**Questions and answers about MIFC New Club Sponsors** **Pagliacci Pizza and Axia Home Loans**

Last month we announced that we'd reached sponsorship deals with two local companies. Pagliacci Pizza and Axia Home Loans have signed multiple year deals to be club sponsors in exchange for logo placement on player jerseys, inclusion in all club marketing and communications, possible field signage and other promotional benefits.

Since that time, the board has received a number of questions about the sponsorship's, why the club pursued these deals, how the money will be used, etc. Here are some answers to these questions -

Q. Why did the club seek sponsors?

A. As a community-based, non-profit organization, MIFC has relied solely on our player registration fees to fund our ongoing operations and ensure that we provide great soccer programs for our kids. The club has always had the goal of finding a sponsor or sponsors who have ties to our community and are passionate about supporting kids. The money from our corporate sponsors will enable the club to provide even better value to our community in terms of quality and affordability. Pagliacci and Axia’s generous support of MIFC will help defray the increasing costs of operating a soccer program for over 1200 Mercer Island kids.

Q. Why these two companies?

A. MIFC conducted a thorough search and analysis of local companies to determine which would be a good fit as corporate sponsor(s), and we reached out to many of them with the opportunity to do so. The ownership of Pagliacci and Axia have deep ties to the Mercer Island community and the club, and we are thrilled to partner with them to continue to provide great soccer to our kids. Not only do both companies have strong ties to Mercer Island and Mercer Island FC, but the owners of played soccer on Mercer Island (or now play in adult leagues on the island) and have children in MIFC programs.

Q. How will the money these sponsors are paying be used?

A. This is the first time in its history that the club has secured corporate sponsorships, so we are being very deliberate and careful to determine how to best use the funds.

We’ve assembled a sub-committee of the board to explore and analyze all of the possibilities, and we hope to make a final recommendation at the next Board meeting in July. That said, over the years we’ve worked hard to keep our program costs down and registration fees as low as possible. We have not increased Recreational fees for two years and Select fees for the past three years. We expect these sponsorship dollars will help us maintain our current fee levels for the next couple of years. In addition, we can continue to provide financial aid for families who need help with player fees, equipment and clinics. Finally, we continue to look for ways to expand our coach and player development programs through clinic and classroom style training.

Q. Do other local soccer clubs have sponsors?

A. Yes, within the Eastside Youth Soccer Association (EYSA) Eastside FC, Issaquah FC and Bellevue Youth Soccer all have multiple sponsorship arrangements. Other EYSA clubs are pursuing sponsors. In the Puget Sound area many clubs, including clubs like Seattle United and Crossfire, have sponsorship agreements. Nationally, it is very common for community-based, non-profit athletic clubs like MIFC to partner with local businesses to enhance their programming and offerings.

Q. Did the club switch to a new Adidas kit this year because of the sponsorship deals?

A. No. Adidas discontinued our previous style, so we would have been selecting a new kit whether we’d signed up sponsors or not. But the timing of these deals allowed us to include the sponsors on our new jerseys, increasing the value of the agreement to our sponsors.

Q. We just bought a kit for our player last year. Do we have to buy a new one?

A. Yes. As noted in the previous answer, Adidas discontinued our previous uniform style, so we needed to select a new uniform for our Recreational and Select programs. Unfortunately, it is common practice for soccer uniform manufacturers (Adidas, Nike, Diadora) to update their styles and discontinue previous ones every 2-3 years.

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For more information on Pagliacci, check out their website at <http://pagliacci.com/>.

Check out Axia Home Loans at <https://axiahomeloans.com/>