

CHELTENHAM

★★★ **SPORTS** ★★★

Building Community Pride One Child at a Time



▶
THE 2023
ICSL DIVISION
5 CHAMPION
CHELTENHAM
CHEETAHS

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

2023 Was a Great Year for Cheltenham Sports

Expanded programs and increased enrollments in key age groups all add up to a bright future for your community youth sports organization.

Is it possible to measure the pride that swells in the soul of a young person when they score a soccer goal on a bright fall day and are swarmed by their grateful teammates? Probably not. But all it takes is to see the smiles on those faces to know that it exists.

Nor could we quantify the thrill a parent feels when they see their child master a skill, be it dribbling a basketball, standing tall in goal at a hockey game, or taking the field in any sport as a team captain.

And yet those thrills, those bright moments, exist for any of us who have volunteered as part of a youth sports program or seen our children play in one.

In this 2023 Annual Report, issued by the community volunteers who serve as the Cheltenham Sports Board of Directors, we are proud to report that we are expanding those bright moments and making more memories for parents, grandparents and other community members.

Of course none of this happens without the hard work on the part of numerous volunteer coaches, those parents who show up with soft pretzels and water bottles at soccer and basketball games, or any number of selfless acts that residents of Cheltenham Township commit for the betterment of our young people and our community overall.

The year 2023 saw more than 1,300 young people take part in intramural and travel sports in the fields of soccer, basketball and roller hockey that were organized by Cheltenham Sports.

In our soccer program alone, we saw an 11.4 percent increase year over year in the number of registrants. Much of that came in the key birth years of 2015 through 2017, those young people which will form the core of our travel soccer teams in years to come.

We are also pleased to report that the finances of the club are on a solid footing. The club carries no debt and has modest cash reserves.

Please join us in celebrating some of the people, featured on the following pages, who helped make all of this possible. We look forward to more bright moments and the ever-expanding involvement of our young people and our families.

And whenever and wherever you can, please donate what time and money you can to keep this great tradition going.

Sincerely,
The Cheltenham Sports Board of Directors

2023 ENROLLMENT FIGURES

The club operated a wide range of programs to keep community participants engaged throughout the year. The following is a summary of the total enrollment.

Program	Enrollment
Advanced Intramural	6
Fall Intramural Soccer	232
Friday Night Fútbol	34
Friday Night Futsal	114
Futbol Fun in the Sun!	55
Indoor Soccer	141
Intramural Basketball	138
Pre-Season Soccer Clinic	46
Pre-Spring Soccer Clinic	23
Roller & Ball Hockey	41
Soccer Summer Camp	12
Spring Basketball Workouts	56
Spring into Soccer	248
Travel Basketball	30
Travel Basketball Pre-Season Workouts	28
Travel Soccer 2023-24	134
Travel Soccer Boot Camp	35
Grand Total	1373



Future Flyers?

Cheltenham Sports has re-established a Ball and Roller Hockey program to an enthusiastic reception.

Since 1995, Cheltenham Sports’ Hockey Program has offered young people in the community an accessible and affordable opportunity to experience and play organized hockey. Offering seasoned players an outlet to play, the program equally provides newcomers of all backgrounds with a welcoming environment to learn to play and grow an appreciation for the sport.

Offering an option to play either ball (with no skates) or roller hockey, the overall emphasis of the program is to provide a competitive, but fun and supportive atmosphere where young people can learn and further develop the fundamentals important to the game. These basic skills include, but are not limited to, stick handling and ball control, passing, shooting, skating, basic strategy, and team play.

As one of only a few hockey programs of this type in the area, this program is a one-of-a-kind channel in the local community for providing young people, who may never become involved in hockey, a chance to experience the sport, build confidence in learning something new, and instill passion for a new team activity.

After a few years with a pause in play, Cheltenham Sports has re-established this unique program within our community, and since 2022, the Hockey Program continues to offer young people the opportunity to play ball and roller hockey during both the spring and fall seasons.

▲
This year’s class of Cheltenham Roller Hockey coaches and players.

DIALLO SOULEYMANE— A PASSION FOR THE GAME



Meet the Elkins Park businessman who has coached hundreds of local soccer players.

A NATIVE OF LIBERIA, Diallo Souleymane played on numerous soccer clubs before emigrating to the United States, where he obtained two US Soccer Federation coaching licenses in 2008.

The Elkins Park businessman has since earned local accolades as a trainer and coach who has helped hundreds of players in Cheltenham Township and beyond experience the pleasure and excitement of this team sport that many refer to as “The Beautiful Game.”

“I love and enjoy the game,” Souleymane said. “I have been involved in youth soccer all of my life. It gives me joy to share the little I know with the kids,” he added.

