

# PeeWee soccer teams kick baseball habit



It was a nice try but the little lady misses her mark and kicks the dirt. Meanwhile, Matt Joelson (left) gets ready to kick the ball to his teammates. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Bundled up against an early spring chill, a group of ardent soccer fans huddle together on the bleachers while the opposing teams take a half-time break.

In a few minutes, the players again will face the joys of victory, the agony of defeat and the ever-present risk of getting kicked in the shins.

As the half-time draws to a close, the coaches address their players. "Now, show me once again, which way are you going to kick the ball," shouts Colts coach Maureen Hussey.

"That way," the team answers, pointing in the proper direction downfield. Across the playing field, their worthy opponents are undergoing the same crucial drill.

After the teams switch goals during half time, it's prudent of the coaches to make sure their players will kick the ball in the proper direction. When a soccer player is five or six years old, such things can be confusing.

Each Saturday, during the spring and fall, the half-time ritual is repeated as part of the Farmington Area Recreation Commission's PeeWee soccer program for five and six year-olds.

UNLIKE OTHER TEAMS, THE PEEWEEs are loved by their fans whether they win or lose. Parents are like that.

"Oh, she's hysterical," laughed Rae Rockefeller, of Farmington, as she delightedly watched her six-year-old daughter Lisa try to kick the ball.

"She misses the ball by that much," Mrs. Rockefeller gestured. "She's so enthusiastic. She loves it. There's not much for a child her age to do, and she was ready for a team sport."

Lisa's team, the Colts, were soundly defeated by the Coyotes; the score was one to zero. But her top fan was undaunted.

"It's important to a child if the team wins. But it won't be the great American tragedy if she doesn't win. Participation is the thing, here, I hope," Mrs. Rockefeller said.

Her hopes were shared by Joan Lee, of Farmington Hills, whose six-year-old son Matthew is Lisa's teammate.

"The kids are having a good time. It doesn't make any difference if they win or lose," she said. "It's great. The kids really need it. It teaches them coordination."

BASKING IN THE ADORATION of their fans, team members scurry

around the 75-by-150 foot playing field as fast as their little legs will allow them. During lulls in the game they will wave to their fans and shout greetings.

Once their mind is set on the game, players have some definite ideas about what they like to do on the field.

"I'm never gonna play baseball," vowed Carl Hansen, 6, of the Coyotes. "I like soccer better. I like scoring goals. It doesn't make any difference if we win or lose, but I like winning better."

Other members of the FARC PeeWee league expressed a distinct preference for being goalie. In regulation soccer, the re is one goalie on the field for each team. In PeeWee soccer, each team has two goalies. It's a way of allowing more children on the field.

"I like kicking the ball," said Sean Harmon, 5, a member of the Badgers. "I like being goalie because then you don't have to use your feet all the time." "That's the way I feel about being

goalie, too," added teammate Michael Smedver, 6.

PEEWEE TEAMS play according to watered down rules that let the youngsters enjoy the game without donning protective equipment. Their playing field is divided into nine separate zones unlike regulation soccer which has three more fluid areas.

"When you have six year olds they need a more structured situation than the older children," explained FARC spokesman David Justus.

Some of the taller youngsters are ready to forego the strict nine zone division for the looser style that the older players use.

"I like playing without zones," said Matt Joelson, 7, of the Buffaloes. "Cause you have to stay in them and I like kicking the ball."

Potential PeeWees and their older brothers and sisters can join coed soccer teams next fall. The spring season is almost over. Most of this season's games come out with an even score, which is nice, but the players remain undaunted.

"We haven't had a very good season so far," said Sean. "We're losing so far. But last year, we won one."

## Youngsters marvel at Indian ingenuity

By LYNN ORR

For the average youngster, a teepee can be a blanket thrown over a pole in someone's backyard.

But Ten Mile Elementary School students had a special opportunity to learn about the real thing last week when Toby and Linda Benetti set up their tipi (as the Sioux spell it) outside the school and invited the youngsters inside for a visit.

Teacher Julie Hawlik and her fifth grade class were just one of the groups who discovered that 26 children and three adults could fit fairly comfortably in the conical structure.

"This one is a little larger than the common tipi, and a lot larger than the tips used for hunting," Benetti told the youngsters. "Native Americans used various structures for housing, like grass houses that looked like bee hives in what is now Texas. The Great Plains Indians generally used the tipi."

