



Chatham United Newsletter

Fall 2016

OUR 11-U & 10-U GIRLS WITH THE CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY TEAM

QUICK NEWS

Chatham United Fall Update

by Chatham United Board

The fall season is underway for Recreation Soccer, the 8-U Technical Development Program and our Travel teams. A lot of hard work by many volunteers goes into opening the season. We are proud to serve our nearly 1,300 players!

Recreation Soccer

We have 700 players participating in Recreation Soccer this season including 200 Kindergarteners and 180 First Graders! Two years ago we did not have a Grade 7/8 Boys Recreation Program. Last year we had 20 players and this year we are excited to have 40 players participating. Best of luck to all of our 60 Recreation teams this fall!

Travel Soccer

This season brings significant changes to our Travel program including birth year registration and rule changes, particularly at 9-U and 10-U. Such changes can be difficult but we believe our teams are adapting and adjusting

well to new teammates, trainers and rules. In addition, our primary League has put many of our teams in very competitive flights. It will take a season for the League to get a better sense of the competitive levels of so many newly formed teams. It is a tough test but many teams will ultimately be better off as a result. You may find it useful to read the article "Change is Difficult" from the US Youth Soccer Parenting Blog included at the end of this newsletter.

8-U Technical Development Program

Our 8-U players have begun training and games. Set up as a true academy format, the players are getting to know one another and the trainers are getting to know the players. They will be looking forward to some "travel" games against FC Berna in the near future.



Red Bulls Club Meeting

We have invited the Director of Training Programs for the Red Bulls to speak to our members about the skills and knowledge that players should be acquiring at each age, as well as ways for players to improve outside of regular team activities. We hope that the presentation will be of interest to you and your child, regardless of their goals within the sport. This presentation will be on Tuesday October 18th at 7pm in the Chatham Middle School Auditorium.

TRAINING PROGRAMS



FOR MORE INFORMATION

PRESIDENT

Jesse Tracey
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Did you know?

CHS Girls Soccer

Many of our players have been supporting the CHS Girls Soccer team by serving as ball runners at the CHS home games. This has been a fun experience for the girls to meet and watch the HS players and support the team. The HS players will also be helping out at the Chatham United Cup!

Relabeling of Age Groups

US Youth Soccer is in the process of relabeling age groups — moving the word “under” to the opposite side of the numeral to reflect the new player registration by birth year. For example, the Under-10 age group becomes 10-and-Under to clarify that players in the age group can be 10 years old and younger. With this change, the shorthand for labeling age groups will change from U-10 to 10-U. Chatham United has already adopted this new labeling in our communications and our website.



Grade 1 Fire take on the Whitecaps!



07 Breakers celebrate a big win against Summit!

Look out for...

Chatham United Cup

The second annual Chatham United Cup will be held Saturday October 1st at Cougar Field. This is an intra-Club event for our 9-U to 11-U Travel players and will include 3v3 or 4v4 games.

New Goals on MAS & SBS

During Travel registration we asked our members if they were willing to donate a small amount to help the Club purchase new goals to meet new US Soccer standards for small-sided games. Thank you so much for all who donated. With the donations we were able to purchase four new goals for fields at Milton Avenue School and Southern Boulevard School.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.chathamunitedsoccer.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/chathamunitedsoccer>

"Pre-teens – kids ages 10, 11 and 12 – may have a physical development age that is +/- four years relative to their actual chronological age. It's generally considered impossible to determine with any accuracy at those ages, which players will become elite players – there are just too many variables. But because we put so much pressure on our kids to perform at those ages – long before they are ready for that pressure emotionally, psychologically or physiologically – far too many kids are leaving the game before they ever really get started in it.

Studies vary, but it's clear seven out of 10 kids who start out playing soccer are leaving the game before they turn 13. So, there can be no question that some players who might have had the ability to become truly elite players quit the game before they, or their coaches, ever recognized that.

Another telling point – the U.S. has had more registered youth soccer players than any country in the world over the past 25 years, yet we have not produced a truly world-class field player on the boys side. But, countries like Uruguay, Iceland and Denmark have. Either American athletes aren't good – and we know from other sports that's not true – or we're doing something wrong."

- Kevin Payne, US Club Soccer CEO on why putting players first, before wins and losses, is essential to youth soccer

Pre-season Tournaments!

The 13-U Titans and 11-U Pioneers won the Essex Fall Tune-up Tournament to open the season! The 10-U Breakers and 9-U Pride swept all three of their games at the tournament also (champions are not awarded at these ages).



**CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL OUR TEAMS
ON A GREAT
PERFORMANCE!**



Changes are Difficult

The following is excerpted from the Parenting Blog on the US Youth Soccer website. Written by Susan Boyd

For many years youth soccer has used the school age template when determining where to place a child. It make sense because it kept kids together with those from their grade letting them play with friends and facilitating car pools. US Youth Soccer goes by calendar year which is how every FIFA nation (with the exception of the US and Canada) conducts their registrations for youth, development, and national teams. Last year US Soccer (USSF) decided to switch to calendar year registrations beginning in August 2017. Most organizations, including US Youth Soccer, implemented this standard in August 2016. So you may have noticed the change when your child signed up for his or her team. It does complicate some issues while simplifying others. Players can still play up, so I imagine several teams will remain intact despite the date changes, and that clubs will slowly transition into teams based solely on calendar year registrations as younger players enter. It will finally place the United States on the same competitive composition scales as the rest of the world, solidifying our membership in this global community. It changes the dynamics for players because now those born in the early months of any year will switch from being the youngest on a team to being the oldest. It also provides for a wider range of competitive interactions since kids will be playing with and against those in different grades. It may cause some carpool hiccups, but neighborhoods don't change even if age limits do, so the likelihood of creating a travel network remains good.