“I still play in town in adult community soccer every Sunday,” he said.

A cornerstone of the Intramural Soccer Program, Diallo Souleymane has been, and continues to be, an inspirational volunteer coach for Cheltenham Sports.

“I started coaching here in Cheltenham in 2018 when my daughter started to play,” Souleymane said. “I now have



three kids playing the Cheltenham Soccer program.”

Diallo has shepherded scores of young girls and boys over the past several years, many who have since moved on to travel teams. Those who know him say that every time there is a call for volunteers, Diallo is one of the first to step forward, not only to assist, but truly be a leader.

“As a volunteer, Diallo goes above and beyond to make sure the players understand the fundamentals of the game. He inspires the kids while pushing them to grow as players,” said Ptah Myers, YTP Sports Director of Coaching and Jefferson University Head Soccer Coach.

Thank you, Diallo Souleymane, for all that you do!

A CHELTENHAM SOCCER FAMILY TRADITION

Marcel Chanoine (lower left), a center back for the Cheltenham Chiefs, shares a love for Cheltenham Sports soccer with his brother’s Emile (left) and Xavier (right).

All three brothers got their start in the Cheltenham Sports intramural program. Emile, a freshman at Cheltenham High School, is now a Junior Varsity and Varsity midfielder. Xavier, also a midfielder, is now a junior and is co-captain of a Cheltenham High School varsity team that finished with a much-improved winning record in 2023.

Pictured are their parents Pierre Chanoine, who is an assistant coach with the Chiefs, and Reem Tarazi, a stalwart supporter of the Chiefs.



Greater Community Engagement



Cheltenham Sports Board Member and VP of Athletics
KRYSTEN SMITH

Reaching out to other community stakeholders is just one way the Cheltenham Sports is working to build bridges in our township and beyond. **BY KRYSTEN SMITH**

OVER THE PAST YEAR, Cheltenham Sports has actively worked towards establishing a more impactful presence as a community partner. In 2023, we successfully forged the following partnerships:

- 1. African American History Month Community Showcase:** We proudly supported and participated in this annual event hosted by the Cheltenham School District, fostering community engagement as both attendees and vendors.
- 2. Positive Coaching Alliance:** As a committed partner, we collaborated with the Positive Coaching Alliance to provide valuable resources and training for our volunteer coaches and parents. This initiative aims to ensure a positive and enriching experience for our young athletes.
- 3. Youth to Pro Sports (YTP):** Our intentional partnership with YTP, a marketing and athletic training group deeply rooted in Cheltenham Township, has further strengthened our commitment to community-centric initiatives.
- 4. East Cheltenham Community Council Partnership:** Actively participating in the local East Cheltenham Community Fourth of July Parade, we contributed to building a sense of community and shared celebration.

These collaborations have significantly expanded our reach and woven a richer tapestry within our community. Looking ahead, our dedication to Cheltenham Township remains steadfast, and we are poised to further broaden our outreach. We recognize that fostering a spirit of collaboration will enable us to achieve an even greater positive impact.

The **Cheltenham Chiefs** have been one of the highest performing Cheltenham teams in recent years. They reached the ICSSL Elite Division in 2022. They have twice been Gold Division semi-finalists in the Jack Walsh Tournament. Five current and former Chiefs now play on teams which participate in the Elite Development Program and two were selected for Olympic Development Program Teams.



The 2015 **Cheltenham Cheetahs** finished their inaugural season as ICSSL U9 Division 5 North Champions, going undefeated in Fall competition. Volunteer coaches Scott Gill and Stefanie Snyder led the newly formed team to an (8-0-2) record.

A Letter From Our President



Cheltenham Sports community, we are pleased to share this annual report to highlight some of the great things happening in our Club. We continue to offer affordable, local youth sports programs for families living in Cheltenham township and nearby areas. Soccer, basketball, and hockey are the sports we currently offer. Next year, we plan to offer wrestling, too. We are a community-based, non-profit organization that relies on volunteerism to run our programs.

We have made a shift in supporting our intramural programs (IM) in both soccer and basketball. Volunteer sports organizations can find it challenging to source highly

knowledgeable and consistently reliable volunteers to run in-house programming.

To address this challenge, in early 2023, we reached out to Chris Williams, a graduate of CHS and a former professional soccer player who is the founder and CEO of Youth To Pro (YTP), a business built to support youth sports. YTP is coordinating the structure of our soccer practice plans and supporting the vertical progression from IM to our travel programs. We have gotten expert advice and modeling for soccer-specific training from YTP. The result has been clearer expectations for our volunteers and communication with the families in our soccer programs.

