**2016-June 14 Update from GAASA**

**To All-**

**On behalf of the GAASA Board of Directors I want to thank everyone for the recently completed spring season.  Without your support and the opportunities you provide for your players none of this would be possible.**

**Every season presents new challenges and this past spring it was adapting to the new “No Header” policy for U9/10/11 players, which for the most part went pretty well.  The coming fall season will bring a whole new set of challenges, the scope of which we have not seen since the switch to small sided games.  In the next week you will be receiving information detailing the many changes to come and it is very important you share this with your members.  Here are some of the changes coming:**

**         Player age group change-this is the one which has so far caused the most concern & disruption for all.  Beginning with the fall season a players age group will be determined on a true calendar year (January to December) instead of the August 1st date we have been using for the last 20+ years.  As an example player born at any time during 2006 would be in the 11 year old division (2017-2006=11).**

**o   Because of this change and the discovery by many clubs they will a significant number of U15 players who are still in 8th grade the league will be offering a true U15 division.  In the event there are not enough teams to support a separate U15 division then the teams will be folded into the U14 divisions.**

**         Competitive Calendar-the league, based on a club vote at the last league meeting, is switching its competitive calendar from August-July year to a January-December calendar to match players aging up.  This maintains the same process we have had when it was August 1st when players/teams aged up.  The added benefit to clubs is they will now have two months to prepare for the new calendar year with the fall season ending in October and new registration not starting until January.  If the August 1st date was kept you would, and have been, preparing for the new soccer year while still completing the old soccer year.**

**         U9/10 & U11/12-these divisions will see an increase in the number of field players.  U9/10 goes from 6v6 to 7v7 and U11/12 goes from 8v8 to 9v9.  The maximum roster size according to the national guidelines for these age groups are: U9/10-12 players, U11/12-16 players.  The league had increased the roster maximum for the 9/10’s to 14 and the 11/12’s went to 16.  The GAASA BOD will be reviewing these totals in our upcoming board meeting to determine if we will continue to allow additional players over the maximum.**

**         Field Sizes/Markings-field dimensions are essentially the same but the U9/10 fields will be marked differently.  For these fields there will now be a line drawn from sideline to sideline which creates an area in which a goalie cannot be pressured until he/she puts the ball in play.  You will be receiving a complete description on field markings well in advance of the season.**

**         Fall Season – as has been the custom of the league at the conclusion of every season clubs receive a spread sheet showing the standings of the just completed season along with the proposed divisions for the next season based on results using promotion/relegation of the top teams & bottom teams in a division.  With the change in determining a players age group every club is going to find their teams from the just completed spring season are going to look dramatically different for the fall.  With that in mind the league is not going to be putting out a “Proposed Divisions” document and instead ask clubs to use their best judgement when declaring their teams.  The league will only move teams if there are not enough for a division (fewer than five teams) or if there are too many teams (greater than 11).  The league will then use the results from the fall season to determine the proper division alignment for the spring season by promoting/relegating teams.**

**         The next league meeting is scheduled for July 19th with the team registration (only necessary if you have any need to add/drop a team or discuss their division placement) at 7pm followed by the league meeting at 8pm.  This meeting will also be for the league elections for the following board positions: Executive Vice President, Boys VP, Treasurer.  Nominations are currently being accepted.**

**         There have been changes to the Laws of the Game and these changes will be distributed once the league has received the changes from US Youth/USSF.**

**Tom Pickett**

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