

The first meetings of high school programs begin next week with Stevens High School boys meeting at 6:00 PM and the girls following 7:30 in the Freshman Lunchroom. Central will hold the meeting for both boys and girls the following week on April 22 at 6:00 PM in the Commons.

Douglas High School will host their parent/player information meeting on April 21, at 7:00 PM in the Douglas High School Library. The Douglas Soccer meeting is open to both boys and girls, grades 7 through 12. Contact Weyland Anderson at (605) 390-2323.

These meetings are very important for players and parents to get all the information and hear the program details. Don't miss this.

The SDHSAA has not yet decided on the details of soccer in high school. When will the season be? Fall or spring? Will the seasons be divided? Boys in fall, girls in spring? The goal is to have the programs in place by 2009 which means that school systems need to begin adjusting budgets to allow for soccer competition. It would be a real shame to lose soccer in any school because there was not enough time to plan for funding.

- The conversation between Rushmore Soccer Club and Rapid City Youth Soccer League, the Summit, has been suspended at this time. The purpose of the Summit was to find more ways to cooperate and communicate, thereby making an easier transition of players from one organization to another. There were many innovative ideas for sharing resources but the participants just were unable to reach agreement on some details and now the demands of the spring season make continuing the process untenable. Perhaps these possibilities will be re-examined in the future.
- It is not too late to register for the Chris Evans Memorial 5K RUN/WALK at West Middle School on April 18. The fees are \$8 for students and \$10 for adults. You can get a registration form from www.rcysl.com, order your tee shirt and help support an important event for kids.

- The soccer fields were full this weekend as all age levels began play. The excitement of teams arriving to play outdoors is electric. Coaches, referees and parents play a big role in maintaining that excitement. Know your role.

Referees are charged with knowing and enforcing the rules to keep the game safe. They should model fair play and respect for the coaches, players and fans. There aren't many adults that have more influence over fair play in any youth sport than the referees.

Coaches must know the laws of the game as well. It is a coach's job to encourage players to be fair and to focus on playing their personal best. It is also the job of the coach to set guidelines for parents regarding behavior on the sidelines and to require support for all players.

Parents should become familiar with the game: the rules, the field, and the role of referees and coaches. They need to commit to having the player at the practice and games on time and with all necessary equipment, including water. It is a parent's role to provide the support – emotional, nutritional, and physical – to players.

If we all get our roles right, this will be a positive season for all kids.