

NorthStar News

The Newsletter of NorthStar Soccer Ministries



OPPORTUNITY BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAUL NEVILLE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- OPPORTUNITY 1
- SPRING SEASON REPORT 2
- FALL PROGRAM PLANS 4
- COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS 6
- SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY! 8

NORTHSTAR SOCCER MINISTRIES promotes opportunities for investment in the lives of urban youth in Birmingham by providing a high quality Soccer Club within a holistic, Christian environment.

NorthStar Values

- Responsible
- Resilient
- Reverent

Newsletter printing by
Wolnski Scheduling Services!

OPPORTUNITY is the new theme we will interweave with our 3 values. Being RESPONSIBLE to work hard in practice will open up Opportunity for the team in games. Lost the ball on the attack? That's an Opportunity to show RESILIENCE & win it back. One of the twin components of REVERENCE is how we treat our opponents. That player intentionally fouled you? An Opportunity to demonstrate sportsmanship (and Christ-likeness) back.

Of course the theme carries meaning off the field as well. Instilling values in our kids will open up Opportunities for them in the future. I am praying that will be the case for Akeriya (above in her blue NorthStar jersey). She demonstrated commitment & leadership on the field so I named her Captain this past spring. A few weeks later, I wanted to hire one of our own kids to referee the Intramural (younger ages) games. I was already pleased with how she responded to being Captain—leading with encouragement and actively supporting the leadership of coaches. She was the obvious choice for the referee Opportunity.

In the picture above you see her not merely

refereeing but using the opportunity to teach. This coming fall I am extending her next Opportunity—Junior Assistant Coach, helping me with 11U & 12U girls teams.

Akeriya got her start playing soccer with our partner ministry Holy Rosary Soccer six years ago. Oak Tree Ministries has been there to encourage her and help her grow—spiritually, academically and emotionally. NorthStar provided her more soccer for a season, more spiritual encouragement, and will continue to provide her leadership development opportunities—at the same time we will support her as she takes a next step in her own soccer development with another Club.

The strategic ways we collaborate with other organizations are a key ingredient for nurturing values and building Opportunity for Akeriya—and many others.

Paul Neville

Spring Season Program Report

Early February was a confusing time. *Was field access restored? One was, another was delayed until April. Was it safe for kids to participate?* Increasingly evidence showed outdoor activity to be very low risk. *Would parents feel comfortable and want kids to return?* Responses were slow early on but interest grew as the season progressed. We tried to build in more fluidity than normal into the registration process with the hope of getting as many kids back as we could—even if late in the season—with the goal to set the stage well for the Fall season.

It was a confusing time but it was a successful strategy. Fall program growth—overall numbers, retention and level of play/quality of coaching—are all set to move forward this Fall beyond what we imagined in February!

NorthStar Intramural League



Above: 10U games. Left—Holy Rosary v NorthStar. Right—NorthStar v NorthStar. 10U league consisted of the above 3 teams plus guests from Pinson. **Below: 8U:** NorthStar East v West teams. Holy Rosary also supplied an 8U team and most weeks we played a round robin of mini-games with all 3 teams.

Below: 6U game day. *this is pre-game. The actual game looked more organized than this. Slightly. Parents, coaches & players all had a great time.*



Lights? Goals? More Action!

We are pleased to announce that NorthStar is a finalist being considered for funding from **One Hundred Shares Birmingham!** This is a major equipment grant which would provide

- portable lighting which we could use at Cornerstone Field (what we currently have takes over an hour for one person to set up and results in less darkness rather than what you would picture as a lighted field. Lighting will be crucial to our growing Club Team program as well as the proposed 6th grade league mentioned on page 7.
- Portable goals for the 6th grade league (but which will be very useful for other applications as well)
- A new(er) van to give us capacity for simultaneous east and west side van service

Club Teams



Left: 12U boys team from this past spring season after their final game. For a coed team spanning 3 birth years they did well (5-3 in regular games and 1-2 in the Trussville Tournament). This Fall, as our participation numbers rebound, these players will move out to a bunch of teams: 8 boys in the picture will play on the State League bound 14U team; 4 boys (1 not pictured) will move to the 13U rec team; 1 boy will move to our exciting new 11U boys team, the 2 girls pictured will be on our new 12U girls team; one girl (not pictured) will play with the 13U girls team. Below: two 12U boys in action



This past Spring NorthStar fielded 2 “Club Level teams” (both played in rec league CASL). The 12U boys and 14U girls. Our program partner Holy Rosary Soccer entered their 14U coed team under the NorthStar umbrella.

