



BITS Week 10 Newsletter

Hi BITS Families –

The end of the season is always bittersweet for the Red Shirts. The excitement of parent tunnels, team parties and trophies; mixed in with the emotion of another season coming to a close. We have had a roller coaster to say the least this year; we have never had this much rain in a single season; which led to more logistical challenges that we expected. We thank you for your support, for your patience, for your grace as we worked through the challenges, and now we're ready to finish the season on a high note!

So let's get into our quick housekeeping notes:

GAME SCHEDULE:

- All games this week are a MAKEUP OF THE WEEK 3 SCHEDULE.
- An email should have come to the league earlier this morning with field assignments for K-9th Grade. All Pre-K teams will operate on a typical schedule.
- TOPSoccer is indoors at BCMS
- If your child will be absent this week, please make sure your coaches are aware of your absence, so games can be shifted as needed ahead of game start times.

UNIFORM REMINDERS:

- It is November, and it is going to be chilly tomorrow. Hats and Gloves are permitted; as are sweatshirts and jackets
- ALL HOODS MUST BE TUCKED INTO THE NECK OF THE JERSEY, so that hood cannot be pulled.
- Shinguards must still be worn under pants
- For families that are new to BITS, you do not need to return your uniform; they are yours to keep. You can continue to wear your BITS uniform proudly on spirit days at school!

REFEREES:

- Referees; please remember to reply to Mr. Parry to RSVP for the end of the year ref party
- If you are not able to attend; please email Mr. Parry to coordinate receiving your check; and return of your referee jersey and flags.
- All Ref gear must be returned in order for you to receive your check

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT:

- The BITS Shed will be open on Saturday – All coaches must return gear bags to the shed tomorrow; there will be referees on hand to assist you with equipment return
- For any parents who would like to donate cleats or shinguards to the club for next year's cleat swap, please drop off at the shed tomorrow, we will have the purple bin outside!

CLEAN UP:

- For any teams that are planning to have a team get together after their games, please ensure that all cardboard / pizza boxes are disposed of properly. If trash does not fit in the Snack Shack receptacles, we have an open top dumpster adjacent to the shed for larger disposal.

FINAL THOUGHTS FROM MADAME PRESIDENT:

Tomorrow is my last day as the President of BITS; so here I sit, writing my final newsletter. When I announced my retirement last year, I figured I had plenty of time to think about this moment, and I've drafted this in my head several times. But when I actually sit down to write, the words are a little shaky, so bear with me.

As many of you know, I started with the club when my oldest son Ben was in Pre-K. My husband Erik spent a large portion of the season as BITS Resident Chicken Nugget cooker, and he suggested we go to a board meeting. Before we knew it, I was the club Picture Coordinator, and then Secretary in rapid succession. (Erik said I had better handwriting and better note taking skills, which is entirely true). I served as VP for a term and have served as the club's president since 2018. Essentially, my family doesn't know Saturday's without soccer, or snack shack chicken nuggets. When we joined BITS, Ben was a toddler, Wyatt was strapped in a stroller, and Matty wasn't even a blip on the radar. Erik and I didn't have ANY grey hair! Now over a decade later, we have embraced the BITS organization, the hundreds of families we've come to know as friends, and even the grey hair. You've become part of the Keller Family, and we could not be more grateful.

So as I sign off today, I say this: It has been the honor and privilege of a lifetime to serve on the Branchburg In-Town Soccer Board, and to be your president. Thank you for trusting the club with your children. Thank you for showing up in rain, in snow, in a heat wave, in the freezing cold, and everything in between. Thank you for going through sign ins, health checks, masks, no masks, picture day changes, field changes, my famous warning notices, bee stings, injuries, empty sand bags, unlined fields, rocks, deer poop, cleat questions, runaway toddlers, errant baseballs, and the Country Fair. But most importantly thank you for the fun and the memories. The joy on our players faces each week, watching them grow as soccer players, watching them mature into Buddies and Referees is unmatched. I leave the field every week with a smile, knowing that soccer is exactly what we need on a Saturday.

To the BITS Boards current and past, THANK YOU. You taught me how to be a more patient human, you taught me how to laugh more; you taught me how to embrace change, I even attempted to delegate on occasion.

