

Grand Junction Soccer Club
Strategic Plan and Statement of Principles
2009-2014
Draft, March 23, 2009

The goal of this Strategic Plan is to provide general oversight and guidance for the Grand Junction Soccer Club (GJSC) over the next five years. The mission statement of GJSC is:

“The Grand Junction Soccer Club is dedicated to providing year-round soccer opportunities that are fun, positive and challenging for individuals of all ages, abilities and financial means.”

To provide the maximum number of playing experiences, it is the goal of the GJSC to provide a tiered structure with teams ranging from recreational to the top level of Colorado Youth Soccer. GJSC also hopes to provide year-round playing opportunities for those children and families who want it. GJSC would like to expand the number of teams and playing opportunities while still keeping costs affordable and providing scholarship funds to families in need. GJSC hopes to provide a quality soccer experience for everyone from the recreational player to a young determined individual who dreams of playing in the World Cup.

Club Membership and Growth – Creating a Grand Junction Soccer Culture

In order to achieve the goals outlined in this Strategic Plan, GJSC would provide a variety of teams at each age level. Table 1 outlines the number of teams and programs for each age group that GJSC hopes to achieve by 2014. If GJSC were successful in these goals, GJSC would then be able to provide an opportunity to virtually any soccer player of any ability and age. There would be multiple options for players and their families to choose from. If the structure were fully filled out GJSC would have a full array of recreational and competitive teams that would not detract from each other. The ideal number of teams at each level is presented first, because the rest of the club should be built around these numbers.

U4-U7

This age group play is purely recreational and is focused on getting young children exposed to soccer and having fun. Practices and games are limited to the in-house recreational league and teams can use the Soccer Plex if desired.

U8

The focus continues to be at the recreational level. Monday Night Football is available for players wanting an additional day of training. A winter Futsal league is also available.

U9-U10

Three tiers of playing are now available at this age group: Premier, Monday Night Football, and the in-house recreational league. Monday Night Football would only be available for children who are not on the Premier team. A winter Futsal league is available for any child of any ability. There would be one Premier team per age group per gender and the recreational league at this age level. The Premier coaches would be a higher level of coaching.

Table 1. Levels of teams at different age groups for GJSC. In five years, it is the goal of GJSC to have teams in all of these categories.

U4-U6	U7-U8	U9 – U10	U11 – U14	U15 – U18	Adult	PDL
Rec. League	Academy (Monday Night Football)	Premier	Premier (CYS)	Premier	Men’s League	Fire FC Men’s Team
Soccer Plex	Rec. League	Academy (Monday Night Football)	United (CYS)	United U15/U16	Women’s League	
	Soccer Plex	Rec. League	Inferno (WSSL)	United U17/U18	Coed League	
	Futsal (U8)	Futsal	Blaze (WSSL)	Futsal	Summer 7 on 7	
			Futsal		Futsal	
		Rec. League and 1 Premier team in each age group.	4 Teams in each age group.		Fire FC Team in all leagues	Professional Team that plays at Mesa State Stadium and players are integrated into GJSC coaching

U11-U14

At this age group GJSC provides the maximum number of playing opportunities. The Premier team is the highest level and plays in the CYS. The United team is the second level team and also plays in the CYS. The Inferno and Blaze are the third and fourth level teams and they both play in the WSSL. This is the goal to have 2 teams playing in CYS and 2 teams in WSSL, actual placement will depend on results, player and family commitment, and coaching recommendations. The players on each team each year will change depending on player ability and will be selected by GJSC coaches and Coaching Directors. By providing 4 different levels of soccer that plays in two different leagues, GJSC will ensure that there is a team for any level of play and any level of family

commitment. The goal would be to have 4 different teams per age per gender. There would be a total of 32 teams from U11 to U14. If numbers exceeded expectations, a fifth team could be added. The Premier and possibly United coaches would have high level of coaching.

U15-U18

It is the experience of youth soccer clubs nationwide that participation begins to decline in this age group. GJSC would continue to have a Premier team at each age group and gender from U15 to U18. In addition there would be U15/16 and U17/U18 United teams. There would be a total of 12 teams from U15 to U18. If the program grew, then there would be a United team for each individual age.

