

September 2006

The Kicker

Newsletter of **Oak Park River Forest Strikers Soccer Club**
P.O. Box 5544, River Forest 60305 • www.oprfstrikers.com

Meet the New Coach

—by Chuck Race

Strikers Boys U17 manager Chuck Race caught up with OPRF High School Boy's Varsity Coach Paul Wright to talk about his first season (which he completed in May 2006), and his expectations for the upcoming season. The Boys Varsity enjoyed a stellar season under Coach Wright, compiling a 15-5-4 record, winning the Oak Park Regional and coming within one game of reaching the sectional championship. During the summer, Coach Wright was appointed to coach the OPRF HS Girl's varsity team as well.

Q: What stands out from your first season?

PW: Passion and heart. Our loss against Morton in the playoffs really showed the character of the program. These young men

had tears in the eyes—they cared about the game of soccer, but, more importantly, they cared about each other. Everything was left on the pitch. They (players) were pretty diverse in

Q: What needs improvement in the coming season?

PW: When I took over the position I knew we had to become a possession-oriented team; chip/chase does not win titles. The ball does not always need to move forwards on the pitch and neither do the players. I plan on building on the system that I started and you will see a lot more combination plays and movement between playing formations to adapt to the game. We will dictate the flow and pace of the game.

Q: How do you replace the talented seniors who graduated?

PW: This is the hardest part of the job. Seniors move on and I wish they could stay. We'll need

age and background but really gelled and became not just teammates, but true friends and when that happens you rely and push on each other, which leads to great things.



The Kicker is a quarterly publication for family and friends of the Oak Park River Forest Strikers Soccer Club. We welcome comments, suggestions, and especially photos. Please send any and all to Vivien Barkidjija at vp@oprfstrikers.com.

—Serena Hinckley
Newsletter Editor

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Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Strikers,

A long-time friend of Strikers has become our newest official partner: Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush. Starting last June, our club signed a contract—at no charge to Strikers families—for Midwest Orthopaedics athletic trainers to provide immediate care and training advice at tryouts, pre-season camp, and selected practices and games throughout the year.

We're lucky to have them.

Midwest Orthopaedics is widely recognized as one of the preeminent specialists in the US in orthopaedic medicine and surgery, including treatment of sports injuries. They are the official team doctors of the Bulls and White Sox.

The friendship part comes from one of Midwest's leaders, Dr. Bernie Bach. Bernie and his wife Elizabeth have been friends and supporters of Strikers for the last ten years when their children David and Laura (both now in college) excelled in Strikers soccer and other sports. Bernie's love for sports and interest in sports medicine

developed during his boyhood playing sports in Michigan and through his years playing baseball and football in the 1970s at Harvard, where his teammates included future Cincinnati Bengals all-pro Pat McNally.

The Bachs rarely missed a Strikers game. This meant little time for Bernie to enjoy his day "off" on the sidelines, as he was called onto the field to treat torn ligaments, sprained ankles, and broken elbows, always with great skill plus the calm bedside manner of Marcus Welby. The den of the Bachs' River Forest home has often served as the Strikers unofficial emergency room on Sunday evenings.

Health, safety, and fitness are as important a part of youth sports as X's and O's. Not only will Midwest Orthopaedics trainers be available to treat

Strikers players, but they will also help us to educate parents and players—including a regular Health and Safety column being introduced in this issue of *The Kicker*—about hydration, nutrition, stretching, injury prevention, and so on (see the article about ACL's in this issue). Strikers, of course, has already been teaching kids about health and safety, and all of our professional and parent assistant coaches have been certified

in basic first aid and sports injuries. But why not get some help from the best?

There's just one suggestion we have for our friends at Midwest. They need to update the logo on their stationery to reflect their new, exalted status: Midwest Orthopaedics, Official Team Doctors of the Chicago Bulls, World Champion Chicago White Sox... and the Oak Park River Forest Strikers.

John Donley

President

Oak Park River Forest Strikers Soccer Club



Tryouts High School Boys

September 24
4:00–7:00pm

OPRF HS Lake Street Field

Go to Strikers web site for
information and tryout forms
<http://oprfstrikers.com>
or call the office
708-771-5720.

Murray Findlay

Strikers New (sort of) Director of Coaching

Murray Findlay has been a part of Strikers soccer for a few years now and we are delighted to announce that he will become Strikers Director of Coaching effective immediately. Murray's soccer experience is extensive. He played on Scotland's U18 National Team and continued on as a professional player for another 4 years all the while obtaining a Bachelor's degree from the University of Edinburgh and graduating with honors.

In addition to working with Strikers, Murray's professional coaching experience includes several soccer clubs, Britannia Soccer USA and the University of Edinburgh's women's team. Murray has continued to advance his professional experience by obtaining an NSCAA National Diploma, Scottish Football license (E, D and C) and an AYSO National License. This fall, Murray will begin his work towards an M.B.A. at the University of Illinois. We are very fortunate to have Murray help lead the Strikers teams to bigger and better things.



