

MMYSA History

While adults were playing soccer in Marinette years earlier, soccer for kids began in the Twin City area during the spring of 1983. Both recreation departments, DAR & YMCA cooperatively organized soccer clinics for the local youth who really took to the sport. Dieter Gaiser, former UW-Marinette Soccer coach, German native & long time player was tapped to arrange a 2 age sessions of organized game opportunities to the 150 clinic attendees and the Youth Soccer League (Association) was born.

By summer of 1988, participation increased to over 360 local youth, the informal Youth Soccer League became the M & M Soccer Association and joined the national soccer organization, Soccer Association for Youth (SAY).

In the beginning years, games were played in various locations in Marinette (Lauerman Field, Civic Center) and Menominee (High School, The YMCA). But it became important to families, referees and all involved to have a centralized location as participation & the need for resources grew. In the mid '90's, the organization contracted for use of the UW-Field house property.

With only the UW fields available to use, the season was split into 2 sessions. The younger divisions (u6-8) would play May thru June or mid-July then the older divisions (U10-18) season would start & run until end of August. All teams played full sided 11 vs 11 soccer and kept score. In 1996 there were about 300 players on 22 teams. Unfortunately, the early start time weather affected the number of young players coming into the program. In 1998, with the addition of soccer at Marinette High School and approval to use the recently developed school fields, the playing season for all divisions was consolidated to begin after Memorial Day at the two locations.

In 2001 to continue our ongoing goal of getting more kids involved in the soccer experience, the organization changed the playing format of the youngest divisions to the short sided, segregated and 'keep no score' format still in use today. By reducing the team size and number of players on the field along with removing goalies, it provides the players more opportunity to score goals, improve their skills and gain confidence in the sport. Participation grew to almost 850 children on 75 teams in 10 divisions for the 2003 season.

While year to year participation is effected by many factors, we continue to average 650-700 children annually. It is our belief some of this is due to continued efforts to keep costs affordable. Financial aid is available and provided for qualifying families and for many years, have waived the fee for the fourth or more children in a family. Sponsorships provide financial support and we look for donation opportunities for services and tangible items. Volunteers are utilized for much of our operations and functions.

In the beginning, fields were maintained by the various entities and respective rec departments with few or no costs effecting player costs. The Marinette Rec Dept continued this service when play was moved to the UW field house and also assisted with the MHS fields. But when budgets could no longer support this field maintenance service, MMYSA became responsible to mark, mow & line them, provide portable toilets for our participants and pay lease rent for some locations. A long term goal would be to own and operate our own soccer complex.

So to all the children that have come thru our program, the parents & other spectators who supported them, the many volunteers who coached teams, worked behind the scenes as board or committee members or served MMYSA in some way, businesses and individuals who sponsored teams or made donations of items or services, we thank all of you. For without you, there would be no MMYSA.