Adults

GJSC would provide a Men's League, Women's League, and a Coed League in the Fall and Spring, as well as a Futsal League in the winter. GJSC would support a Fire FC Team in each league. A 7 on 7 open league or arena league in the summer could also provide additional opportunities for adults and high school students.

Mesa State College (MSC)

The relationship between GJSC and MSC has grown dramatically in the past year to the benefit of both entities. Having a quality Men's and Women's program that plays games in a quality stadium shows youth of the Grand Valley that there are attractive options other than football and baseball. Watching high school and MSC games at night at Walker Stadium is an experience that enriches soccer in the valley. The MSC programs provide a young, but knowledgeable pool of potential coaches. Talented young coaches that show promise can grow with the club from a skills trainer to an assistant coach to a head coach. GJSC members provide MSC with increased attendance and support of their programs. GJSC should continue to foster and nurture this relationship. GJSC may also have the ability to use Walker Field pending availability and permits.

Premier Development League (PDL)

At the very top of the Fire FC playing structure would be a Men's Professional/Amateur team that played a 16-game schedule with home games at Mesa State Soccer Stadium during the summer months. In the United States the top professional league is Major League Soccer (MLS). The United Soccer Leagues offer three tiers of professional soccer below the MLS. The Premier Development League is the third tier of the United Soccer League and the fourth level of professional soccer in the United States. Players could potentially be incorporated into GJSC as coaches and running clinics during the summer. The league allows for some players to be paid, but the structure and schedule also allows for elite level college players to play as amateurs without jeopardizing their eligibility.

If GJSC PDL was successful it would dramatically transform the club and soccer presence in the Grand Valley. It could also have major implications to the annual budget, so should be pursued cautiously and in a sustainable manner. Marketing efforts could also significantly contribute to the PDL team. GJSC currently sees investigating a

potential PDL team as a second tier priority. If GJSC membership grows as outlined in this Strategic Plan and the efforts of the Marketing Director are successful, a sub-committee should be formed to investigate a PDL team in 1-2 years.

Program Growth

To reach the numbers needed to maintain 4 full teams per age group from U11-U14 would require that GJSC has 70-80 children per age group per gender from U7 through U14, with slightly lower numbers at older age groups. Total numbers from U4 to U18 would need to be approximately 2600 children. (U4-U6 – 300, U7-U14 – 1152, U15-U18 – 252).

This represents a 112% and 97% increase from the number of children that were registered in the Fall (1,226) and Spring (1,320) of 2008, respectfully. However, GJSC had a high of 2,475 children in the program in the Fall of 1997. At the time 2,475 children represented 12.8% of District 51 students. The Fall 2008 numbers only represent 5.7% of District 51 Students. To achieve 2,600 children, GJSC would need to have 12.1% of the students in District 51, which is below what GJSC has achieved in the past. Since a low of 971 in the spring of 2005, participation has increased an average of 3.6% per season. We think that achieving player registration of 2,600 is entirely possible over the next 5 years.

To reach the goal of having 4 teams of 18 players per age group from U11 to U14, GJSC needs approximately 72 players per age group per gender. According to Spring 2008 numbers GJSC meets or exceeds these numbers from U6 to U9. Historically GJSC numbers have dropped off when players reach U10. For example GJSC only had 47 boys at the U10 level in the Spring of 2008. If GJSC simply retains numbers that it already has in its lowest age groups, GJSC could meet our tiered structure goals in the next 5 years. Retention of players already in GJSC is the most effective way to reach our desired numbers. GJSC will focus its efforts on getting 4 teams at the U11 level each year in each of the next four years. In this manner after five years the current U9s will be U14s and GJSC will have obtained the goal of 4 teams per age group per gender.

Expansion

In addition to retention, GJSC can expand its membership in several ways. First, GJSC should have a stronger presence in the growing Hispanic community. Having at least one Spanish-speaking staff member would be very desirable. In addition GJSC can expand its membership to the eastern half of the valley. In 2008, only 2% of the club was from Palisade. There is also a perception that GJSC is more expensive and caters more to the competitive level than the other soccer club in the valley. By achieving the number of teams outlined above, GJSC will be providing a broader level of teams to play for and by implementing additional coaching education (see below), will be providing the highest quality soccer experience in the Grand Valley for any ability.