Left: One of several true U13 players on the U14 team. She is about to make one of her signature moves to get past her opponent.

Holy Rosary registering its coed U14 team through NorthStar meant we could share players—we took advantage of the opportunity in a big way. Several NorthStar boys and several girls took turns as guests on the Holy Rosary team. 5 Holy Rosary girls were regular guests on the NorthStar Girls team—including the player picture here (**bottom left**). A true U12 player by birth year, this girl was a key player on both U14 Holy Rosary Coed and U14 NorthStar Girls. We also added her as a guest with the NorthStar U12 boys in the Trussville Tournament (since they were the only NorthStar team participating). She was a major contributor on that tournament team as well!



It was a joy to see so many of our players flourish on the field this spring. Even better was to see them grow together as a team and show steps in embracing NorthStar values—on and off the field.

Fall Program Preview

The coming Fall season could be our biggest ever. NorthStar has two State League level teams set to begin practicing the end of July. Five teams that will play in the regional recreational league (CASL). All three of our Intramural sites will be back up and running with leagues for 6U, 8U and 10/11U to cover the full range of elementary ages.

Of our seven 'Club Teams' (Statue League and CASL) we have coaching committed for five. **We need coaches—Head Coaches or Assistants—for the 13U boys, 15U girls, 13U girls and 11U girls & Intramural teams.**

- Head Coaches need to have a strong soccer background
- We love for Assistant Coaches to have a strong soccer background but can utilize Assistants with an interest in teaching the game and using it as a tool for mentoring kids—regardless of soccer background.
- Coaches for our 6U/8U/10U NorthStar Intramural League are a mix of parents, college students and other volunteers who share a commitment to
 - mentor kids & coach them for success in life
 - teach them NorthStar Values (Responsible/Resilient/Reverent) through our devotionals
 - Help them develop confidence as they learn soccer skills

If one of these Opportunities is a potential fit for you — Let us know!

NorthStar Intramural Soccer (6U/8U/10U—ages 4 through 10) will kick off on August 31!

- Hemphill after-school team practices are 3:00-4:15 on Tuesdays & Thursday
- East (Cornerstone) and West (Legion Field) practices are 5:30-6:45 on Tuesdays & Thursdays.

Contact Paul Neville today if you are interested in: coaching, administrative help, or serving as a devotional leader.

paul@northstarsoccerministries.org

NorthStar Girls Club Teams

The Girls Club level (meaning, 11U and older) is the focus of Paul Neville. We will have 4 teams—11U (intermediate level), 12U (advanced), 13U (intermediate), 15U (advanced—one of our 2 State League Teams). Currently Paul Neville is the coach for all 4 teams (several wonderful assistants make that possible). "But I am willing to share!"

Not sure about the Head Coach commitment? I am ready to mentor a team of Assistants to make sure the girls on these 4 teams all get quality attention leading to spiritual impact, character & values development and—soccer skill development. *Join me!*

Team Highlight—12U Girls Team

- Team will practice at Cornerstone Field and play 'most competitive' CASL (with a goal to play State League in Fall 2022)
- We have the core 9 ready to roll and Coach Paul will add 3 subs as the right girls who are ready for this team are identified.
- Team composition—2 'NorthStar West' girls from Princeton Elementary, 4 Cornerstone School girls, 1 Holy Rosary girl, 1 new recruit through our expanding Birmingham City School partnership, and 1 more through word of mouth.
- Assistant Coach, Lindsey Giglio. Junior Assistant Coach, Akeriya Hamilton!

Below, Cornerstone students (left—Kylee, right—Sarah Grace). These 2 started with NorthStar Soccer as 6U players—since the beginning of our Cornerstone partnership in 2016. Look out world, they are a couple of tough & skilled competitors!



