

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

We know that and we feel that. And it being June, we are reminded that black people are the reason we have gay pride today. This conversation may be a result of current events, but we acknowledge that racial injustice is not anything new and current, rather it is systemic in our society. While individually, members are out marching in solidarity with black lives, we as a club have taken this as an opportunity to look introspectively at our organization and how we can make immediate and impactful changes within the Strikers while still fighting for Black Lives and people of color in our larger communities.

We recently held a Strikers Town Hall in which we had a very open and honest conversation about the Strikers. We listened. We learned. We acknowledge that we are not the most diverse organization. And while that is not intentional, it is something we have been thinking about. We've heard things like 'well Boston is mostly white' and 'the gay community here is mostly white' and while that may, or may not be true, we do not want the Strikers to be satisfied with "simply being like the status quo." And so we used the Town Hall to introduce actionable ways in which we can actively address diversity and inclusion with the club.

## A new board position

One of the ways we intend to make sure this remains an integral part of our operations is by announcing a new **board position that will focus specifically on club diversity and community outreach**. We currently have an open board position - the Community Service chair, which we have struggled to fill. And so we are looking to expand this position to one that is more holistically community-oriented. We will continue our community service plans as an organization, but this new chair position will be charged with **holding the board accountable for being more inclusive and more diverse**. The role will focus on issues directly affecting the club and ensuring we continue to improve not just for the next few months but longer term; additionally they will **look for ways we can connect with our communities better throughout the year and be stronger activists** - looking for ways to partner with other nonprofits, to use black owned businesses and support other marginalized communities. **If you are interested in this new position, [please fill out this form](#).**

## The Buddy System

We all remember what it was like the first time we came out to play with the Strikers. Nerve-racking. Intimidating. Add to that the possibility of approaching the field and seeing that no-one looks like you. In an effort to ease that first day, **we are introducing the Buddy System**. We are asking long standing members to take new players under their wings and be their 'buddy' through the season - **get to know them, introduced them to other players, invite them to team events or to Cathys after soccer, help coordinate rides if they are stuck, and most importantly, make sure they feel welcome**. We will include an option to be a Buddy with each seasons' registration, but if you would like to sign up now, **[please fill out this form](#)**.

## Recruitment and Retention

Another focus for the club will be on our retention. It's easy to think all is well when we have the same players coming back season after season, but we need to start looking at why people leave the club. Sometimes that is straightforward, like they move, but if they are leaving because of racism or some type of discomfort with the club or some members, we need to know that so we can address the issue and resolve it.

...in this edition

#BLM



Strikers Spotlight



Soccer vs. COVID-19



Dear Daddy



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On the flip side, while we aren't out actively recruiting at events, we all individually have a role to play in recruiting new members. **If we are only recruiting people who look like us, then we will continue to lack diversity in our club.** We also need to get a better idea as to the barriers of access to our club - whether it's financial or physical, like being able to get to a field or facility. Are we unintentionally limiting who can play by not thinking about these things? We all have to think about our individual biases that go along with recruiting and challenge ourselves to not limit who we are recruiting to play.

## Boston LGBTQIA+ Sports

Another initiative is to work closer with the other LGBTQIA+ sports organizations in Boston so that we can all learn from one another and support one another as a united front for Black Lives Matter. Many of the other leagues are involved in donating to Black Lives Matter Boston, as are we with our proceeds from our tee shirt sales, and so we have been using that as common grounds to start discussions across leagues to address race issues in our clubs and to better support black lives in Boston. We were recently part of an initial call with the heads from the basketball, football, and softball leagues and the group is going to work on a larger town hall for all of our clubs together, with the hope of getting members from Black Lives Matter Boston to engage in a conversation with us on how we can all be better within our groups but as a gay sports community in total.

At the end of the day, we we have a voice and we want to use it. We want to actively engage in the uncomfortable conversations, we want to continue to learn and grow as an organization, we want to stand in solidarity with all black lives, and we want to make sure that our organization does not tolerate any type of racism or discrimination.

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## Soccer 0 | Coronavirus 2 Covid-19 wins. All summer soccer remain cancelled!

Unfortunately our summer soccer leagues remain cancelled due to COVID-19. However, we are hoping to put together some pop-up sessions late in July/August if we are permitted to do so. Please keep an eye out on our Facebook page for any and all updates. We miss being on the pitch too, but we will always put the health and safety of our club and members first.

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## FORE!!!! Footgolf IS happening!

While the recreational fields and facilities remain closed, golf courses have opened up and we have reserved FootGolf for July 18th at Quail Ridge Country Club in Acton, MA. So strap on the spikes, make a 4some (we know its your fantasy), and let's see how rusty we really are.

Where: Quail Ridge Country Club  
49 Skyline Dr.  
Acton, MA 01720  
When: Saturday, July 18th 5:30pm-8:00pm  
RSVP: [On our Facebook for an accurate headcount!](#)  
Dinner: We've reserved the outside area at The Red Raven in Acton for dinner following golf.



