



SYLVAN LAKE BLIZZARD SOCCER CLUB

Box #8988  
Sylvan Lake, Alberta  
T4S 1S6

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## SYLVAN LAKE BLIZZARD SOCCER CLUB (SLBSC) TURNS 25 IN 2025

Soccer in Sylvan Lake has deep roots that have run through many young athlete's lives. The start of my journey with the Sylvan Lake Blizzard Soccer Club (SLBSC) began in January of 2017 when my daughter became interested in the sport. Upon entering the AGM, I was greeted with a welcoming and contagious smile by the President of the Club John Salsbury. At the end of the meeting, I signed up to be a volunteer Photo Coordinator and joined the Board of Directors. Nine years later I have been deeply involved within the Club fulfilling multiple volunteer roles, coaching all ages and hired on as the Director of Operations in September of 2019. Each time I meet a new face in our organization I love hearing about their experiences and the overwhelming reach that the SLBSC has sustained since the late 1980's.

While my journey with the Club is fairly new, I have been working on gathering historical information for a momentous occasion. This year the SLBSC is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year as an incorporated non-profit organization! It turns out the Club is quite a bit older than 25 years and as I asked around and listened to many generations of stories, the name Tom Harrison cropped up as the first President of the Sylvan Lake Soccer Association in 1987. He was in this role until 1990 when he got transferred for work and unfortunately the program ceased to exist for the next couple of years with no succession in leadership. In 1992 the Town of Sylvan Lake started a soccer program and asked Dan Schultz to lend a hand; he served as President from 1993 to 1996. He was integral in the Club being placed into the Central Alberta Soccer Association (CASA) which governed minor soccer from Ponoka to Stettler, Rocky and Innisfail; CASA is still our governing district and has grown to include 17 Clubs. Participation in these early years rose from approximately 80 players to over 320 by 1996. From 1996 until 2002 the Club saw several significant changes. Player participation grew to over 500 youth, the Club became incorporated as a non-profit organization in 2001 and underwent a name change to become the Sylvan Lake Blizzard Soccer Club (SLBSC) in 2004. Over the years, many dedicated families and volunteers have graciously given countless hours of their time. While it is hard to name everyone individually, please know that without those who laid a strong foundation, the Club would not have continued success in building enthusiasm for the sport.

A second-generation Club member named Amber Simcoe reflected on growing up playing the game in Sylvan Lake; her father, Dan Schultz shared his love of the game with her and her two brothers from a young age. Amber started volunteering a few years ago as a Coordinator, then joined the Board of Directors and most recently added coaching to her contributions. In the fall of 2024, she started coaching indoor soccer as the SLBSC ventured back into this program after a great many years of being absent. "This spring I am on three benches as a Coach; the U13 Tier IV team, my youngest son's U13 Tier III team and my oldest son's U15 Tier IV team. One of my favourite things is watching the growth in the players from the start of the season to the end. Our daughter is experiencing her first season this spring as a U7 Girls player and a goal I have is to see her age group develop into an all-girls competitive team." Three generations of this family have shared the love of soccer in Sylvan Lake and Dan came out of coaching retirement to train goalies during this past indoor season, including his own grandchildren!



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As the Club continues to thrive, it is because of volunteers who bring not only their love of soccer to the field but also their vast knowledge of the game. A current Coach and Board of Directors member named Jon Worth had this to say, "The SLBC has passionate leadership, and the Club's members are an extension of the fantastic Alberta soccer community. After forging friendships with members of the soccer community around Alberta, I am happy to continue to make those relationships here in Sylvan Lake, too. The Club offers a truly welcoming and supportive environment with a focus on the growth and development of players, programs, and coaches. I'm blessed to have an amazing network of coach developers who continue to support me, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to bring that experience as a coach to the SLBSC."

With the spring season coming to an end, the Recreational League teams will celebrate by having a full day tournament on June 21<sup>st</sup> at Leader Field. In total 34 teams from U5 up to U13 will finish out the season with a truly memorable day full of soccer, community and hopefully great weather ... as we all know spring soccer weather in Alberta can be challenging! The Competitive League teams will be involved in Fun Festival activities, a District Challenge Tournament and Provincial Qualifiers for U13 and U15. The goal is to get these teams to the top and battle it out in Provincials for Tier III and Tier IV!

Now that the spring season has its conclusion, where do we go from here? Current President and Technical Director Kevin Breitzkreutz sees a bright future for the SLBSC including looking forward to the construction of soccer fields in Pogadl Park. This construction will allow the Club to branch out within the Alberta soccer community offering a tournament location, a place to host Provincials in collaboration with the Town of Sylvan Lake and possibly offering an adult league. The excitement and vision Kevin brings to the Club is a wonder to observe! His goal is to keep creating safe community-based programs which are fun, provide Long Term Player Development in keeping with Canada Soccer's Grassroots Standards and to cultivate a lifelong passion for this beautiful game! With Kevin's leadership and focus on teaching players good sportsmanship, the atmosphere of the SLBSC creates a fun memorable soccer experience. He will continue to provide mentorship, research resources and training tools, and ensure that the legacy that was put into motion more than 25 years ago remains strong. A personal motto that you will often hear Kevin say is "There is no losing, you are either winning or learning." He would encourage anyone that he meets to cheer on and celebrate the blue and white colour of our Club as we embark on the next 25 years of the biggest sport that is played around the world!

If you want to learn more about the SLBSC and check out the upcoming indoor season, please visit the website at: [www.sylvanlakesoccer.ca](http://www.sylvanlakesoccer.ca)

Here you can explore programs offered, our amazing sponsors who make it possible to keep registration fees low and how you can become part of our soccer family!

Submitted by Julie Maplethorpe  
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Sylvan Lake Blizzard Soccer Club (SLBSC)