Team Highlight— 14U Boys Team—Fall 2021

July 27 the NorthStar 14U boys team will begin team training sessions. One of two NorthStar teams that will be playing in Alabama State League this Fall, this dynamic team is composed of a diverse group of boys from all ends of the city.

Coach—Hayden Hilt is entering his 6th year coaching for NorthStar. Hayden joined us as a freshman at Birmingham-Southern College and has continued coaching with us after graduating. Over the years Hayden has coached various age levels from 8U to 12U. He is devoted to coaching excellence (is pursuing his D license with US Soccer coaching education this Fall) and is committed to his quiet but firm style of team atmosphere.



Above—Hayden coaching the 12U team this past Spring season. 8 out of 16 of those players will move forward with Hayden on the new 14U team. The rest will be divided across several teams (including 12U girls featured to the left) but all will continue playing soccer with NorthStar!

Players & Program Partners behind them

- 6 team members had their start at NorthStar West Intramural (next to Legion Field stadium), our original program site. 3 **Tuggle** elementary students and 1 Princeton Elementary (core NorthStar Schools, since always). 2 more from other schools.
- 4 team members are former students at **Hemphill Elementary School** in the West End neighborhood of Birmingham. They are products of our after school outreach program at Hemphill Elementary School in the West End neighborhood of Birmingham. 1 more word-of-mouth to bring our West End representation to 5 players
- 3 team members played for years on with our partner **Holy Rosary Soccer** in the Gate City neighborhood on the east side of Birmingham.
- 1 team member was referred to us by our partner, **Briarwood Soccer Club**, last Fall when they didn't have a team to fit him during the peak of the pandemic. He stayed with NorthStar and will be a key player on this dynamic team in the Fall.



Sponsors!

NorthStar is funded through a mix of sustaining contributors, team sponsors and parent fees. Thanks to all who make the work possible!

A really big thanks to our Club Team Uniform Sponsor—**Ingram Equipment**. We would love to add an Intramural Program Sponsor to provide more funding for that program!

Elegant Earth sponsors our 14U boys team for the coming year. We would welcome team sponsors for the two younger boys teams. **ACCI** sponsorship will shift down to 11U/12U girls teams. Our 15U girls (like Gabby to the right) would look great with YOUR company or other logo on their sleeve!



Collaborative Ministry Enhances Opportunities!

Holy Rosary Soccer

Holy Rosary Church in Gate City is on the edge of the Marks Village Public Housing Community and operates youth programs for kids in that community and surrounding areas. Soccer is their strongest program effort.

Our partnership began in January 2019. We started with Holy Rosary 8U and 10U teams entering the NorthStar Intramural league and doing shared field management. Next step was the older Holy Rosary team registering under NorthStar, opening opportunities for our players to be guests on each other’s teams.

In May the Holy Rosary players who were rising 11U and older attended NorthStar Club Team tryout & evaluation. We have distributed those Rosary players among the planned teams—increasing our ability to have single gender teams spanning fewer ages. The combination has also enhanced the competitive level of several of the NorthStar teams.



Briarwood Soccer Club

An outreach program of Briarwood Church, Briarwood Soccer has a spiritual focus similar to NorthStar and has been a great partner for the 20+ years we have had soccer as a ministry tool. In June NorthStar took 33 players to the one week Briarwood Soccer Camp—where they had great soccer training *plus* spiritual impact. “We need 3 more weeks of this camp!” — Tyrone (U14, Holy Rosary/NorthStar player after the week of Briarwood soccer camp).

This Fall our 15U girls team is officially registering under Briarwood, which will open the opportunity to share players between the teams and build cross-team relationships.

Oak Tree Ministries

Oak Tree Ministries is on the opposite edge of Marks Village from Holy Rosary. Most of the Holy Rosary players are also active with Oak Tree. Holy



Rosary uses the Oak Tree bus to transport players. Oak Tree staff attend games in support of Holy Rosary players (and plan to follow those players as they are dispersed on to different NorthStar teams this fall).

This past season when there was a major discipline issue involving Holy Rosary girls (who were also regular guest players on the NorthStar girls team), Oak Tree stepped in to provide support to coaches and role play guidance for kids. Oak Tree also provides an additional level of spiritual outreach to these kids.

