

The recreation season is winding up and will culminate in the Kohl's American Cup June 6-9. This tournament offers teams across the state an opportunity to compete for bragging rights to the age division title. Kohl's also sends an assortment of inflatable playgrounds to add to the fun between games so Sioux Park will be a very busy place.

The spring season is also the important training season for club teams. The Rushmore Soccer Club teams have been traveling to tournaments in places like Colorado and Montana to meet other high level teams in order to be ready for the State Cup, May 30-June 1. This important tournament decides the state's representation in the Region II tournament held this year in Rock Island, Illinois in June. Spring competition is extremely important to teams in order to be ready for this tournament.

The school district is considering a freeze on activities budget at this year's level. If they do so, there will be no way to add soccer without significant cuts to other athletic programs. If Stevens and Central do not add soccer, their teams will not be allowed to play in the high school schedule or the tournament. Rapid City high school soccer will not happen.

If the budget issue is resolved and soccer is added, then the issue is the impact of the split season. If the girls high school soccer season remains in the spring when it is set to launch in 2011, it will force one of two things. Either girls will have to chose between playing for the school team or their club team and most local high school players are also club players. The SDHSAA rules will not allow both in the same season. In the event that the SDHSAA would allow an exception for soccer, the players will be playing an increased number of games which can lead to injuries.

There is ongoing research regarding the increased number of injuries in young women playing highly competitive basketball, volleyball, and soccer. The incidence of ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injuries in young women is much higher than boys of similar ages. Some studies suggest it may be connected to hormones and the differences in muscular-skeletal structure between women and men. There are some training programs that focus on strengthening core muscles and teaching female athletes how to jump and land correctly in order to avoid increased pressure on their ACL.

Until there is evidence to the contrary, these findings should be incorporated in making the decision regarding increasing the number of games that players would be required to play if the club and high school seasons are combined. Girls high school soccer season should remain in the fall.

Rapid City Youth Soccer League will again partner with Challenger British Soccer to offer a camp July 21 through 25. You can register your child online at www.rcysl.com and have everything ready for the first day.

RCYSL has also announced the hiring of a Director of Coaching, Brian Pitts. Pitts holds a "B" license and will take the "A" class this summer. He is South Dakota's Director of Coaching and is author of a goal-keeper class offered by USYSA. He has a coaches' workshop every Wednesday evening. The next session focuses on "when and how to dribble" from the U12 module. These will be open to all coaches although they will focus on different age levels each week. This is held at Fairmont Field beginning at 6:00 PM. There will be players involved in the instruction so keep in touch with your coaches and coordinators to find out how your child could have this experience.

In addition, Pitts is developing a Sunday afternoon experience for kids who want to get together just for the fun of soccer. He will be providing more details on that in the weeks ahead. It will be similar to the popular program offered last fall.

The registration for Fall 2008 season will be heading your way soon by newsletter and school bag. You can register online after May 28 with the final deadline will be July 18. Challenge team tryouts will be held June 23-24 and July 21-22 beginning with check-in at 5:00 PM at Upper and Lower Valley fields.

Rushmore Soccer Club will hold tryouts for their team placements on July 7-8 and 14-15. You can access more information online at www.rushmoresoccerclub.com .