***FAQ - New Web/Registration Provider for Tewksbury Athletic Association***

Beginning January 1, 2015, the TAA has a new Web site and Registration provider – Blue Sombrero. This brief FAQ was developed to answer questions about the selection of this new provider. If you have any other questions after reviewing this FAQ, please feel free to contact any TAA Board member.

***What is the address to the TAA’s new Web site?***

[www.taa-sports.org](http://www.taa-sports.org)

***Who was the TAA’s previous provider?***

The TAA used SportsOffice for about 10 years. This provider gave the TAA excellent service over the years and continues to provide service to the TAA with regard to our legacy data. There was nothing that transpired between the TAA and SportsOffice that resulted in our decision to select another provider. While the SportsOffice site was always easy for our parents and administrators to use, Blue Sombrero represents a cost savings to the TAA along with new functionality that will aid in areas of program management, communications and site flexibility/sustainability.

***Who is Blue Sombrero?***

Blue Sombrero is the leading provider of Online Registration and Web Design for youth sports. The company was founded in 2002 with the intention of giving back to the soccer community and helping clubs run more efficiently so that administrators can spend more time and energy inspiring kids to love the game rather than bury themselves in paper.

Blue Sombrero has customers, from all over the U.S., that represent many different organizations within youth sports (soccer, baseball, football, basketball, lacrosse, volleyball, tennis, summer camps, church leagues, and the list goes on). They have thousands of partner organizations across all 50 states.

Blue provides the best service in the industry, with ongoing enhancements and upgrades to their already robust feature offering. They stand behind their software 100% and understand that they provide mission-critical software. They have already demonstrated to the TAA a commitment to excellent service.

In 2012, Blue became a part of the Dick’s Sporting Goods family of companies. Dick’s Sporting Goods shares the same commitment to youth sports, with the same mission of providing an exceptional product with superior service.

***What are some of the key attributes that attracted the TAA to Blue Sombrero?***

Communications – Program Directors and Coaches will be able to both email teams/parents and send text messages to parents that opt into text messaging. We believe this will be particularly useful for parents on the move by allowing for a rapid receipt of last minute notices about game cancellations or changes. Blue is also working on a Mobile App which will make it even easier for parents to access their account and register on the go. Completion of this programming is expected in late 2015/early 2016.

Simplicity – High on our list was to make sure the new site would be simple for our Parents, Coaches and Program Directors to use. While SportsOffice was easy to use, we believe Blue may be even easier with its simple design and many time saving short cuts. We understand, as with any new site/technology, there will be an adjustment period for all of us so we hope you take the time to get to know the new site and provide your feedback after you’ve gotten to know the ins and outs of the site.

Highly Functional Web Pages – Our Program Directors will be able to be as creative as they want in designing their sport’s web pages. This may take some time, as we adjust to our new site, but the functionality exists to have very interactive and user friendly sport sites that provide parents with useful and timely information about their sport/teams.

“My Account” Page – Simply click My Account on the TAA’s Home Page and click Register to see the programs for which your child can register. No more going to different areas of the website to register your kids for different spring sports, etc. It’s handled in one spot to save you time.

Field/Gym Status – We now have a section on the new Web site which shows our field status as open or closed. It also provides an easy click to access directions to our various fields and gyms, which is convenient for relatives or friends coming to see a game in Tewksbury.

Flexible Site Appearance – The TAA has access to about 20 site “Themes” which will allow us to update our design and appearance on the fly without requiring complicated programming changes. We may not need to update the appearance all that often and we really like the current look and feel of our new site but because this is very new to us, we may (or may not) test another design in the near term. So, if you notice an appearance change at any point in time, please feel free to provide your input on the new look. If nothing changes, feel free to provide your input anyway.

Cost – While cost is always an important factor, we did not set out to limit our options based solely on cost. As it turned out, Blue offered us the lowest cost option out of the providers we reviewed, including SportsOffice. We estimate a savings to the TAA of about $2,000 per year by moving to Blue from SportsOffice (and even more of a savings over other providers).

***How is Blue able to offer such a cost effective solution to the TAA?***

Blue was acquired by Dick’s Sporting Goods in 2012. Prior to this, Blue had one of the higher cost solutions in the marketplace because of the technology and support they offer. The merger provided significant economies of scale to Blue, which allowed Blue and Dick’s to offer the Blue Web/registration service for free to organizations like the TAA. And of course there is a catch...

By utilizing their service, we agree to have the Dick’s logo at the bottom of our home page. It’s small and is in a Sponsor section where we can include other sponsors so that it won’t be so prominent. We are actively pursuing sponsorships for our new web site and if you know anyone interested in being a sponsor on the site, please let us know. You will also receive periodic emails from Dick’s with coupons to Dick’s. If you do not wish to receive these emails, please follow the link on the email to opt out. Once opted out, you will not receive these emails. We hope some of you will find the coupons timely and useful.

***What’s up with the rotating pictures on the home page?***

We thought you’d like that… We love having action and other shots of the kids on our home page which demonstrate their excitement and passion for TAA sports!! We would like to highlight our youth athletes so if you have any pictures that you would like to see in the “ROTATOR”, please send them to us. We will do our best to get everyone’s pictures posted.

***How can I get support from Blue Sombrero?***

You can certainly contact Blue directly with your questions, however, we may have a quick answer for you so please call the TAA first. You should contact your TAA Program Director with any Web Site/Registration questions. All program directors are listed on the new site with their email addresses. Here’s a link - <http://www.taa-sports.org/Default.aspx?tabid=763039>

***What can I do to help?***

Please register your family account on the new site ASAP. We’d love to hear from you so please share your feedback on the new web site.

Finally, we are looking to add a new Board position for a Web Director who will manage our new site and work with Program Directors on creating great sport sites. If you or anyone you know in town, has an interest in Web design, etc. and would like to volunteer to be a part of this exciting change, please contact David Cooley, [david.cooley@comcast.net](mailto:david.cooley@comcast.net) or 908-439-3969.

Thanks for your continued support.