The mystery player on the rear cover striking the head ball is last year's OPRF HS Huskies senior co-captain and sweeper **Amanda Corcos**. Corcos won the Players' Player award as a member of last fall's U18 Strikers team. This fall, Amanda joins the University of Chicago Maroons, a top-ranked national division III women's soccer program.

Strikers 2006 Spring Season

Navy Rules!



What a great spring season our boys U9 Navy had! This newly-formed team struggled to finish 1-9 last fall. But they improved to 6-4 in spring 2006, with four come-from-behind wins. The boys also played their first tournament, winning one game at the Park Ridge Memorial Day tournament. "I was very proud of them," said coach **Dan Cross**. "They're a great example for all our teams of what can be done if you work hard and have a 'never-say-die' attitude." Kudos also to assistant coach **Edmundo Garcia** and manager **Susan Frost**.

Three Champs and two "Almosts"

Congratulations to **Gregg Gullo's** U13 girls who won the IWSL B-South division with an 8-1 record and will move up to the AB division this fall—only the second time a Strikers U14 team has played at that elite level. **Dave Parker's** U14 girls took second place in the B division with a 7-2 record and graduated many quality players to the Strikers high school program.

Boys U14 had a great spring under coach **Mick O'Malley**, improving from a 3-win season in fall 2005 to finish 8-1-1 this spring to win the NISL Silver North division. With coach **Mike Cockroft**, the U10 boys also won their division with a 5-1-4 record in Bronze North. Under coach **Murray Findlay**, the Boys U9 Orange team also took an impressive second place in the NISL Silver North division.



Tournament Warriors

A record ten Strikers teams played in the Park Ridge Memorial Day tournament and competed well despite punishing heat in the 90s. Congratulations to the U10 Orange girls coached by **Katie Johnson** for going 3-0 to win their group before losing by a last minute goal in the division final. This team also won its division's IWSL Sportsmanship Award for spring 2006. Coached by **Dina Castillo**, the U11 Orange girls played in their first tournament and shone, winning two games to reach the consolation final. Girls U9 Orange and Boys U13 picked up big wins after struggling earlier in the season, with the boys sparked by **Malachy Schrobilgen's** two goals and keeper **Tracey Davis' shutout**.

High School Boys

The Strikers U17 boys team finished the spring season with a record of 6 wins and 2 losses, which landed them in first place. Formed in the fall of 2005 under veteran coach **Dean Smith**, the boys gelled during tough winter indoor league play at the Aurora Sports Dome. Their efforts paid off with big wins in the spring over strong teams from ELA, Elmhurst and Tri-Cities and two ties and a win in the Libertyville Cup tournament over Memorial Day weekend. Team members included: Mark Blaha, Nate Race, Ryan Clarke, Seth Lueck, Tristan Rogers, Aaron Lesser, Jeff Davis, Sean Delbecarro, John Maher, Hilel Ehrman, Evan Simon, Nikita Finkel, Brendan Wylie, Rory Landis, Dean Rogers, and Joel Horras.



Go Huskies!

The OPRF HS Girls Huskies defeated Trinity to win the regional playoff championship last May. They went on to defeat Nazareth before falling to eventual state semifinalist Lyons Township. Every player was a current or former Striker, and several of the seniors played in Strikers starting in grade school.

**Just in case
you lose your
perspective once in awhile...**

"Don't forget that what we're talking about is a little leather ball. You pump air into it. Kids run around a field and kick it and have fun."

—Daniel Corcos,
President Emeritus,
quoted in *The Wednesday Journal*

Health and Safety

Bernard Bach, MD

What is an ACL?

ACL stands for the anterior cruciate ligament of your knee. A ligament is a “cable” that connects bone to bone. Your ACL connects your thigh bone (femur) to your shin bone (tibia). Its main purpose is to prevent the tibia from sliding out from under the femur. It is commonly torn in soccer. Some estimate the rate of ACL tears in girls as high as 3 to 1 over boys.

How is the ACL injured?

The ACL can be injured from a traumatic, direct blow to the knee. The most common way to incur an ACL tear is a non-contact, twisting injury, with your foot planted.

This mechanism of injury essentially twists the knee joint, exceeding the restraint limit of the ACL, causing it to tear.

What are the signs and symptoms of an ACL tear?