The tipi's design is ingenious, according to Benetti. Three central wooden poles form a tripod and are lashed to-

gether with a rope using a special notch. When the poles are pushed skyward the rope tightens.

"Harvard engineers were using cranes to try and stand the tipi up in the 1930's," Benetti told the students. "They couldn't figure out how the Indians had erected it on the ground."

"The tipi is very wind resistant and not a perfect cone. The heavy wind comes out of the west so the tipi is slanted more to the east, which makes a long natural slope that acts as a wind barrier."

Actually seeing the tipi gave the students a chance to absorb exactly the kind of engineering feat Indians accomplished. And Benetti uses a question-and-answer approach to interest the students in native American history.

"Why do you think the door always faced the east?" he asked the students—because the sun could warm up the tipi on cold winter mornings was a typical exchange.

THE BENETTIS currently live in Lake Orion and were invited to Ten Mile after they participated in a workshop for

Oakland Schools. The couple ordered their tipi (which stands about 15 feet high) from Oregon, and although it lacks authenticity because it consists of a canvas covering rather than buffalo skin, it closely resembles the kind of tipi Plains Indians used.

Because the Benettis enjoy talking about native Americans and their lifestyle, they consented to bring their equipment to the Farmington school.

"It's probably our last school around here," says Ms. Benetti, "because we're going out west this summer."

The couple hopes to be engaged in some kind of outdoor education project to use their expertise, she adds.

Outside the tipi, the couple set up a cooking arrangement to simulate how native Americans cooked on the open plains.

"They would string a buffalo stomach between two poles, and then heat rocks on a fire," Ms. Benetti says. "When the rocks were heated, they would throw one into the water in the buffalo stomach for an instant boil to make soup."

"The next day they would eat the stomach. They didn't waste anything."

Like native Americans, the Benettis cut their own tent poles and prize them as highly as the Indians did.

"Great Plains Indians had to travel a long way to get these poles, and they were treasured. One horse would be worth five poles," Benetti says.

The students were surprised to learn that Europeans brought horses to North and South America and that native Americans often used dogs to pull their equipment.

And the tipi itself was the woman's domain, according to Ms. Benetti. "If a woman wanted to get rid of her husband, she just threw his belongings out the door and he had to find a place to live," she says.

Although the tipi comes down quickly, it takes the Benettis about four hours to put it up—most of that time being spent on putting up the liner.

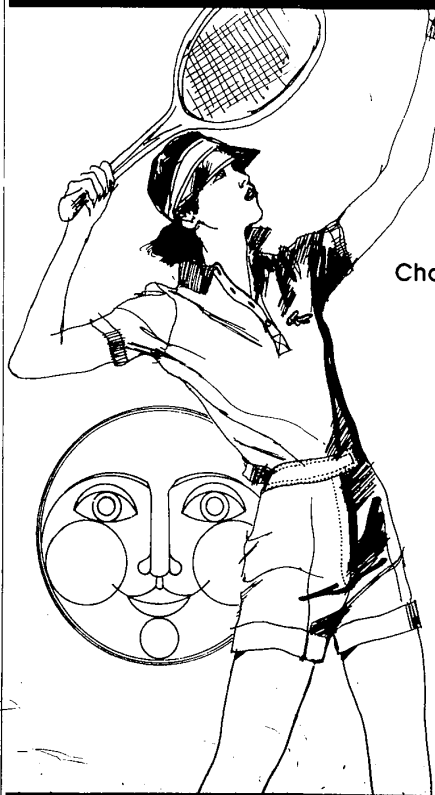
"Of course it was a lot easier for the Indians," Benetti quips. "They had a lot of practice."



Two intent members of opposing teams swoop down on the soccer ball that has landed in their zone. Players have been known to miss the ball and

accidentally kick each other in the shins. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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All Ten Mile Elementary School youngsters had an opportunity to see an Indian tipi in their own backyard last week during Michigan Week celebrations and these kindergartners got right into the spirit of things with some headgear of their own. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## Class honors Mrs. Lindbergh

Flanders Elementary School second-graders decided to honor the 50th anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's historic flight across the Atlantic in an unusual fashion last week.

They visited the grave of Lindbergh's mother in Pine Lake Cemetery

to pay tribute to their personal hero.

Instructor Marion Spencer arranged the field trip after the students decided they wanted to do something special for the anniversary. The students have been studying many aspects of Lindbergh's career and are "experts" according to Ms. Spencer.