

The contrast between last week's weather and this week's is dramatic and very welcome. The fields are greening up and soft making them just right for soccer. These groomed fields and the equipment on them are paid for by your registration fees. You can do your part to protect your investment by reporting anyone who removes or damages corner flags, relocates or climbs on the goals. Call the police or Mark Owen at 381-8493.

The goals and nets are expensive and need to be staked down to avoid accidents. No one who is not on the field maintenance contract should be removing goal stakes or relocating goals for any reason. This is dangerous for all of our kids and should be reported.

The goals may appeal to kids as a climbing exercise but goals are not a substitute for a climbing wall. The nets, their attachment to the frame, and the frames themselves are built for soccer not gymnastics. Never allow your child to climb on them.

Pets along the sidelines can be another concern. All pets must be on a leash in any city park (that includes soccer fields) and you are responsible to clean up after them. But, consider the stress you may be putting your pet in as you place it in the midst of a large group of strangers, a fast-moving ball along with players, and noises they may not know. More than one dog has snapped at a child who approached too quickly in this situation. If you must have your animal nearby, stay back from the fields and keep your pet under control.

Rapid City Youth Soccer League and Scheels are launching a fun tournament in May. The deadline for teams from U8 through U19 is May 1 and more details are available at www.rcysl.com.

On May 3, the Colorado Rapids development team will be here to play the South Dakota United at 7:00 PM at the Sioux Park Stadium. Admission is free and concessions will be available. The Rapids will offer a mini-camp with their semi-pro players for all kids ages 5 to 12 beginning at 3:00 PM at a cost of \$10 per player. You can register your players at www.rcysl.com.

South Dakota United is a boys' team that combines some top U19 players in the state. Based in Pierre and coached by Chris Derry, this team combines players from several cities who want to compete at high levels. These boys traveled to Kansas City a couple of weeks ago in a blizzard and won a big tournament. They are fun to watch.

Plan to make an evening of it. You can get some great ballpark food, see old friends, treat you kids to an exhibition of high level soccer, and help support soccer in Rapid City.