On a smaller scale, we have partnered with Ed Reynolds to coordinate our IM basketball program. Ed was a multi-sport student-athlete who grew up in Abington and went to Widener University. He has made it an expectation that each player brings their own basketball to practice so that we maximize the number of reps that players get with the ball in their hands. The expectations for players in IM basketball has ramped up as a result.

The result of our work with YTP and with Ed Reynolds is a modernized, professionalized approach to teaching our young people how to successfully participate in sports. We have funded these contracts through enhanced sponsorships and fundraising and a modest increase in registration fees.

You can help our community club by encouraging kids in your neighborhood to register for our programs, by volunteering to help coach, and by getting local organizations to provide funds to sponsor our overall Club and specific programs.

In yet another new partnership, we are working with Sponsor Jawn to solicit, manage, and promote our sponsors. Sponsor Jawn was started by a baseball dad in Plymouth Meeting to systematize local fundraising.

I want to thank the 17 people who make up our Board of Directors. Each of them is a local parent and volunteer who participates in monthly meetings in the effort to fulfill the mission of our Club.

We all have real jobs and busy family obligations, but our side hustle is to support the work of Cheltenham Sports. Without young people participating and their families volunteering, we don't have a functional club.

So, please thank our board members, our volunteer coaches, and our professional partners for making our organization go. And, thanks for being a participating member of our Club!

Andrew Kuhn
President, Cheltenham Sports

SOCCER ENROLLMENT DATA

The overall enrollment figures for 2023 represent an 11.4 percent increase over 2022. We are seeing huge growth in the 2017-2015 years which will be our key kids in the next 4-5 years. There was a dip in the girls' enrollment due to the loss of two travel teams. But we think we can pick those numbers up with the right community outreach.

Total Enrollment, Year-over-Year

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2022	313	245	558
2023	388	234	622

2023 Enrollment by Birth Year

BIRTH YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2019	7	4	11
2018	16	21	37
2017	41	23	64
2016	54	18	72
2015	59	33	92
2014	57	32	89
2013	37	19	56
2012	51	30	81
2011	30	23	53
2010	22	14	36
2009	4	14	18
2008	2	2	4
2007	3	1	4
2006	3	0	3
2005	2	0	2
	388	234	622

Upping Our Game

Supporting young people’s mental and emotional development a key focus. **BY LARRY DIGGS**, Board Member and VP at-large

In 2023, the Cheltenham Intramural Program emerged as a beacon of community engagement, showcasing remarkable achievements through enhanced parental involvement, volunteerism, coaching excellence, and successful fundraising efforts. The program’s success was further amplified through a strategic partnership with YTP, infusing the initiative with structured, high-quality sports education and development opportunities for the youth of Cheltenham.

Parental involvement and volunteerism reached new heights this year, as families across the community stepped forward to contribute their time, skills, and enthusiasm. This surge in community participation not only fostered a sense of belonging and teamwork but also ensured that the program’s events and activities were executed. Parents and volunteers became the backbone of the program, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to nurturing young talent and promoting healthy, active lifestyles.

The partnership with YTP introduced a new level of structure and professionalism to the program. YTP’s expertise in youth sports education complemented the intramural program’s goals, offering participants a comprehensive curriculum that focused on physical, mental, and emotional development. This collaboration not only enhanced the quality of coaching and training but also opened new opportunities for young athletes to excel in their chosen sports.



CHELTENHAM
★★★ SPORTS ★★★

Ball & Roller
HOCKEY

Intramural and Travel
SOCCER

Intramural and Travel
BASKETBALL

Ages Pre-K through 7th Grade

Volunteer COACHES NEEDED!

The Cheltenham Intramural Program of 2023 stands out as a testament to the power of community involvement, volunteerism, and effective partnerships. Its success in fostering athletic talent, promoting sportsmanship, and building a vibrant community spirit has set a new benchmark for future programs. The combined efforts of parents, volunteers, coaches, and partners like YTP have laid a solid foundation for the continuous growth and development of youth sports in Cheltenham.



DONATE NOW!

Thank you to everyone who supports Cheltenham Sports!

We’re excited and honored to be expanding opportunities for young people in our community to participate in athletics, make new friends and learn important life skills about fitness, resiliency and team building.

For 2024, we have set a fundraising goal of \$25,000 for improvements to our clubhouse and for the construction of an outdoor “kick wall” for young players to use to hone their soccer striking skills.

Please donate what you can by going to cheltenhamsports.org/donations. Or by mailing a contribution to Cheltenham Sports, Attn: Sponsorship P.O. Box 211 Cheltenham, PA 19012 .

And thank you for supporting this vital community effort that has benefitted the young people of Cheltenham Township for generations.

Sincerely,

The Cheltenham Sports Board of Directors