

Tomorrow is the first of the shortest, slowest month of the year, February. This is a Leap Year so it is unusually long, giving you every possible opportunity to plan for March. That means getting your soccer registrations completed and returned or finished online. Just because it seems like February moves slowly doesn't mean you can forget about these things. Registration deadline is February 29.

The indoor tournament season continues with tournaments in Spearfish (2/15-17), Pierre (2/22-24), Gillette (2/29-3/2), and Rapid City (3/7-9). Many Rapid City teams will take advantage of some or all of these to hone skills for the spring and summer games.

Kudos go to Lynn Taylor Rick for a well-written presentation of the indoor soccer experience in Saturday's RC Journal. Coach and tournament director, Mark Vargo explained the value of an indoor experience for soccer players at all ages. We are fortunate to have strong indoor opportunities for our kids and grateful to the folks who donate their time to provide them.

Soccer Rapid City continues to work with the Soccer/Sports Complex concept and a group of people will guide a fund-raising program currently under development. Donation of 80 acres of land north of I90 is not completed and there is some interest in exploring other locations as an alternative if the donation doesn't materialize. Both Soccer Rapid City and the City Council remain committed to this project, if not the exact location.

Rapid City Youth Soccer and Rushmore Soccer Club have decided to continue the conversations about possible cooperation in tryouts, training experiences, and other things. The Summit group is exploring a single tryout procedure for all players interested in joining teams at either the Classic (Challenge) or Premier (RSC) levels. Players and parents would have full control over where the player is placed as an invitation to become part of the Premier team roster could be declined. If Rushmore Soccer Club has a single roster at each age level, it truly is a "premier" level of play. A single tryout where both Classic and Premier coaches can see all available players will enable selection of those who are ready for the Premier level. In addition, players who

are uncertain of their ability level would be encouraged by the invitation to this level but still would be able to accept or decline.

Rushmore Soccer Club has developed an outstanding summer training camp, the College Coaches Camp in early June. This experience could be expanded and made available for Classic teams as well. Being able to attend a top-notch camp without having to leave home would be of great benefit to Classic teams.

The most important thing for all soccer people to remember is that the Summit is an exploratory group. Nothing has been finalized, agreed to, or written in stone. There is a strong desire from both organizations to make youth soccer in Rapid City more user-friendly and to simplify the system thereby allowing players and families to easily understand and choose the level of competitive play they desire. The goal is to provide families with adequate information on all aspects of both competitive levels and let families decide.