

The Screaming Eagles annual meeting, held on March 6, 2005, featured reports from volunteers and news about the team from DC United representatives. Approximately 75 SEs came to the meeting. Here are some highlights for those of you who missed it.

Mike Petke kicked off the meeting with thanks to everyone for coming to the matches and providing such a lively atmosphere. Commenting on the new "Wanker 12" T-shirt being worn by several SEs, Petke said if things went really well this season, he might wear one during warm-ups. He thanked the group for holding the pub quiz nights, which raised money for his Kick the Violence Foundation, and said he looked forward to doing more of them this year.

Lisa Middlebrook, coordinator for the SE outreach activities, described the group's charitable activities in 2004, including a \$2000 contribution to the Petke Foundation, \$3200 to United for DC, and \$2000 to the Eddie Pope Foundation. Charities related to soccer are eligible for SE support and suggestions are welcomed.

President Kim Klyberg said that the SEs will continue working with Barra Brava and La Norte on the hand painted banners inside the stadium. She asked for volunteers to handle several new projects, including a game day coordinator to help make the Nest more exciting and viewing party coordinators to put more "party" into the viewing of away matches. The SE Web site is being redesigned and will have new content, thanks to the efforts of Eric Lowe and Brian Shea. The regular e-news, "Inside the Box," will continue this year.

Marcia Faulkner, director of membership services, offered volunteer opportunities for anyone interested in helping with tailgates, road trips, and member services.

Marie and Ken Gemmell, new chairs of the tailgate committee, announced that free Foggy Bottom beer will be offered to members again this year. Volunteers are needed to help with food purchases and running the tailgate parties.

Cliff Moy talked about the three men's teams that the Screaming Eagles sponsor and indicated that an all-women's team might be started this fall. Anyone interested in playing should get in touch with Cliff at sefc@screaming-eagles.com. Keith Bundy organizes an over-18 pick-up game on Saturday mornings in Springfield for all skill levels. Keith said efforts to find a better field are somewhat hampered by the non-league nature of the game.

Keith also handles Screaming Eagles merchandise, the latest addition being the wanker T-shirt now on sale for \$15. See the SE Web site for more details.

Match day ticket sales last year were phenomenal. Although prices have increased for 2005, pre-ordered match day tickets will be available at an even larger discount than last year. Ticket Mistress Nicole Gara also reported that the SEs have already sold over 170 full or half season tickets in the Nest. Season tickets will be mailed in plain brown AEG

envelopes later this month. For the team's first game in the CONCACAF tournament (March 9 vs Harbour View FC), the SEs sold 114 tickets.

Road trip coordinator Paul Sotoudeh thanked everyone (including the team!) who went to the MLS Championship at the Home Depot Center last November. A trip is planned for the 2005 MLS Cup match in Dallas and, as in 2001, the SEs are doing a trip to the Azteca for the USA-Mexico City match at the end of March. Because there are no bargain plane fares to LA for the April 2 season opener, the SEs will not be organizing a trip. In the months ahead, look for trips to the Meadowlands on June 12 and October 1, to Chicago on August 6, and possibly to Costa Rica for the October 9th WCQ.

Guests from DC United included president and CEO Kevin Payne, coach Peter Nowak and technical director Dave Kasper.

Kevin opened his remarks by remembering last year's meeting when everyone was wondering if the team could get out of the funk it was in. ("How did that turn out?" someone in the audience jokingly asked.) He said it was a real pleasure to watch the coaches instill a new sense of discipline and purpose, to add a few key players and see all the players step up and play harder, and to see everyone regain that special sense of what it means to be part of DC United.

Dave Kasper told the Screaming Eagles how much the fan support means to the players. "You saw it," he said, "at the Meadowlands when the players came over to you to celebrate. And you saw it during that playoff game vs. New England. It was overwhelming." The team is so much further ahead this year, he observed, because no wholesale changes were needed. Some senior roster spots will be filled in the next few weeks and several young players will be signed next week to the developmental roster.

Peter Nowak expressed his thanks for a great year. "You guys make [the team] believe they can do it. It's important to help the players build their confidence. You guys give them this confidence because sometimes they don't know if they are doing well, but you give them respect." He said a successful franchise has three elements: the front office, the fans, and the team. "Soccer is a funny game," Nowak concluded and promised that the team would "run and fight" for us.

Kevin returned to the podium to discuss the new players in camp: Nick van Sicklen, Tim Merritt, Matt Nickell, Andrew Terris, Shawn Kuykendall, Bobby Boswell, Clyde Simms, Kenny Arena, Jamil Walker, and the Brazilian defender, Odvan. He mentioned that one more significant player announcement will be made in the near future.

There were questions from the audience about RFK and the new stadium, DC United merchandise availability, and the reserve teams. Kevin said that the conditions are RFK will not be perfect and may represent a challenge at times, but that everyone worked hard to achieve the best possible solution. If many things go smoothly, it may be possible to break ground on a new soccer stadium this calendar year. The team has been assured by adidas that more merchandise will be available in local outlets. Kevin also noted that

MLS has a new fulfillment house so that online purchasing may also be improved. There is a minimum 12-game reserve team schedule. These games will be played on Sundays at 10am on RFK's auxiliary field; admission will be free.

In closing, Kevin mentioned the possibility of a four-team tournament in the 2006 preseason to be held in Hawaii: DC United, the LA Galaxy, and two teams from the J-League. He encouraged the SEs to save their pennies for the trip.

Check the Web site, www.screaming-eagles.com, for information on SE activities and contact information.