



Phoenix FC President's Report

Hi again Phoenix FC Family,

As the days shorten and the temperature drops, we wrap up our outdoor soccer season, which seems shorter every year. We quickly retool, shift gears and transition towards the indoor season.

Outdoor Season Summary

Thank you to all the players, coaches, referees, staff and families that contributed to a successful outdoor season. It was a pleasure to get out to games and training sessions and speak with many of you over the summer. I take pride in seeing the Phoenix culture showing in so many of our teams and players and the lessons learned in training being applied in games.

With the smoke and rain having less impact than recent years, games and tournaments went largely uninterrupted, which always makes it easier to plan around the busy soccer schedules. Congratulations to teams in their successful appearances in leagues and tournaments.

Thanks to the efforts of our staff and volunteers working in collaboration with the staff at Alberta Soccer, we successfully hosted the Tier 2 and 3 provincials in conjunction with the League 1 Women's Interprovincial Championship. The event was well attended, with several Phoenix teams representing us at the tournament. The economic benefit to the community will be notable, with hotels and restaurants filling up over the weekend.

Our facilities in Strathcona County showed as second to none this season. I would like to extend a large thank you to the staff, administration and councillors of Strathcona County who share our views on the importance of quality facilities to support the development of youth athletes, and it shows.

National Youth Soccer License

We remain on track in our National Youth Soccer License application process with our latest updates having been provided on August 15th and next steps involving league readiness discussions with Alberta Soccer for 2026 intake into the Alberta Player Development League.

Phoenix FC Staff Updates

Thank you to Bernie and his leadership during this time of transition and change. While the foundation remains sound, the operational improvements providing value to membership have been impressive.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new staff members Jordan Wainright and Tanya Giesbrecht. I have had the pleasure of meeting both of you and look forward to you bringing your passion and experience to our club.

Thank you to all staff at Phoenix FC for embracing change and showing effort and care in all that you do. I truly feel that we have a special group of people working at the club and your efforts too often go unrecognized.

Strategic Plan Updates

The board has recently reviewed the progress on the one-year goals of our 2025 Strategic Plan. There has been progress in many areas of the plan, while some other goals remain to be achieved.

Finances

Financial Year end July 31. Next few weeks will push to reconcile accounts and ensure all relevant costs are realized. Numbers looking good, likely ahead of budget. A credit to the joint efforts of board and staff to improve financial processes and reporting, enabling decisions to be made with financial considerations understood.

I am happy with the financial progress of the association and look forward to members seeing the benefits in the seasons ahead.

Facility Updates

We recently met with administration from Strathcona County and members of the Indoor Field House integrated project delivery team. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure the needs of the user groups are being met and prioritized in the project. In the meeting we were able to discuss many aspects of the proposed project including field sizes and layouts, spectator areas, change room facilities, storage areas and many other aspects of the infrastructure. We remain excited to continue to the journey of this premier indoor facility development and look forward to the beginning of construction in the spring next year.

Leadership

The board and staff remain tightly aligned in the pursuit of the strategic plan and path forward at Phoenix FC. I am enthused to see the progress in the trusting and open relationship between the staff and board, and this has been instrumental in the progress seen over the past 6 months.

Soccer In Canada

There are increased pressures from the changing soccer landscape in Canada. We are currently seeing a rapid movement towards the professionalization of youth sport and pressure to create pathways to support the national and professional club systems in Canada.

While the system engages a top-down direction of standards, requirements and certifications necessary to participate, there is a bottom-up funding of the system, with most of the funding coming from player registrations and fees. This is a national issue, with the model evident in

Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. There are significant reports of issues coming out of each of these provinces, with many districts and clubs struggling to succeed.

We are also seeing a large divide between Calgary and Edmonton soccer models within our own province. While the Alberta Player Development League is seeing success in Calgary, it is struggling to take root in Edmonton, with few clubs showing the ability or appetite to participate. The geography of our province and distance separation of our two large cities creates unique challenges to implement soccer programming models that have worked elsewhere.

The pressure to move forward with the national agenda is creating strain between Alberta Soccer and its membership. This strain is evident in the current relationship between the ASA board, staff and members and while there is a united voice to improve and move forward, the path forward is not yet clearly defined.

We remain committed to working with the Alberta Soccer Association and our fellow districts and clubs to provide the best youth soccer programming to our members.

Indoor Season Ahead

I was fortunate to be asked to help with some of the assessments in preparation for the indoor season. While it is always such a difficult and stressful task to evaluate players and form teams, it is such an important aspect in placing players in the right environment to maximize their opportunities to grow and learn. I appreciate the mental strain that this places on our staff and thank all the players, coaches, and parents who make this experience as positive as it can be.

Our registrations appear to be on track with estimates and forecasts with the possibility of some growth areas compared to the 2024/2025 indoor season. The recent trends have showed stability in membership and while some organic movement of players is to be expected, the majority of members are showing their satisfaction through their club loyalty.

While we never enjoy seeing a player leave, we do celebrate when players are able to earn opportunities outside of our club. We wish every player the best of luck in their journeys, be they here or elsewhere. You will always be welcome at Phoenix FC.

Nils Pregitzer

President

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