- **The OG: John, Harry, Ed, Tony** – you have served this town for decades, and you are who I wanted to emulate as a volunteer. You are the reason I joined the Parks & Rec Committee, the reason I tried so hard to push for field improvements, and the reason the club is so storied in strength and numbers.
- **The side crew of support: Bill & Greg** – you should both be honorary red shirts for life. Thank you for coming to the field to support the kiddos week after week, for the pancakes, for the cheering, for the therapy, for the late night emails of encouragement. You simply are the best.
- **Statler & Waldorf: Rob & Brian** – You are fixtures in the landscape, and I am so grateful that neither one of you ever really retired. Your presence and your support both on and off the field is recognized constantly by the club. You left a legacy, and I hope it continues for years to come. Thank you for being an ever-ready sounding board, and source of humor. Though McClaine, you're going to need to clear your stuff out of the shed soon.... The incoming president might want a lock change on the door!
- **The Recently Retired: Becky, Jenn, Michelle, Jodi** – Thank you for time and service, for your friendship, and for all of your efforts. Even in your time away from the board, you continue to be part of the family, and we love seeing you on the fields still. All the love!

To the fam: Erik, Ben, Wyatt and Matty. Thanks for being the backbone, the crew, the behind the scenes, and the manpower that loads my car every weekend. We are the ultimate family sandwich and I love you more than the whole sky. We did this together; you deserve way more than a participation trophy. You ARE THE WORLD CUP.

And to the current BITS BOARD: (sorry, I know, the Oscars music is playing in the background)

- **Stephen, the Referee Chief:** As if dealing with me at work for almost 20 years wasn't enough, you were a glutton for punishment. Thank you for building on the Referee Program, and for the relationships you have built and strengthened with our refs. You are a mentor, a coach, and a friend, and I am truly honored that you joined the club.
- **Elijah, the training guru:** Thank you for joining the board, for continuing to coach, for pitching in wherever is needed, and for being the future of the club. You are an asset to the club, and to the community – I can't wait to see your kids continue to grow with us!

- **Diana, the Picture Day Master:** My spirit sister. Thank you for your organization, for understanding how hard it is to be this short, and for being a support structure in all things being a mom. You are an amazingly strong human, your family is blessed to have you as their wife, daughter and mother, and you have the patience of a saint. Keep that Traveling Circus going.
- **Nhan, though he's not really on the board:** Thank you to the Strive in Sports team for being part of the family. Thank you for your organization, your positive motivation every week, your 8pm conference calls, your SIS trainers for being simply awesome. You are more than just the trainer, you are part of the crew.
- **Tim, the guy who does more than just uniforms:** Some people are just meant to be your friend – you are one of them. Your sense of humor is unmatched, as is your dedication, and your fierce will to make people smile. People around you are glad to be in your presence. Plus you're the only person I know that can get Wendy's to deliver to the shed, or offer to stuff his own olives, and those skills are lifelong friend worthy.
- **Jeremy, the VP:** Thank you for being our resident expert on cornhole, and our weatherman. Though you couldn't hold up the "dome" some weekends, you sure held us all up. Thank you for your enthusiasm, for your coaching, your planning, your foresight and your leadership. Can't wait to see the club under your presidency – you're going to be amazing.
- **Kerrin, the OG Branchburg Friend, master of the Pivot Table, and longest serving Club Secretary:** Kangaroo Kids brought us together, soccer and boy-momming kept us together. Thank you and Neil for your decades of friendship, and for your dedication and service to the club. You have done it all, and balanced it all beautifully, and never let them see you sweat (mostly, because we were freezing together). Love you bunches.
- **Tony, the guy who keeps us financially and mentally stable:** You are the heart and soul of this club my friend. Three decades is unmatched. Your daughter grew up playing in BITS, and now we're watching your grandchildren take the field. Every grandkid extends your tenure for another 5 years, so hold onto that jacket. Let us know where you're going for dinner tomorrow, so we can start the group chat just as you and Cheryl sit down.
- **Heather, the bestest friend and partner:** I never thought I would gain a sister in my mid-30's, and I don't know how I survived before you came into Thirsty's. You are the most passionate and driven human I know. You grew TOPSoccer from an idea at the end of the season, to a standalone program. One of only 20 in the state. You believe in every kid on your field, you believe in the power of positivity, of being inclusive, of giving people a chance. The world needs more Heathers. You have been my first phonecall, the one who knows what I'm thinking before I think it, and an unending ear. I cannot wait to retire into TOPS with you next year, though we HAVE TO GET NAMETAGS, so people don't get us confused. Thank you for being everything, everywhere, all at once.

And with that, you'll have a new President next season – stay tuned for his inaugural address!

Thank you BITS, it has been a great run.

With Love, Gretchen

**All the Best in the off-season to all our BITS Families, thank you for a great season.
We'll see you May 1st!**

BITS RED SHIRTS