



# A-Board Newsletter

From your Communications Chair - Dylan Hammon

## SPORTS COMMISSION UPDATE:

Welcome A-Board members to 2026!

The first quarter of 2026 has already delivered strong momentum with several successful hosted events across Greater Cleveland, including two weekends of JVA Rock N Rumble, the AAU Cleveland Grand Prix, and the Nike North Coast Cup.

The 26th Greater Cleveland Sports Awards was a tremendous celebration of our region’s sports community. A special thank you to the Associate Board for their leadership and support. Associate Board auction donations generated more than \$40,000 in proceeds — the highest total to date. Financials remain on track and will be reported at the 2nd Quarter meeting.

Re-watch the full show here:

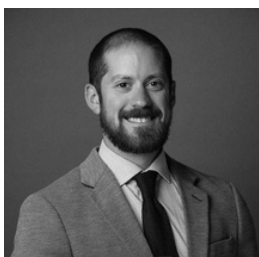
<https://youtu.be/TcwRH1Xfln8?si=OckWVomqXF6ZecrO>

We’re excited to announce several major upcoming events:

- International Soccer Friendly – Brazil vs. Egypt (June 6) at Huntington Bank Field
- Street League Skateboarding (August 9) at North Coast Yard
- USA Boxing (September 26 – October 3) at Cleveland Public Auditorium
- USATF Club Cross Country & National Championships (December 12) at Silver Creek Metro Park

Stay tuned for the announcement of the new date for Pickle in the Land 2026.

Lastly, we’re excited about our new sports sales manager at GCSC - check them out in the Announcements section!



**Matt Sajna**  
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**Rachael Stentz-Baugher**  
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### This edition:

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# A Word From Our Leaders...



**ANGELA ALMASY**  
**CHAIR**

I'm excited to see us build on last year's momentum and start 2026 strong. Most notably, our Associate Board raised more than \$42,000 through the Sports Awards auction – an achievement that earned a round of applause at the recent GCSC Board meeting. Thank you for your hard work in making that possible.

Despite the snowstorm, we had a great turnout at our Q1 meeting, and I hope you left feeling energized. As we continue to learn more about GCSC's strategic plan, we have a meaningful opportunity to elevate our contributions and raise greater awareness of the impact GCSC has on our community. "Loud and proud" is our new mindset.

A special thank you to Steve Volchko for hosting us at Rocket Arena and coordinating with our guest speaker, Nic Barlage.

We've set ambitious goals for ourselves, and our Awareness and Engagement committees are already hard at work. If you haven't signed up for one (or both), please do so soon. We need everyone's involvement, and I'm happy to connect one-on-one to discuss how you'd like to contribute.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our first YES Program volunteer opportunity on March 18!

For those of you who braved the snowstorm and were able to join us during our Q1 meeting in January at Rocket Arena, I hope it got you energized about everything that we have on deck for 2026. Thank you to Steve Volchko for hosting and our guest speaker Nic Barlage for taking time out of his busy schedule to chat with us about his tenure on the GCSC Board and the future of Downtown Cleveland!

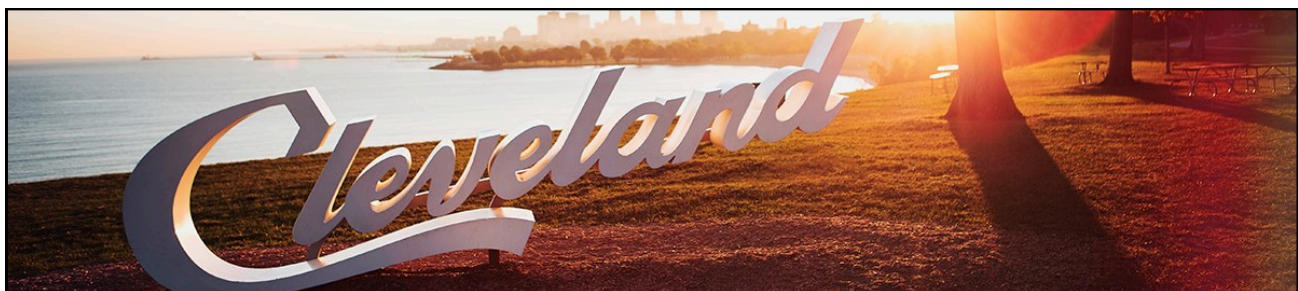
In addition to the 15+ official GCSC events that we still have in front of us, there will be several chances to get to know each other and contribute to the overall mission of the Sports Commission through professional development sessions, intern support, fundraising, socials and volunteering. Bookmark the A-Board calendar to keep yourself organized and be on the lookout for a communication from me with dates of upcoming engagement opportunities.

