated fields in the system, and collaborate and coordinate if they wish.
- This new system has made it possible to remove restrictions on travel play and supports teams to compete in whichever league they prefer.
- We became a NorCal club two years ago to help some teams, mainly from the Alliance, access NorCal for the first time. Now the board has voted to expand our club status to help more teams play NorCal.
- The board has made it a priority to invest resources to support and develop volunteer-coached and low-cost teams and programs.

- SFYS staff has dramatically increased our programming serving underserved public schools, running clinics and pickup soccer at elementary schools.
- The board has adopted conflict-of-interest and disclosure policies, which were not mandated by our bylaws.
- We are working on revising our bylaws to place representation in the hands of parents of children on a team so as to protect the recreational league from being controlled by competitive clubs in the future.
- We implemented a new program to increase the number of referees in the City.
- SFYS staff has increased clinics and programming to support volunteer coaches.

None of this placated the Alliance and they have increased their efforts to control the board. The personal attacks on SFYS by these clubs' leaders never stopped, even though their clubs were well represented on the board. SFYS did not make this conflict public, hoping the Alliance leaders would recognize escalating conflict in children's lives was inappropriate and not in anyone's interest. Unfortunately, they continued to put their own interests above all others and continued to make numerous charges that were proven false. They made demands of SFYS to benefit their teams at the expense of others. Most recently they attempted to block SFYS from providing NorCal play to more SFYS teams. They threatened lawsuits that required us to hire a litigator. Just responding to their claims has forced SFYS to spend \$50,000 in legal fees in the last year.

Now the Alliance is at it again, triggering a mechanism in the California Code to call a Special Meeting, which will be held on May 23rd. Fifteen teams from SF Glens Evolution, 9 from SF United, and 6 from the SF Seals have called this meeting, trying to remove past president Po Bronson with baseless personal attacks, claims of financial improprieties and a blatant rewriting of history. This despite Po being elected by members seven months ago. In response, our board recently passed a resolution in support of retaining Po.

Po has worked tirelessly to help all the SFYS teams, regardless of whether they were a club or Parks and Recreation team, to grow and become more competitive. Before Po came on the board, there were only two clubs in the City that got fields, and competitive play was severely restricted due to inefficient use of fields. Po figured out how to use the league's status as a platform to form new clubs, and he helped the teams that now form the Alliance grow and thrive. He worked with the City to open travel play to all clubs, using technology and spurring cooperation amongst clubs to boost field usage efficiency. Po coached for both the Glens and the Evolution before they merged. He opened the door to NorCal play on city fields and personally recommended the newly merged Glens and Evolution club during their application process to NorCal. Po has recruited parents and coaches from these clubs to join our board, drove through our name change from Vikings League to SF Youth Soccer, and led the effort to get Beach Chalet approved. Po also was instrumental in figuring out how to make our rec league grade-based, rather than be split by birth year, allowing long-standing teams to stay together. He even spearheaded the development of the travel field selection software all

the clubs now utilize to search for and secure fields on their own. Ironically, Po's efforts and support of these clubs over the years has contributed to their growth.

Enough is enough! You can help reduce the strife and discord that has been brought to youth soccer by discouraging these actions. Talk to your team manager or team voting representative to be sure they attend the Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 23rd. If they cannot attend, let them know they can proxy their vote to another parent or to SFYS staff (proxies are required to vote as instructed). You can learn who your team voting representative is, and more details about the Special Meeting, at this page on our website: <http://www.sfyouthsoccer.com/special-general-meeting-2017.html>

Hopefully, we can put this era behind us, return to more peaceful mechanisms to resolve any issues and remember who it is that we are serving, the children of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Kipp Kjeldgaard
President
SFYS Board of Directors