

What's in a name? Adult soccer league fun

By Rachel Murdock

Contributor

ANDERSON TWP – Just the team names give them away.

Instead of the usual, competitive-sounding team names like "Thunder United" or "Vortex" or "Eclipse," the Anderson Township adult coed soccer league is replete with rather more entertaining and self-deprecating names. "Dazed and Confused." "Old and In the Way." "Good Once." "GanGreen." "Holy Guacamole."

With three divisions and 25 teams, the league involves many people, both in the township and without, who don't need to reach a championship, but instead play soccer for fun, exercise and friendship.

Jody Brandon, who plays on a team called "Eight is Enough" (because they usually end up with only eight players at any given game (instead of the 11 needed for soccer), represents the kind of player running the field Saturday mornings in the spring and fall.

Brandon is a special education teacher at Summit Elementary School in Forest Hills School District. She grew up in Anderson Township, played soccer for Anderson High School, continued her soccer career at Wright State University

Since her graduation, she has played soccer in adult leagues, taking a break only for the births of her two children, Owen and Tate.

"I play spring and fall, and sometimes indoor during the winter, too," Brandon said. "I enjoy it. I'm setting a good example for the kids to exercise and be active all during their lives. We always try to bring the kids and let them see that being fit is a great thing, and fun."

Brandon said she has played with this group for three years, originally recruited by an old college friend with whom she played soccer.

"I was excited that it was right here in Anderson and easy to get to," she said. "Some of the players live in the township, and some come from outside."

Brandon's husband, Dave, had a blanket spread out on the sidelines, where he and the boys were equipped with toddler finger foods while watching Jody play.

"It's a great game," he said. "It's social; it gives us a chance to get outside and enjoy the parks, and it's helping her stay in shape. It's great. We just come outside and have a good time."

While Dave hasn't played competitive soccer, preferring other sports, he has been conscripted into

being a sub when "Eight is Enough" couldn't quite get enough players to take the field.

Jody Brandon said she'll definitely try to keep playing as the children get older.

"I know things will get busier, and I may not be able to play as often," she said. "But I think it's a good thing for them to see me stay active all my life."

Players on another team, Old and In the Way, agreed with Brandon.

Emily Robinson played recreational soccer while she was growing up, and she attended Anderson High School.

"I just want to get exercise and hang out with friends, and this is a great way to do it," said the Montessori teacher.

Her teammate, Rhiannon Oheweler is a graduate student who has one child and two stepchildren. She played soccer growing up and at Anderson High School, and was brought to "Old and In the Way" by a friend.

"I play in a lot of different leagues," she said. "It's a commitment that I have to follow through with. It forces me to exercise. For me,



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Jody Brandon takes a break with her two children, Tate and Owen, at half-time of their game.

it's a discipline."

Former Anderson High School and Fort Wayne University player, TJ Messerschmit, also plays for "Old and in the Way."

"I really just play for fun," he said. "You meet a lot of people and keep in shape." A salesman during the week, Messerschmit said he also kayaks and rides mountain bikes in his off hours.

His teammate Chad Dils also played soccer at Anderson High School.

"It's something to do and it gets you out of bed on a Saturday morning," he said. "And it's a chance to torture your body for absolutely no reason."