

To: IFPAA Families, Friends and Neighbors
From: Gary Fritsch, President Ingomar - Franklin Park Athletic Association

Dear Friends,

I am thoroughly excited to be writing to you for the first time as President of IFPAA. Over the past several weeks I have received about an equal mix of congratulations and condolence. That is probably appropriate given the amount of work that lies ahead. Be that as it may, I am looking forward to tackling the challenges with your help.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the incredible lifetime (30 years) of service provided to all of us by Chuck Mazur and Tom Hewitt. Dealing with 30 years of concerns and issues alone is worthy of a medal, but we often take for granted many of the facilities that were created and improvements that were made not only during their time, but directly because of their efforts and leadership.

I have been very blessed and proud to be a part of IFPAA over the last 10 years. My experiences coaching in-house, B-tournament and Federation League teams are some of the most treasured moments of my life up to this point. Despite our great tradition, and my own positive experience, I do know that there are areas for us to improve, and I look forward to working with all of you to help IFPAA provide the best possible sports experience for our children. Here are five key themes that I hope to advance over the next several years:

1 – Volunteerism. We should be invested in building this experience together. If every IFPAA family contributed 1-2 hours of effort in the right areas each year, we would be able to do INCREDIBLE things for our kids. I hope to make volunteering easy, impactful, rewarding and fun.

2 – Coaches. For most of you, your experience of IFPAA is limited to the man/ woman that coach your child's team. You want coaches who are knowledgeable AND know how to make the experience great for the team. I will do everything I can to provide coaches with the support they need to become the best they can be on both of these important fronts.

3 – Facilities. Anyone who knows me knows that I have always had a passion for making the fields GREAT for our kids to play on. I hope to work with our Municipality partners to make our fields a true source of pride, and a pleasure to play on.

4- Communication. Whether it is figuring out what division of play your child should register for, getting updates on schedules, or understanding how our processes work, communication is a big part of getting the most out of your baseball/softball experience. I am putting a high priority on uncovering where we need to improve and putting resources in place to address these needs.

5 – Players First. Don't get me wrong, the player should put the team above himself/herself, but the youth sports organization should put the player above the organization or above any national affiliation. This means that we will endeavor to provide opportunity for EVERY PLAYER at every skill level to improve their skills and enjoy the great game of baseball/softball.

While I have very specific ideas for how to act on these 5 key themes, I am only one person in an organization which relies on volunteers and its Board of Directors to not only back these initiatives, but to ACT on them. I welcome the ideas of others and am interested in ANY idea that helps IFPAA be the very best youth sports organization in the area. Are you part of a hockey club that is great at fundraising? Share your ideas. Does your football organization have the best snack shack in Allegheny County? Share your ideas. Did you figure out a way to make team communications easy for you and other parents? Share your ideas.

I am committed to making IFPAA the best possible baseball/ softball organization for our community. If you will join me, I am confident that together we can make it happen.

God Bless,

Gary J. Fritsch

President, Ingomar - Franklin Park Athletic Association