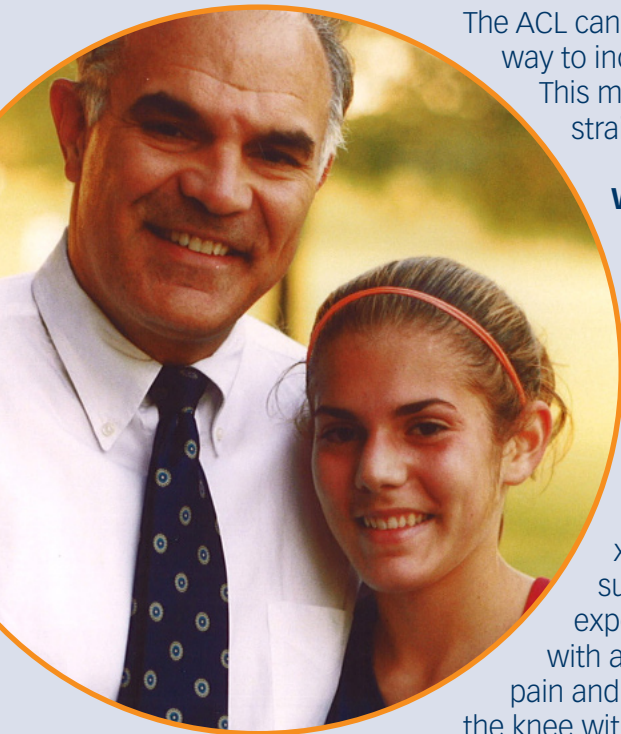
Signs of an ACL tear include hearing or feeling a “pop” from within your knee, which will usually cause you to fall. You may also see a fair amount of swelling in the knee within several hours of the injury. Your knee may feel unstable or “loose,” consistent with a major “cable restraint” being torn.

How is an ACL tear diagnosed?

Quite often, the pain and swelling from the injury are severe enough to warrant a trip to a local emergency room. At the preliminary exam, x-rays will be taken to rule out a fracture. A follow up with an orthopedic surgeon specializing in knee ligament injuries should be the next step. An experienced surgeon can usually make the diagnosis in a clinical setting with a number of manual tests performed on an exam table. Sometimes the pain and swelling are severe enough that the patient will subconsciously “guard” the knee with their muscles, making the clinical exam very difficult. This will require an MRI scan to assist in making an accurate diagnosis.

How can I prevent an ACL tear in my knee?

Unfortunately, there is no magic recipe you can follow to prevent tearing your ACL. However, there are measures you can take to minimize your chances of suffering a tear. The best form of prevention is total body fitness. This includes keeping your weight at an ideal level and keeping your entire body strong and flexible, not just your lower body. The trend in ACL tear prevention today focuses on proprioceptive and plyometric activities which “fine tune” the body’s reflex and reaction times. These activities can help young soccer players learn to change direction rapidly, develop better balance and knee stability. The goal of these types of programs is to sharpen the link between your brain, nerves and muscles so that they work together at peak efficiency in an effort to protect the knee joint in sports situations where there is injury potential.



Meet the New Coach

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some of our promising younger keepers to play well. The rest of the positions I feel pretty good about. We have a talented bunch of boys who will have to adapt to new positions and to roles to be as successful as we were last year.

Q: What are your goals for the fall season?

PW: For the varsity we will start with the sectional final win and the rest will come. At the lower levels we have some new, but experienced coaches that will emphasize the Huskie style of possession play... My assistant Paul Daly will spend some time with the lower level practice sessions to make sure they are developing accordingly and there is logical flow between the levels—there has to be progression through the levels to be a successful program.

Q: What can Strikers do to help your program?

PW: Strikers is already helping by sharing field space, communicating to incoming freshmen about

the Huskie program, listening to my coaching staff's concerns about the state of soccer in this great community, and providing coaches like Dean Smith and Mick O'Malley who are focused on player development. If young soccer players are going to fully reach their potential in our community, it's going to take continuing cooperation between our program and Strikers as well as other clubs in the area.

Q: Any changes in the fall 2006 program?

PW: The Huskies were invited to be in the Pepsi Showdown, probably Illinois' most elite high school tournament. We are seeded 10th in the tournament and gained a lot of respect in the soccer community coming from nowhere last year. However, soccer is not just about winning games but building friendship and trust. I do not want to give too much away, I have a lot of extras planned (not including the team dinners), but if you drive by any of the practice fields, the soccer program will have a new look this year that sets the tone.



Fall/Winter 2006-7

Regular fall practices start

Week of August 28

Boys high school team tryouts

September 24

Last date for regular fall practices

October 29

First date for league games

Boys, September 3

Girls, September 10

OPRF HS Homecoming parade

September 30

Last date for league games

Boys, November 5

Girls, November 12

Whirled Cup

Early November... date TBA

Mandatory winter indoor practices start

Sunday, January 7

*"Who am I?"
(see answer
inside)*



Questions?

Visit our website,
www.oprfstrikers.com
or call the
Strikers office
708 771 5269

Go Strikers!

Oak Park River Forest Strikers Soccer Club

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