

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” according to Shakespeare. Labels and designations in youth soccer are often confusing and to those new to the organization or those who just happen to be observing, are just plain confounding. There does not seem to be any agreed-upon list of terms that state and local organizations can use.

Some state associations call local soccer associations “clubs” or “leagues” or “associations” whether they are focused on recreation or competitive soccer, or both. Others label the competitive organizations “clubs” and some of these will have both recreation and competitive levels of play within the same club. In Rapid City, we have the Rapid City Youth Soccer League that manages the two aspects of recreation soccer (recreation and classic), and Rushmore Soccer Club that manages the highest level of training and competition, the “premier” level.

RCYSL gets kids started at age 4 in the Under 6 division and at Under 10, these players have an opportunity to choose to move to the “Classic” (formerly Challenge) level. These players spend more time in soccer practices and games and may travel some but not a heavy travel schedule. Under 12 Classic players and those older will participate in a try-out selection process, practice more and travel to several tournaments but will not be in competition to represent the state in the Region II Tournament. These teams will play in the Classic Cup being inaugurated this May in Sioux Falls.

Rushmore begins their program with an Under 10 Development program during the winter season (Register now at www.rushmoresoccerclub.com) and their Under 10 teams compete in the same festival format that RCYSL U10 teams do. This offers more game experience without raising the level of competition for these young players. There is some travel but very limited. The older teams will travel during the spring, summer and fall. These are the teams that contest for the honor of representing South Dakota at the Region II Tournament.

RCYSL offers recreation soccer for players from U6 through U19. The older levels of these teams might travel to Black Hills Area tournaments and their focus is to offer kids a chance to play without the more

intense practice and tournament schedule. These teams (from U12 to U19) are the teams that go to the state recreation tournament.

There are many reasons kids choose to play soccer and Rapid City has a spot for almost any player. Recreation players continue through high school age because they have fun playing with friends and, although they have increased demands on their time, they want to find some time for soccer. For those who are more intense about soccer, other obligations may be somewhat sidelined as players give more time to practice and travel. For these players, the choices are Classic and, perhaps, Premier teams.

Many are unaware that there is also a Men's League, a Women's League and a Co-Ed League offering adult players a chance to continue playing the game they love. Twenty years ago there were few adult players but as the youth soccer program has grown, players have gone through it and then formed the leagues that allow them to continue. In addition, many are now returning to coach in the youth program.

Registration is opening for spring season. Find your spot and get signed up.