



VSA Board Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2026

Organization	Vermont Soccer Association (VSA)
Call to Order	Time not recorded in source summary
Recording	Meeting was recorded
Meeting Close	Adjourned by motion, second, and unanimous approval; time not recorded

Attendance

Present	Rich DeGraff Murphy, Lori Levinson, Kyle Koenig, Andrew Minnis, Matt Spitznagel
Absent	Emily Milbank, Keith Roberts
Potentially Joining	Bill Edwards

Approval of Minutes

- Previous meeting: August 2026 VSA Board Meeting
- Motion: Approve minutes as written
- Result: Approved unanimously

Public Comment

- None reported.

General Board Reports

President's Report – Rich DeGraff Murphy

- Rich reported on a recent 2.5-hour meeting with the five major clubs regarding Sporting Vermont and related concerns. He said the discussion helped calm concerns and that the clubs appeared more supportive by the end of the meeting.
- Recruitment policy: Coaches may identify players who could be a fit for Sporting Vermont, but may not contact players or families directly. Names must be passed to the VSA office for Andrew or another staff member to contact.
- Rich suggested expanding this restriction at the January AGM so coaches from any club cannot directly recruit players.
- Sporting Vermont governance: Rich stated there is no intention for Sporting Vermont to spin off as its own club. Rich and Andrew discussed a bylaw amendment clarifying that Sporting Vermont cannot be established as a club and is solely owned and operated by VSA.
- Rich will continue regular meetings with the major clubs to hear and address concerns.

Vice President's Report / Awards Committee – Emily Milbank

- Emily was absent. Andrew reported that she is again leading the gala awards committee.
- Nomination deadline: October 20, 2026.

- The committee will meet after nominations are collected to review recipients and the selection process.
- Nominations remain short in Girls Community Coach of the Year, Girls Player of the Year, and TOPSoccer Buddy. The TOPSoccer program had just begun and is expected to generate nominations.
- Referee awards will be handled separately by Bill Edwards under the board's prior agreement.

Treasurer's Report – Matt Spitznagel

- For the fiscal year ending 2026, Matt reported approximately \$758,600 in revenue, \$489,000 in expenditures, and about \$91,000 in net profit.
- For the first 14 days of the new fiscal year in September, estimated profit was approximately \$7,000.
- VSA held approximately \$330,000 in cash across bank accounts.
- Andrew reported that all entities were current except Monarch Soccer Club, which owes approximately \$550.
- The board will verify whether Monarch remains active. Matt had already reached out and may follow up. Rich suggested a payment plan, such as \$100 per month, and the board noted interest could be added if needed.

Secretary's Report – Kyle Koenig

- No separate Secretary's Report was recorded.

Risk Management and Discipline – Keith Roberts

- Keith was absent and had not submitted a report.
- One appeal hearing had already been settled through the appeals committee.
- A separate quasi-appeal concerns only the amount of a financial penalty, not the Discipline Committee's factual findings. The party believes the fine is too harsh and requested reconsideration.
- Andrew and Rich said U.S. Soccer and USYS advised that the office may negotiate the financial component without using an appeals committee.
- The board emphasized caution regarding precedent and fairness, particularly because fines are relatively new and many member entities are nonprofits with limited budgets.
- Rich has one open investigation that he hopes to bring to the Discipline Committee within approximately one week.
- Background checks are temporarily delayed because VCIC updated its website, creating technical issues. Lori and Andrew will work through the backlog.

State Referee Report – Bill Edwards / Andrew Minnis

- A first-time referee mentorship and clinic was held with the Bailey Jamboree, with approximately 24 referees attending.
- Competitive play had 100% referee coverage in Week 1.
- Parks and recreation coverage was short approximately 5 to 6 of 11 games. Three referees covered six games by working two games each.
- The affected games were 4v4, kindergarten-first-grade contests that VSA referees are not normally trained to officiate. Burlington Parks and Recreation appeared to expect coverage as part of its fee to VSA, reflecting a miscommunication.
- Andrew, Corey, and Jay are creating a more direct assignment process. Letty, Callahan, and Roosevelt in Burlington were affected; Williston and Essex had full coverage.
- Pathway 90 is a new U.S. Soccer referee pathway currently being piloted in the South and expected in the East in approximately 5 to 8 months. It appears to be U.S. Soccer-led, with SRC identification and data support. Rich described it as similar to an ODP model for referees.
- The program may offer mentorship and advancement opportunities at no additional cost to referees, though cost details were not confirmed.
- The board will circle back with Bill Edwards and referee leadership to ensure alignment.

Technical / Coaching Education Update – Andrew Minnis

- Approximately 31 coaches received coaching education in August.
- Sessions were held in Georgia for coaches from Georgia and the Milton/St. Albans area, and with Burlington Parks and Recreation.
- A grassroots course is scheduled in Milton for Saturday, September 26, 2026. A D license course is being scheduled for late October and is expected to finish before Christmas.
- U.S. Soccer terminology will shift from licenses to certificates. Certificates are intended to last a lifetime, unlike licenses that require renewal.
- Curriculum will move from game-format based to age-specific groupings: U6-U8, U10-U12, 14-16, and 16+.
- "Grassroots" will be replaced by Player Development Course / Player Development Certificate. The D certificate and higher levels will remain, with a more asynchronous, player-centered course structure.