Lastly, I want to highlight that as the Sports Commission completes their strategic planning process, we are well positioned as an A-Board to carve out our own lane and really make a difference. In future meetings we'll talk about this, but feel free to reach out to Angela or I in the meantime if you have ideas or questions. We are all ears!

You can reach me at [ariel.mcnaair@ey.com](mailto:ariel.mcnaair@ey.com) if you have any questions or would like to connect!



**ARIEL MCNAIR**  
**VICE CHAIR**





**PAIGE RABATIN**  
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**PRADEEP GIRI**  
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## ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Engagement Committee held its first meeting of the year on February 18 and discussed key initiatives and volunteer opportunities that will guide our work in 2026. The group is focused on increasing Associate Board engagement while continuing to make a meaningful impact in the community.

### **NCAA Wrestling YES Clinic (March 18)**

- We are currently seeking volunteers to assist with onsite registration and serve as group leaders. We are still looking for a few more volunteers — please sign up if you're available.

### **Baseball Equipment Drive**

- Beginning in March, we will collect new and gently used baseball equipment (gloves, bats, balls, cleats, etc.) to benefit local youth recreation centers. We encourage members to consider organizing collection drives within their companies and to share additional drop-off opportunities with the committee.

Looking ahead, the Engagement Committee has established clear goals for 2026: to host three YES Clinics, collect at least 150 items through the baseball equipment drive, and engage 50 total Associate Board volunteers across events this year. We are excited about the year ahead and the opportunity to deepen our impact both within the organization and throughout the community.

## AWARENESS COMMITTEE UPDATE



**CHRIS PECK**  
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**JIM HOFBAUER**  
James.Hofbauer@UHhospitals.org

We would like to begin by thanking everyone who expressed interest in joining the Awareness Committee.

Thank you to everyone who shared their great ideas received as part of the survey. We are genuinely excited about the opportunity to collaborate and look forward to all that we can accomplish together this year.

For those joining the Awareness Committee, you should have received an invitation a few weeks ago to attend our initial kick-off meeting, scheduled for this Thursday, March 5th, from 9:00–10:00 a.m. During this meeting, we will discuss several exciting spring fundraising ideas tied to spring events (Guardians Opening Day, March Madness, et. al.) and begin planning for our new Mitchell's Ice Cream Summer Campaign. We will also engage in a brainstorming session focused on our 2026 initiatives, including a proposed summer fundraising activity centered around a watch party for the 2026 Special Olympics (as we prepare for 2030 in Cleveland)!

We look forward to connecting with our committee members this week and throughout the next few months. We are excited to share our plans and progress at the next A-Board Meeting in May.

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# Member Updates & General Announcements

## IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

- March 4-9 | USA Fencing March North American Cup
- March 14-15 | Nike Shamrock Showdown
- March 18 | NCAA Wrestling YES Clinic
- March 19-21 | NCAA DI Wrestling Championships
- April 15 | GCSC Intern Lunch and Learn
- May 7 | 4pm - 6pm: Q2 A-Board Meeting [TBC]
- June 4 | Breakfast with David Gilbert
- June 24 | GCSC Intern Lunch and Learn
- August 13 | 4pm - 6pm: Q3 A-Board Meeting [TBC]
- October 14 | GCSC Intern Lunch and Learn
- November 5 | 4pm - 6pm: Q4 A-Board Meeting [TBC]
- TBA | Board-to-Board (Kristin Baird Adams)
- TBA | Board-to-Board (Eddie Taylor Jr.)

## Announcements

- Save the date for our 2026 A-Board Meetings!
  - May 7<sup>th</sup>
  - August 13<sup>th</sup>
  - November 5<sup>th</sup>
- We are still looking for locations to host our quarterly meetings, so if you have any ideas, reach out to the Executive Committee!
- Bookmark the path to the A-Board google drive: [GCSC A-Board Google Drive](#)
- Learn more about the newest member of the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission team below!

## Celebrate Good Times!

Shouting out to all the exciting news and events occurring in the lives of our A-Board members! We encourage you to share what you're celebrating in life so we can celebrate YOU throughout the year!

### Birthdays

- 01/05 | Greg Pasiadis
  - 01/30 | Travis Poppell
  - 02/06 | Angela Almasy
  - 02/19 | Imani Tibbs Boone
  - 03/09 | Angel Rice
  - 03/31 | Connor Gibbons
  - 03/31 | Steve Volchko
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# Welcome to the Team!

