

# EAGA Business Builder

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Finally, a light at the end of the tunnel...or is it just a distant 'out of business' sign. June 23, 2020

## Today's presenter was Roger Linn—i9Sports



For those of you that are not familiar with Roger's business...i9 Sports is a national youth sports league that is designed to focus on providing age-appropriate instruction that is fun for kids and convenient for busy parents. Their slogan is "It's the way that Youth Sports Should Be". They provide the instruction and involvement in a variety of season based sports and athletic programs, including football, basketball, baseball, soccer, cheer and many others. Today Mr. Linn provided us with an insight into the limits, opportunities and many challenges

that his business is experiencing during this coronavirus pandemic 'adventure'. The i9 programs naturally require a substantial amount of advance planning. It starts with participant registration in order to figure out how many kids will be involved, and in which sports. Then fields, courts and other athletic facilities have to be located and scheduled. The teams will need coaches and other program supervisory personnel that most often require different levels of training themselves. And appropriate equipment has to be purchased, or otherwise made available, so that the participants are able to have a complete and enjoyable experience. So, just how would a pandemic affect a program like Roger's? Pretty much in every way that you can think of...and also in some ways never even imagined. When the governmental and medical entities first began trying to figure out how to deal with the situation, they basically shut everything down. At that point, i9 Sports Albuquerque was experiencing record-breaking enrolment and was about a week away from starting their new season's sports programs. Everything had to come to an immediate halt. The four to six months of pre-planning that had gone into making sure that everything was ready—it was all messed up now. But it was not just an 'OK. Figure out where we are and how we will adjust' situation for Roger and his staff. The next step was a constantly changing, and ever elusive thing. How the sports programs could be played, or whether they could even be played at all, depends on periodic, and certainly unpredictable, decisions made by governmental entities. The governor's announcements of what would become allowable most often came via mid-week press conferences. For the first few weeks, the next step was to not take any new steps. When things did slightly ease up, the social-distancing and limited gatherings rules were a complication for i9's normal operating programs. The now allowed ratio of 5 players to 1 adult supervisor was a drastic reduction from the normal team sizes of 10 to 12 players. So the juggling began to rebuild teams, find additional coaches and reestablish playing venues. Another major complication was that the small number of allowed participants would not accommodate the standard team size. Roger and his team now had to redesign the programs to be geared more toward training than to game situations. But that wasn't the end of the challenges. By this time, the families were themselves redesigning their 'normal' lives. Restrictions, uncertain safety situations, program modifications and general individual family schedule changes caused previously registered participants to start dropping out. Those dominos began falling now, and they, in turn, caused the recently reset dominos of schedules, team reformation, etc, etc, to begin falling again as well. And the cycle was re-visited every couple of weeks as the government allowances and requirements changed. One of the more confusing, and sad, situations that occurred after i9's limited program restart was the barrage of complaints, threats and harassment that came from competitor sports programs. People were lurking around venues intending to gather 'evidence' of i9 breaking the current rules for such events. There was even an incomplete, and quite misleading, television story regarding the matter. Very sad how some people behave during these frustrating times. Roger's i9 program continues to be in flux while the pandemic situation constantly evolves in always unpredictable jolts. The group's annual fund raising golf event has been cancelled for this year. The spring program registrants continue to dwindle, though the numbers seem to be stabilizing right now (original 2,100 in number, is down to about 1,450). The summer programs are in jeopardy though. Originally scheduled for at least 1,600 participants, only 170 remain signed up at this time. Roger and his team are committed to providing the kids with a safe and reasonably organized place for learning about sports via enjoyable activities. If you want to know more about the current i9 programs, give Mr. Linn a call at 505-209-2000 . He could also use folks to be coaches and other providers of adult supervision. And it is likely that just general moral support would be nice as he and his staff navigate this pandemic infused business 'adventure' .

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- ◆ EAGA will be holding a Members Only Happy Hour at Rio Bravo Brewing. Mario has provided the following details:
  - When: July 9, 2020 at 5:30pm
  - Where: Rio Bravo Brewing- back patio under the tents
  - Who is invited: EAGA members only. No spouses.
  - EAGA will be providing beverages and appetizers.
- ◆ The 2020 Membership Roster has been published. A pdf version is included as an attachment to this bulletin email.
- ◆ Virtual meetings continue. The next one will be at 7:00am, Tuesday, July 7th. The link remains the same and is noted in the outlined box below.
- ◆ There is no requirement that you wait until exactly 7:00 to sign on to the virtual meetings. If you log in a little early you will be able to participate in the discussions du jour, hear a variety of anecdotes, or randomly discover something new and interesting. Had you been there early this morning, you would have seen Jukka model his newly acquired electronic coronavirus protective mask. Whenever he spoke, random lights activated on the mask. The lights appeared to be caused by the sound and not because of his accent. In any case, a humorous thing. Mr. Jumisko usually activates the meeting 15 to 20 minutes before the scheduled time, so jump on early and see what the week's interactions bring.
- ◆ Upcoming Presenters:
  - July 7th: Joe Sierra—Century Bank
- ◆ We are in need of presenters. Slots are available for the remaining meetings in July, and any Tuesday that you would like in August. Please contact Mario if you can make a presentation at one of our meetings.
- ◆ Our changing of the guard will happen on July 1st. The newly elected members, Steve Grant, Mike Blomker and Steven Douglas, will take their position on the Board of Directors and new officers will assume their roles at that time as well. Since we are not having a meeting on June 30th, President Kit will have an off week to clean out his virtual desk and make room for incoming President, John Mead. Mr. Turpen won't need the virtual moving van though. He will be taking his things over to the virtual Chairman's office, just down the pretend hallway, where he will take charge of those duties for the next 6 months. We also want to thank the outgoing Board Members, Tom McMahon, Dan Mowery and Michael Berezniak for their dedication in directing our organization over the past few months.

**EAGA Tue, July 7th, 2020 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM (MDT)**  
Join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/940475581>

You can also dial in using your phone.

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