Domestic/International Partnership

GJSC should investigate the opportunities of creating a partnership opportunity with an American and/or European club. This partnership could lead to club exchanges between

the two countries or programs and an exchange of coaching and developmental ideas. This partnership could also provide top level players with increased opportunities.

Staffing Plan

To meet the needs of the player and team structure outlined above, GJSC office and coaching staff would also have to grow.

Office Staff

General Manager: Responsible for the day-to-day activities of the club including but not limited to scheduling, collecting fees, budget, team formation, and field logistics. This position would also be Tournament Director for GJSC two annual tournaments. This position would oversee all office staff.

Office Manager: Responsible for team formation and collecting fees. This position would be responsible or oversee communication and frequent updates of website.

Office Assistant: Assists with office tasks where needed.

Facilities Coordinator: If an indoor facility were created, a coordinator would need to be hired to oversee logistics and scheduling of the facility.

Marketing Director: This position is responsible for bringing in additional streams of revenue through sponsorships and would play a large role in the club's major fundraiser each year. This person leads grant-writing for the club.

Age Group Coordinators: These would be part-time positions, with each person coordinating 2-4 age groups as well as one person coordinating the adult leagues. Ideally they would match the same age groups as the Coaching Directors described below. They would be responsible for team formation, logistics, and collecting fees. They would be in regular communication with the Coaching Director of their age group.

Minority Relations Director: Minority populations are currently underrepresented in GJSC and the language barrier is likely a significant barrier. By hiring a bi-lingual coordinator, GJSC could more effectively reach the Hispanic and other minority populations. This would be a part-time position.

Director of Referees/Assignor: This is a part-time position. This position would assign referees, provide training for referees, and lead recruitment efforts.

Coaching Staff

Technical Director: Oversees soccer aspects of the club including but not limited too, hiring coaches, coordinating with CYS and WSSL leagues for competitive team

placement, selection of players to competitive teams, and train and develop staff coaches. The Technical Director would oversee all age group directors.

Age Group Coaching Directors: One age group director would be hired for U4-U8, U9-U11, U12-U15, and U16-U18. The positions are purposefully offset by a year to the transitions in playing opportunities that go from U10 to U11 and U14 to U15. Having the same coordinator will make the transition period easier for players and families, and the same coordinator will be able to readily explain the different options during this transition. These positions will correspond to the age group coordinators in the office staff. The two groups would work closely with each other during team formation. Age group coordinators would be responsible for coaching contacts, getting feedback from teams, and player identification.

Goalkeeper Coach: This position would provide individual and group training to goalkeepers at the older age levels. The position would be a roving.

Premier and Academy Coaches: It is the goal of GJSC to have all high level Premier and Academy coaches, which may result in these coaches being paid positions. After five years, GJSC would have the full complement of teams at all age groups, necessitating a minimum 22 coaches for just Premier and Academy coaches. There would be an additional 14 coaches at the United level.

Agility/Strength/Nutrition/Psychological Coordinator: Soccer is more than just footwork and movement off the ball. Players can benefit from improving agility and strength drills and mental preparation can greatly improve performance. This person would be a roving instructor offering clinics to players and to teams throughout the year and designing off-season program.

Facilities

GJSC currently has good relationships with the City of Grand Junction and Mesa County regarding field access. However the relationship with local high schools to utilize their gyms for futsal has been much more tenuous. The recent and dramatic change in this relationship is reason for concern for indoor facilities. Therefore GJSC should consider outdoor and indoor facilities differently.

Outdoor Facilities

GJSC currently has access to two great outdoor facilities at Canyon View Park and Long's Park. In both cases GJSC is the largest or one of the largest tenants of these facilities, and thereby GJSC gets good access and prices. GJSC needs to be aware that this could change as population in the valley grows and other sports like lacrosse grow in popularity. While not as pressing as indoor facilities, GJSC should always be open to an opportunity to develop its' own outdoor facilities.

