

## **This goulash has got game**

**Kickers Soccer Club serves up venison for its annual dinner**

March 11, 2009

By [JIM NEWTON](mailto:jnewton@scn1.com) [jnewton@scn1.com](mailto:jnewton@scn1.com)

LAKE VILLA -- Chef Jerry Kowalczyk and his staff had their hands full Saturday, but it was a labor of love.

"It's just a good time. Cooking for these people is just a pleasure," Kowalczyk said as he led an operation to prepare the courses for 300 attendees of the Chicago Kickers Soccer Club annual venison dinner at the American Aid Society of German Descendants Hall.

With the exception of Oktoberfest, it is the second biggest annual event for the Soccer Club and the American Aid Society.

"There's nothing like having a party for 300 of your closest friends," said Soccer Club President Bill Zettlmeier, who was part of the bustling activities Saturday afternoon, hours before the guests were scheduled to arrive.

In the kitchen, huge, steaming pots of venison goulash were simmering on the commercial stoves as marinated venison roasts were being pan seared. The

goulash is cooked for seven hours to tenderize the game.

There was a Thanksgiving Day feel to the all-day culinary event, as cooks sliced vegetables and prepared sides to the main entrees.

Club volunteers once ran the entire event, but as the work load increased along with the age of the volunteers, the club decided to bring in a professional. Saturday was the third venison dinner handled by Kowalczyk, who owns the Niles-based Cut Above Catering.

Club members still played a vital role, however, providing three elk and two deer harvested last fall.

One of the hunters was Adam Sollmann, a club member for decades, who said he was glad to see a caterer taking over the preparation stages of the event.

"I've been doing this 43 years -- I'm the instigator," Sollmann said. "We finally got a guy to take care of it."

Club members and other guests paid \$35 for the all-you-can-eat dinner, which included liver dumpling soup, salad, cranberries, red cabbage, spaetzle-bread dumplings, rolls, venison goulash, venison roast and wine with dinner.

The event was a success, according to Soccer Club spokesman Terry Beadle.

"I think it went very well," Beadle said. "It was a good dinner."



## **Chef Jerry Kowalczyk's Marinated Venison Roast**

- Take one three- to four-pound venison roast and marinate 24 hours by submerging in a 50-50 refrigerated mixture of water and red wine with sliced onions and peppercorns.
- After it is marinated, coat the roast with a wet rub of olive oil, crushed garlic, rosemary, paprika, black pepper and salt.
- Thoroughly pan sear the roast on all sides to seal in the juices.
- Bake the roast in a preheated 400-degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes. Venison should not be served rare, but a little pink color is OK, Chef Kowalczyk said.



JOE SHUMAN ? Special to THE NEWS-SUN News-Sun reporter Jim Newton (left) helps Chef Jerry Kowalczyk mix venison goulash.



Fermin Cruz gets ready to pan sear a marinated venison roast.

## **Braised red cabbage**

- Add two heads of sliced red cabbage and four sliced Granny Smith apples to an oven-safe pan, along with one cup of brown sugar and three shredded carrots.
- Add a splash of red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar if desired.
- Put the pan in a pre-heated 350-degree oven and bake for an hour and a half.