Join us in welcoming the newest GCSC Staff Member. Spencer starts on March 3rd. Click his name to be taken to his LinkedIn profile.



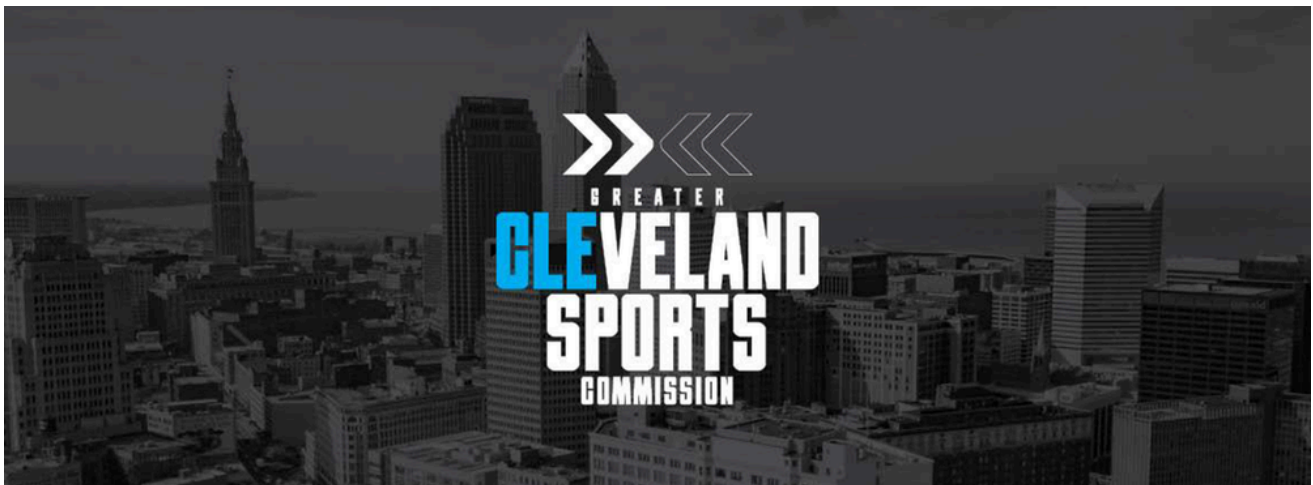
**SPENCER WILLIAMS**  
SPORTS SALES MANAGER

As a lifelong Browns and Cavs fan, my sports journey began as soon as I could walk and was largely shaped by basketball. I grew up in Orange Village and went on to play basketball at the College of Wooster. While there, I earned my degree in Political Science and served as team captain of the men's basketball team, leading us to the NCAA Tournament in each of my four years.

My college experience ultimately led to a unique opportunity in Donegal, Ireland, where I played professionally while also coaching and mentoring underserved youth in the local community. While abroad, I earned my M.A. in Governance, Compliance, and Data Protection in Financial Services from Atlantic Technological University.

Upon returning to the U.S, I spent five years at KeyBank in the Anti-Money Laundering space, ultimately becoming a Senior Analyst and Sales Liaison. Today, as a youth basketball trainer and an Orange High School basketball coach, I continue to embrace my passion for sports while using my experiences to make a lasting impact.

In my free time, I enjoy traveling, staying active, and spending time with family and friends — especially my eight-year-old son. While I appreciate a wide range of movies, documentaries, and series, The Office will always hold a special place in my heart.



# Cleveland in the News

Check out other Cleveland sports updates happening around town and in the community!

- Congratulations to our own Bailey Wells, who was announced as part of Crain's Cleveland's 40 Under 40 2025!
- Join Tri-C for an exclusive luncheon on how local businesses can use NIL partnerships with student-athletes to grow their brand. Tickets are on sale now for Wednesday, March 6 at Corporate College.
- Wednesday is FOUR Women is back as part of the 2026 MAC Basketball Tournament, scheduled for Wednesday, March 12 at Rocket Arena. Tickets for the event and tournament games are on sale now.
- Check out all the local Clevelanders who represented Team USA in Milan-Cortina, including Laila Edwards and Red Gerard!
- The latest renderings of the Cleveland Clinic Global Peak Performance Center have been released.
- Congratulations to Mike Vuraich and our friends at the MAC on the announcement of their newest university, Sacramento State!



CRAINS 40 UNDER 40 2025  
BAILEY WELLS



NIL BUSINESS LUNCHEON  
2026



WEDNESDAY IS FOUR  
WOMEN



CLEVELAND OLYMPIANS



GPPC RENDERINGS



SAC STATE JOINS MAC!



*Thank you for reading!*