Indoor Facilities

Futsal is growing in popularity. Soccerplex has also been a huge success, particularly for younger players. Both Futsal and Soccerplex give players a chance to play year-round and provide an additional revenue stream for the club. In the winter of 2008-09, access to gyms became much more limited and GJSC had to turn players and teams away from Futsal. The strategic plan calls for investigating the options and costs to create an indoor facility that could also house office staff. This facility could potentially open up Futsal to more age groups and teams and include an adult league. This could also allow for “Midnight” soccer leagues in the summer where indoor leagues allow children access to summer out of the heat and provides another activity for youth. It would also allow for GJSC to hold an Indoor Tournament each winter as an additional revenue stream. A community room could provide places for teams and the club to meet, training space for coaching and referee clinics, and could be available to rent for birthday parties and special events. Glacier Ice Arena has quickly filled its ice time throughout the year with hockey leagues and private rentals. If space, were not filled up by soccer activities, it could potentially be leased to private groups and other summer sports, such as baseball and lacrosse to use as a winter training facility. By moving the administrative offices to the same facility, GJSC the costs for those costs and the costs paid for Futsal gym rentals would be absorbed. An indoor facility may quickly pay for itself with additional streams of revenue. An indoor facility is higher priority than an outdoor facility. A sub-committee should investigate the costs and opportunities of an indoor facility.

Marketing and Fundraising

Fundraising

GJSC should have one premier fundraising event per year. Two additional side events. All events should have some funding generated go towards scholarship funding. In the future a scholarship fund may be created former club players who go on to college.

Tournaments

GJSC shall strive to hold 2 tournaments per year. At least one of these tournaments should provide a high level of play. The tournaments will provide a chance for GSJC teams to play against competition from outside Colorado and will raise funds for the club.

GJSC Investment Account

The Board of Directors will assess the GJSC investment account performance at least twice a year. The General Manager and a sub-committee that is appointed by the Board will have direct contact with the assigned advisor quarterly. The objective for the investment account will be as follows: Act in a manner that is reflective of the GJSC Board of Directors. GJSC will consider both the short term time horizon, (usually 1 to 3 years) and the long term horizon (5 years and beyond). The short term portion of the portfolio will be managed in a prudent and conservative manner. The long term horizon portion will be managed in a growth and income portfolio, still conservative but more in line with a long term time horizon.

Capital Campaign to Build Endowment/Indoor Facility/Rainy Day Funds

This may be worth investigating particularly in concert with developing an indoor facility. Marketing Director could play a large role.

Coaching Education

In order for GJSC to reach its membership and program goals, retention as children age is of utmost importance. A major factor in retention is a quality experience that is made possible by quality coaches and coaching at all levels and ages of the club. A non-soccer playing parent can still provide quality coaching when given the proper tools. GJSC needs to always remember that it is often the coaches who do not seek out extra help are the ones that may need the most assistance. Many coaches are parents who are volunteering, so requirements to attend coaching clinics should be kept to a minimum. However the option of optional coaching education needs to always be present and coaching contacts with GJSC staff need to be a requirement of agreeing to coach a team at any level. GJSC should:

- Increase coaching clinics
- Increase coaching contacts with GJSC coaching staff
- Develop age-specific manuals with practice outlines for an entire season

Conclusions

Primary Priorities to Begin Implementing Now

1. Move towards filling the team structure as outlined in Table 1 beginning with ensuring that this year's U10s fill all 4 teams as next years U11s.
2. A sub-committee completes its plans to determine the cost and feasibility of developing an indoor facility.
3. Expand coaching manuals and coaching contacts, particularly with recreational coaches.
4. Hire a U4-U8 director
5. Hire a Hispanic Relations Director
6. Establish a coaching fee structure

Secondary Priorities

1. Hire a Goalkeeper Coordinator
2. Hire a Nutritionist/Agility/Strength coordinator
3. If growth continues as outlined in this strategic plan and the marketing director position is successful, investigate the opportunities of a PDL team.
4. Investigate opportunities to create an international/domestic partnership.