The collaborative partnership between NorthStar, Holy Rosary and Oak Tree is a model for what we would like to more strongly develop for other groups of NorthStar players. **Cahaba Medical Care** is actively supporting NorthStar at Hemphill. Pray for another partner to join that partnership. Pray for a partner to embrace Tuggle Elementary and a partner to work with us to support all these west side players as they move into middle school and beyond.



Cornerstone School

Our partnership with Cornerstone began in 2016 when they invited us to bring our soccer program to their new field next to the elementary school in the Woodlawn Neighborhood. (from 2002 to 2015 our soccer program operated solely from the practice field next to Legion Field Stadium on the west side of Birmingham).

That field was a bit rough at the beginning but we have made improvements to it and for the last few years it has been our primary field and the location for all NorthStar games. Cornerstone is the single greatest source of NorthStar players. This Fall we anticipate 60 to 70 Cornerstone kids participating in the NorthStar Intramural League as ‘NorthStar East’ with another 10+ distributed throughout our Club Teams.

Players with NorthStar experience have begun moving up to Cornerstone High School and contributing to Cornerstone athletics at that level. This school year we anticipate offering some in-school clinics at Cornerstone. The combination of the field and the collaborative impact on kids makes this one of our most important partnerships!

Junior League of Birmingham

Since 2017 JLB has provided funding and coaches in support of the 6U soccer program at NorthStar. Having these ladies serve as the core of our coaching team for the 4 & 5 year olds has been a tremendous asset to the ministry.



Congratulations to **Jackson Nabors** of Indian Springs HS for being named Gatorade Player of the Year for 2021. Thanks also to Jackson for designating NorthStar as a grant recipient on his behalf. Jackson plays Club soccer with Hoover Vestavia Soccer Club, which is how he connected to NorthStar in the first place. Thanks to Vestavia Soccer for consistent support of NorthStar for years and to **Hoover Vestavia Soccer Club** for continuing that support for our players!



New Collaborative Partners leading to Opportunity for more youth

The Church at Brookhills has a strong, established partnership with Oliver Elementary School (serving the Gate City area). Currently we are exploring possibilities for a partnership with NorthStar, Brookhills and Oliver School to launch “NorthStar at Oliver,” in the Spring 2022 season. This will be our 2nd After School program (Hemphill Elementary School being the first). The after-school model is a great platform for strengthening our ability to reach harder to reach kids. Pray that NorthStar at Oliver will be a big success and set the stage for a third such program in the future!

We have worked with individual schools for years, of course, but our new work with the Physical Education Department of Birmingham City Schools is leading us toward the launch of an *in-school 6th grade league* in the Spring 2022 season. We hope to reach 6th graders across the city but it makes sense to focus and build on our strongest elementary school presences. Oliver students go to Putnam Middle School so that is one logical focus for the new program. Students from Hemphill & Tuggle Elementary go to Wilkerson Middle School so that will be another. Cornerstone School will also participate in this new and exciting program.

Please join us in praying for the funding and the staffing to implement these exciting prospective add-on programs.



NorthStar Soccer Ministries
P.O. Box 11512
Birmingham, AL 35202

Nonprofit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

Permit Number

3257

Birmingham, AL

Phone: 205-322-9296

E-mail: paul@northstarsoccerministries.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Board of Directors:

Rachael Burrow, Raymond Butler, Michael Grant, Kevin Holdefer, Annette Martin, Kimberly Rollins, Teneasha Washington

Executive Director: Paul Neville

Club Registrar: Michelle Chambers

Intern: Matt Dale

www.northstarsoccerministries.org

NORTHSTAR SOCCER MINISTRIES— HELPING YOUTH FIND THEIR DIRECTION

Seize the Opportunity!

What difference will your time & commitment make in the life of youth in our community? Only one way to find out!

NorthStar Soccer has Opportunities for experienced soccer players to use your love for the game as a tool for ministering to kids!

Don't have a soccer background? We have Opportunities for you too!

Take a look inside to read more about the Opportunity to change lives—and have your life changed at the same time!



Support NorthStar while you shop on amazon. Log on to smile. Amazon.com and selected NorthStar Soccer Ministries as your charity of choice. A portion of what you spend will come to NorthStar as a contribution!