

Start-up streamlines sign ups

Spa City-based company's clients span continent

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The Saratogian

SARATOGA SPRINGS — It began with a massive stack of applications for a local youth soccer club, a busy registrar, an idle computer programmer and an idea.

John Haller and Matt Scarchilli have turned the idea into the Saratoga Springs-based company SportsSignup, which provides online registration and other services for more than 1,000 youth sports leagues in 44 states and Canada.

"We had no intention of making this a business," Scarchilli said recently at the company's new downtown offices.

The two men met by chance in 2001 when Scarchilli, of Latham, was president of the Latham Circle Soccer Club and Haller's wife, Michelle, served as its registrar. Haller, who had worked for Map-Info as a software developer, was in between jobs. He decided to find a way to help his wife eliminate the hassle of manually processing 1,000 registrations and eventually developed the software that today is SportsSignup.

The Web site, www.SportsSignup.com, caters to customers who are mainly parents of children in the leagues who volunteer hours of their time as registrars in between day-jobs and raising families. Some receive thousands of applications each season or year, depending on the sport. Typically, volunteers spend between five and 10 hours per week opening, sorting and recording registrations received by mail, Scarchilli estimated.

"Basically, the automated system takes the headache out of processing the registrations by



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SportsSignup Vice President of Sales Matt Scarchilli, right, describes the online registration company alongside CEO Anthony Bruno in their conference room located at 18 Division St. in Saratoga Springs last week.

hand," he said.

The software accommodates individuals registering for road races or swimming lessons in addition to large teams in a variety of sports, from bowling to baseball.

The business was incorporated as League Sports Services LLC in 2003 and has been growing ever since, owners say. In 2007, Anthony Bruno signed on as CEO. Twelve full-time employees work out of a headquarters at 18 Division St., which was established last August.

SportsSignup profits from a small fee added to each player's registration that is processed through the Web site. Fees range

from \$2 to \$10 based on the cost of registration set by the league. An automated background check service for coaches operates in a similar manner on the Web site.

Capitalizing on a partnership with the athletic apparel supplier EastBay, the company recently started offering leagues the option to sell their own merchandise through its Web sites. SportsSignup receives another small fee from each transaction, which varies with the retail price of the item.

CEO Bruno wouldn't release revenue figures, but reported the company saw a 55 percent growth in profits from 2008 to 2009. It has been processing 2,000

registrations a day and plans call for hiring three more employees to expand its sales and marketing team by the end of 2010.

Youth sports league administrators that have switched from other online registration services to SportsSignup say the system is user-friendly and efficient.

"It does just about anything I'd want it to do," said Tammy Kishbaugh, a registrar for both Blackwatch Premier Soccer and the Capital District Youth Soccer League, which has about 12,000 members.

Rita Hawkins, a volunteer with the Adirondack Girls Lacrosse League based in Queensbury, switched to SportsSignup three

years ago.

"With the old system, I would constantly be using work time to contact the company for support," she said, but those days are in the past. "I very rarely have to talk to SportsSignup."

Hawkins said she also likes having the ability to view uncollected debts and send mass e-mails to the league.

The company's fee system, which is based on the number of people who register for a session, is a better deal than her former provider, which charged a flat rate no matter how many players signed up, Hawkins said.

"It's not as variable of a cost," she said.