



Dear VSA Parents & Players,

As you are aware, Vision Soccer Academy of Waukee recently entered into a partnership with the Iowa Rush Soccer Club, (formerly the Ankeny Soccer Club,) for our U15 and up Select teams beginning in the fall of 2009. This change may have appeared to come about quickly. However, deliberate consideration was given to a number of factors that ultimately led to the decision by the Board of Directors.

This past January, a retreat was held where board members worked diligently reviewing club policies and by-laws, defining roles and responsibilities and establishing a new mission and vision statement. All efforts intended to aid the board in managing and guiding our decisions for the future of the club. The mission statement reflects what we do - *to champion healthy life skills* - and the vision statement establishes a bold, fundamental goal - *to be the premiere soccer club in the Midwest*.

During the exercises, the board identified a number of key challenges facing our club and tried to identify strategic initiatives that would help the board meet those challenges while remaining aligned with the vision and mission statement. One challenge the club faces is maintaining adequate participation at all levels to help ensure sustainability and the continuation of the program offerings.

Both the Select and Recreational programs suffer from a lack of participation in older age divisions for many reasons and this problem is not unique to VSA. Several clubs in the greater Des Moines area and in the state experience this same dilemma and it often leaves players with few options:

1. Be placed on a team that is not formed as optimally as it could be - typically players of disparate ages and skill levels
2. Leave to play for another club
3. Simply to not play at all

VSA Director of Coaching and Head Pro Coach, Chris McGill, felt this was the case with at least one VSA Select team he coaches. Chris wanted to work to offer the players the best opportunity to continue playing and develop to their highest potential. Knowing players in the Ankeny Soccer Club in the same division were facing a similar situation, Chris began discussing the possibility of partnering and forming teams with ASC's Director of Coaching, Corbin Stone.

Through these discussions Chris and Corbin determined that similar situations existed at other age groups. They believed the opportunity to partner could be leveraged to provide the same benefits to other players. During this same time, the Ankeny Soccer Club was in the process of working to become the Rush Soccer Chapter in the state of Iowa - the Iowa Rush Soccer Club. Rush Soccer is one of the largest and most successful soccer organizations in the United States with nearly 40,000 youth players represented in 22 states.

A meeting with representatives from the Iowa Rush Soccer Club was arranged to explore the possibility of partnering and it was learned that both clubs face a number of similar challenges and share similar goals and philosophies. Both clubs agreed that the soccer landscape is changing rapidly not only locally but statewide and nationally with more clubs working together to enhance the overall value and benefit they are able to deliver to their membership in terms of opportunity, growth and development of players and the club as a whole.



The board considered of all the information and had spirited discussion regarding the options. The board weighed our decision against our strategic initiatives, our mission and our vision. Ultimately the board determined that it was not only mutually beneficial but also necessary to work with the Iowa Rush Soccer Club in an effort designed to overcome our shared challenges and meet our longer-term shared goals.

Our initial objective is to address issues of critical mass that jeopardize the sustainability of the programs we're able to deliver to our respective memberships. The decision to partner with the U15 and older teams was based on the fact that these are the age groups most affected by the issue of critical mass and also the timing of the Select tryout process in relation to our joint discussions. Our shared goal is to ensure players from our respective clubs are able to continue to receive the highest quality coaching while being able to train and compete at in environments most beneficial to their individual development.

The board understands that there are still unanswered questions and have established Integration Committees with members from both clubs that are tasked with working through outstanding details and communicating any new information as quickly as possible. The board is absolutely committed to making this transition as smooth as possible.

***The board will be holding Town Hall meetings next Tuesday, 7/7, and Thursday, 7/9, from 6:30 to 7:30 PM at the Waukee Soccer Complex to aid in the communication process.*** The board will provide any updates available at that time and members from both the VSA and Iowa Rush will be onsite to answer questions. Additionally, you can visit the following website for the most current information - [http://www.visionsocceracademy.com/Select/next\\_steps.htm](http://www.visionsocceracademy.com/Select/next_steps.htm).

In closing, the board would like to thank you for your continued patience and support as we work toward implementing these exciting changes for our club and our membership.

Vision Soccer Academy Board of Directors:

Cecil Williams, President; Robert Cutchens, Vice President; Carlos Acebey, Executive Director; Chris McGill, Director of Coaches; Terrisue Johnson, Secretary; Julie Kunze, Treasurer; Kent Kunze, Director of Referees; Sohn Wallace, Director of Fields; Cathy Chelsvig, Director of Select; Javier Gutierrez, Director of Recreation; Nikki Spence, U6 Coordinator; Lesley Gates, U8 Coordinator; Kelsey Hutton, U10 - U19 Coordinator