

The spring recreation season is growing short. It terminates in the MidContinent Cup, June 5-8 with teams from across the state meeting in Rapid City. This includes a U-10 festival and the Classic Cup, a tournament for the teams that are at mid-level competition, a place between the rec and club levels.

The Classic (also called Challenge) teams are comprised of players who are willing to make a commitment to more practices, more games, more travel and also be able to pursue other sports in the year. These teams travel to tournaments through part of the summer and compete for state championships in the Classic Cup in June.

Rapid City Youth Soccer League offers Classic teams at U-10 with competition at a higher level than the recreation but not with the rigorous schedule of the older age groups. Because fall registration begins next week, parents who are considering a move to this level should attend a Classic team's game and evaluate the atmosphere. Is this a level of competition where your child will be comfortable and succeed? Are you willing to offer the extra time for practices, travel, and competition that this level requires? If your answer to both of these questions is not a resounding "yes", wait another year.

Team membership at this level and the club level changes very little and families have the opportunity to become good friends along the sidelines. Each travel experience brings more shared memories and a willingness to cooperate in providing an enriched environment for the players. One Classic team is planning a trip to Disneyworld for a July international tournament. These girls have already raised the money needed to transport the entire team and now they are fundraising for family members. Other teams will, no doubt, follow this example.

Rushmore Soccer Club will represent South Dakota at the Region II tournament June 19-24 in Sioux Falls. The U13 boys and girls teams along with the U16 girls won their divisions at the State Cup in Pierre last weekend. This high-level competition brought together the clubs from Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, Rapid City and Pierre to compete for the honor.

Congratulations to Chaney Burns from Rapid City for winning the tee shirt design contest for the State Cup. You can get a look at the design at www.southdakotasoccer.com .

Major League Soccer will expand to 16 teams in 2010. The latest addition is Philadelphia and the team is named "The Union" with a crest that evokes the city's colonial history. Philadelphia is building an 18,500 seat soccer stadium on the waterfront in suburban Chester. The Union joins the new expansion team, Seattle Sounders with Vancouver B.C. and Portland, Oregon to follow in 2011.