Because of COVID-19, please set up groups of 4 or 5 ahead of time to ensure proper tee times and spacing out groups. If you need a group, just let us know and we will set you up!

# Strikers Spotlight

Each newsletter we're shining the spotlight on two of our players for you to get to know. No shin guards to protect them here! Oh and we're letting them pick the next two stars too!

## Rodney

1. How long have you been playing/did you play with the Strikers?

*I started in 1988, a year after the club started!*

2. Why did you join the Strikers?

*I had played soccer all my life through high school in Falmouth, then one year on the freshman team at UMass and then intramural. I moved to LA for grad school and moved back to Boston in 1987 and wanted to get involved in the community, and heard about the Strikers!*

3. What is your favorite Strikers memory?

*Only one? No, because I played so long. Gay Games in Vancouver ('90), Amsterdam ('98), and Sydney ('02); Serving on host committee to plan/manage '03 IGLFA World Cup at Harvard; 2 terms as Strikers President; Conceiver of first PTown Soccer Classic (and playing in the PTown Soccer Classic in 2017, five months after having double knee replacement surgery); playing in the European Soccer Championships ('13) with the Strikers at the age of 57!*

4. What do you do for work:

*HR Business Partner for 9 years at TSNE Missionworks supporting Mission driven nonprofits across the country*

5. How long have you been living in the Boston area?

*Grew up in Falmouth, went to UMass, lived on and of between Boston, LA, Miami, and NYC, but back in Boston since 2009*

6. If you could donate to any charity right now, which one would you?

*UMass Amherst*



**What are you currently obsessed with?**

- **Song:** Joy (any one of the dance mix versions)
- **Movie:** Short Bus
- **TV Show:** Forensic Files
- **Book:** Harry Potter
- **Food:** Salty barbecued meats & fried seafood



## Troy



1. How long have you been playing/did you play with the Strikers?

*Started in the Summer/Fall of 1996!*

2. Why did you join the Strikers?

*I had just moved to Boston and was looking to keep playing soccer and meet people. Saw an ad in the Phoenix newspaper about the club.*

3. What is your favorite Strikers memory?

*Marching in the NYC Pride Parade with the Strikers & Ramblers for the first time in the late 90s. They had a DJ in the back of a pickup truck and we danced the whole route.*

4. What is your favorite season with the Strikers?

*I have a special place in my hear for Sundays, but I love indoors most.*

5. What do you do for work:

*I have a degree in & worked for 16 years as a medical illustrator. Right now I'm working as a Media Development Editor for an educational publishing company managing all of their digital art assets. It's as fascinating as it sounds \*insert sarcasm voice here\**

6. How long have you been living in the Boston area?

*Moved to the area in 1996. I've lived in Framingham, Arlington, and now have a home in Maynard.*

7. If you could donate to any charity right now, which one would you?

*Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). From their website: The SPLC is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality*

**What are you currently obsessed with?**

- **Song:** Tracy Chapmans first album on repeat
- **Movie:** 13th - Documentary by Ava Duvernay
- **TV Show:** The Politician
- **Book:** Black Leopard, Red Wolf by Marlon James
- **Food:** Thai - massaman curry specifically!



## Dear Daddy...

I know most messages are asking for your help navigating everyday gay life - sex, drag, dildos... but lately, my social media feed has been taken over by friends at protests and marches. I'm just a fraction of the larger community, but I was wondering if you had any advice for an individual looking to make a difference. Eventually the posts will be back to the typical speedo posts of summer, but how can I still make progress?

Sincerely,

A white millennial

Dear Ally,

As a gay person, I'm sure you understand the value and meaning of being an ally. Someone open to hearing your story, supporting your fight, and standing up for you against hatred. That is what matters most now. Uplifting black voices and highlighting the inequities of black and bi poc individuals on social media is a great way to voice your support. But it is when you notice your feed starting to lose focus again that your continued fight matters most. Continue to use your platform for progress. Continue to donate to this fight - whether it be money or time. And do not stop educating yourself. Understand what you are fighting for and why. It means engaging in dialogues with black people and actively listening to their stories and experiences. Their realities are different from yours and acknowledging your privilege is needed for you to help make progress. An ally's best resource is knowledge.

I think one of the most impactful pieces I've read recently was the NY Times article ["WHAT IS OWED" by Nikole Hannah-Jones](#). It highlights how racism is systemic and what really needs to happen to achieve justice and equality.

Additionally, I know you are a soccer player... I mean, football player. Or however you identify... but it may be a good idea to check out your local MLS teams' resources. The [NE Revs C.H.A.N.G.E page](#) is lush with content, resources, and charitable and actionable organizations. **I would urge all soccer players** to also watch the video there that includes current and former NE Revs black players discussing their emotions during this time and their own experiences.

Keep up the good fight. Stay loud and stay proud.

Love, Daddy

**Board Notes**



Soccer Reminders  
ALL BLACK LIVES MATTER

Show your Strikers pride - get some gear!!  
Check out our team store:  
<https://www.teepublic.com/user/bostonstrikers>