- Rich noted that VSA contacted major clubs and membership for coach educator recommendations, supporting a membership-driven approach.

Operations Update – Lori Levinson

- The first weekend of league play went well. More than 70 matches were played the previous day in excellent weather.
- Several U8 field mix-ups occurred after parents moved fields from their setup locations. VSA will remind participants to leave fields as found.
- For the Fall Festival at Tree Farm, Lori is exploring food trucks through a company that distributes event information to its vendor list and charges \$50 per committed truck.
- Lori will ask whether the fee can be waived or whether VSA can receive a revenue share.
- Rich and Kyle supported the position that food trucks should pay VSA. Rich suggested a flat vendor fee of approximately \$200-\$250 per food vendor or a share of sales.
- The board discussed alternative leads through local farmers markets and food truck nights.
- The festival will include the vendor village, new vendors, and the water sponsor setup. Lori is coordinating with Matt, the carnival food vendor, on strategic placement so vendors are not isolated.

Executive Director Update – Andrew Minnis

U.S. Youth Soccer / U.S. Soccer Restructuring

- Andrew and Lori attended the US Youth Soccer Annual General Meeting and Grassroots Symposium in Dallas.
- Andrew reported a 99-1 state vote to integrate USYS into U.S. Soccer, beginning a two-year timeline communicated by U.S. Soccer.
- Member meetings are scheduled in Atlanta for October 22-24, 2026, to discuss next steps and the path forward.
- U.S. Soccer continues weekly communications and deep dives, with materials received by Rich and Andrew each Friday. The hope is to have clearer answers by the March 11, 2027 U.S. Soccer AGM.
- USYS is expected to continue operating through 2028.
- USYS has approximately \$15 million in reserves: about \$5.2 million for redistribution to states, about \$5 million retained for legal matters, and about \$5 million for wind-down operating costs over two years.
- The current \$3.25 per-player fee will not change this seasonal year. Potential changes for 2027-2028 remain under review.

Soccer in Schools, Grants, and Partnerships

- Andrew reported that the Soccer in Schools Educator Certificate was enjoyable and well received.
- VSA submitted an ITG grant application with Soccer Without Borders and Vermont Green to bring soccer into every Vermont school over two years, organized by district.
- The grant request is \$200,000 per year. Soccer Without Borders would lead educational components and coaching education. Vermont Green would support amplification and sustainability through its platform and charity-event reach. SHAPE Vermont is also supporting the effort.
- Rich highlighted VSA's connection with the Vermont Principals Association as important to the broader soccer-in-schools effort.

School and Partner Relationships / Awards Collaboration

- Andrew spoke with John Olmsted about possible collaboration between VSA and another organization for the awards gala.
- Preliminary concepts included Gatorade Boys and Girls of the Year and Small and Large School Coaches of the Year.
- Rich requested involvement in future meetings and suggested adding referee recognition, noting referees are the "third leg of the game." Andrew will follow up with John.
- John distributed Sporting ODP player-identification needs, particularly for older boys and freshman girls. Andrew reported a strong response from high school coaches, validating the communication method.

Renewals, Nominations, and Soccer Ball Logistics

- Renewal materials for Rich and Keith are due October 1, 2026.
- Rich intends to run again for president and expects to submit his nomination by the end of September, if not sooner.
- For the schools initiative's soccer ball distribution, Kyle agreed to support logistics, storage, and shipping after receiving pallet counts, dimensions, and shipping details.

- VSA will purchase the required shipping label or other needed item and send the balls to Kyle's location. Kyle can store the pallets and use logistics and freight discounts, provided delivery is handled in chunks rather than box-by-box.
- Rich requested a media release or story before launch, suggesting MyChamplainValley.com, Fox, and ABC. The board agreed media coverage would build momentum and recognize sponsors.

Fall Participation and Advisory Committee

- VSA has 122 registered teams, up from approximately 112-113 last year.
- Advisory committee members have been identified, including returning participants. Lori plans to participate, and Andrew intends to hold the first meeting in October.
- Meetings will generally occur between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and last approximately one hour.
- Potential topics include rules review and deeper discussion of club needs. Rich supported building on October-through-June discussions and presenting at the next July meeting.

TOPSoccer Update

- TOPSoccer opened successfully with approximately 25 participants and 34 buddies from several schools.
- Participant shirts will be distributed the following Sunday.
- The board discussed identifying future volunteer leadership because Amanda Cowan may need additional support over time. Rich encouraged using Sunday sessions to identify potential leaders. Lori noted that Adam's daughter from Essex may be interested and has participated.
- Rich asked Andrew to video the shirt distribution to recognize the sponsor publicly for its generous support.

Other Business / Good of the Game

- Andrew shared that Meg received the Evelyn Gill Award for outstanding leadership and service at the USYS awards luncheon in Dallas.
- Andrew said it was good to spend time with her and take her to dinner. Meg reportedly said she is doing well and enjoying doggy daycare life.

Executive Session

- No executive session was held.

Next Meeting

- Date: Not specified
- Time: 6:00 p.m. per meeting format
- Location: TBD