



[Ask a Member](#)

Written by Gretchen Morrison

Fall is not only back-to-school time but back-to-activities time, too. For this issue's Ask a Member section, we let Gretchen Morrison tell us all about an organisation that has been extremely helpful to her and her family.

**Brussels Sports Association: Helping Families Stay Active in their New Environment  
by Gretchen Morrison**

An important component in moving the family to a new country is keeping the kids active in sports and other activities that they were involved in “back home”. Creating an atmosphere where the kids are comfortable and thriving helps to aid in a smooth transition. While I do understand and appreciate the significance of immersing children in the local culture and in activities spoken in the local language, I was very pleased to find the Brussels Sports Association (BSA) for my children.

The BSA has been organizing recreational sports such as soccer, basketball, baseball, and the newly added lacrosse for over 50 years for children ages 4 to 15. The language spoken at games and practices is English, but it is not required. The BSA was established to provide competitive sports to children in an international environment where the focus is on skill development, fair play, and fun for all. We have been involved with the BSA for the past two years, since moving to Belgium, and have witnessed firsthand how the organization, the volunteer coaches, and the players live out the ideals of the founder.

My son, Nicholas, was 5 when we moved to Waterloo and had played soccer for 2 years through the YMCA organization in Arizona. There, he was learning good sportsmanship, how to play on a team, and that winning was not everything. I was hoping to find an organization with similar philosophies and I haven't been disappointed with the BSA. While he does love to win, Nicholas understands that winning is not everything and that he needs to give his best effort every game regardless of the outcome. His coaches have been instrumental in teaching this philosophy.



BSA teams are composed of kids of mixed ability levels, the emphasis being on doing your best and advancing your skills. I witnessed the result of this firsthand this year when Nicholas realized he was not as fast as some of his teammates in soccer and became more of a defensive player. The coaches, who are parents of the players, work with their teams to encourage everyone to play to the best of their abilities. Throughout this past season, Nicholas' coach helped him to learn the art of defensive soccer and how his skills were benefitting the team. I was surprised to see how little confidence Nicholas had at the beginning of the season compared to past years and was very pleased to watch his self-esteem change as the season progressed. He found success in his new role on the team. We are both looking forward to this coming soccer season and what that will bring.



I truly believe the BSA is an integral part of our happy transition to Belgium. It's a great way to meet people from different countries and communities all around Belgium. My daughter, Lindsey, who is now 5, will be playing soccer for the first time this fall. I am confident she will have a positive experience in her first foray into competitive sports.

To find out more about the BSA and how to register for fall soccer, check out their website: <http://www.bsasports.org/>

**Gretchen Morrison** has lived in Waterloo for the past two years with her husband and 2 children. The former language arts teacher enjoys volunteering at her children's schools and

*within the AWCB.*

*Published in the Fall 2011 issue of the Rendez-vous.*