Calendar year registration simplifies deadlines since it isn't based on a child's expected grade level which can be fluid based on several factors. Even with the school year standard, kids were never guaranteed to play with classmates and friends. Skill levels, limits on team size, and convenience of practice schedules always have played a role in team assignments. The calendar year insures that kids will play with some grade level peers even if they skip a grade or are held back. That helps remove some stigma from the process. Likewise it puts us on equal footing with our developmental programs which have always been calendar year based since they had to mesh with all the other teams in the world when it came to cross-nation competitions. However, parents may now be confused by the designations of U-6 through U-23 which were previously based on school year calendars. With the calendar year implementation the U designation will truly mean "under" the age. Until the dust settles, many clubs may opt to keep older teams together by having those born in the earlier months "play up" with their classmates with birthdates in the later months of the previous birth year, effectively maintaining the school year designations. Clubs can then delay fully enforcing the calendar year birthdates only beginning with the youngest teams this year and restructuring teams as opportunities to do so become available.

The blow back on this change has been strong. Parents argue that the new guidelines unfairly target players born in the later months of a calendar year who aren't as physically developed as players born earlier in the year. However the truth is that a player born, for example, July 28, 2001 in a 2000-2001 school year calendar scenario was subject to the same argument of being developmentally behind a player born August 2, 2000. When ages are spread over a year there will be discrepancies. Other parents argue that teams have been split apart, though that doesn't need to happen at all should a club want to keep teams together by having the players born in a later year play up in the birth calendar year of the older players. The argument could be made that these kids playing up will lose a year of competitive soccer, but they could also elect to move back down to their calendar year should their team disband or change dramatically in make-up. U-13 to U-15 turns out to be a very volatile period of team registrations as kids drop sports to focus on studies, to focus on just one sport, or to move to a different competitive level team, so staying with a team of schoolmates does become harder as kids grow older.

Having the option to play in a calendar year or up a year provides players with lots of team options. One parent complained that his league dropped U-8 because no one wanted to travel for 4-v-4. I'm guessing those parents didn't find this to be "real" soccer and therefore not worth the time investment. Most of the youngest teams play against teams in close geographic proximity, even playing teams from their own club, so travel to a game shouldn't be a factor and certainly that decision has little to do with a change in age parameters. Another parent voiced concerned that her daughter "would be left behind" while her peers got to advance. This isn't school where being "held back" relates to not being able to handle the material. There's no failure in adjusting to the new age template, and I would argue that her child will benefit from more developmental training and from fostering new friendships. In truth no one likes change because each person sees it in terms of how it affects them personally. Changing the age registration standards certainly can present some individual concerns, but overall it doesn't need to be a seismic shift.

The other big change will be a greater emphasis on small-sided games especially 7-v-7 and 9-v-9 rather than 11-v-11 on a regulation pitch. For many years these smaller teams have been fielded for the youngest ages, and US Youth Soccer has been encouraging this philosophy of training for over 20 years. However, there has been parental pressure to move as quickly as possible from small-sided games to full field games because they see it as an advancement for their kids. However, the studies on development of soccer players have overwhelmingly established that small-sided games promote far better improvement by allowing players more touches on the ball, giving them the opportunity to learn different positions, and requiring them to make more tactical decisions. With fewer players on the pitch and a smaller field, players need to interact often and quickly, opening the door to developing the collaborative and social skills that make stronger teammates. From the instructional perspective, coaches can more easily keep track of players, work with them on how to play off the ball, and control the speed and level of play needed to insure all players have equal opportunities to practice skills. Therefore, in conjunction with the new age guidelines, 11-v-11 games are limited to those U-13 and older, giving players two years to adjust to full field play before high school. These guidelines will be required by August 2017 as overseen by USSF, but US Youth Soccer is implementing them as best practices as of August 2016. They have asked their 55 state association members to adopt this training philosophy which will be extended to league and tournament play. Most of the member associations had already moved to small-sided training formats along with their league and tournament play, but will now be doing it under the new age guidelines.

Coaches recognize the immediate benefits of this training philosophy. Players are constantly engaged in the play since the fields are small and the ball moves from space to space quickly. If kids are involved consistently it not only boosts their skill development but makes the game more enjoyable. Likewise parents will have the opportunity to see their kids in action rather than sitting on the sidelines or daisy picking on the pitch when nothing is happening around them. The focus is on how to play rather than scoring goals, so even when players have the strength to make long shots, these are discouraged in lieu of fostering strong team play with passing and positioning. Small-sided games give coaches the freedom to advance the more subtle aspects of soccer play which ultimately create sharp, capable, and wily players. Coaches can spend time working with players on their off-the-ball movement and strategy.

Again, there has been some strong displeasure with these standards. Many parents complain that the fields and goals are just too small leading to kids scoring goals from the opponent's touch line because they can kick so powerfully and kids playing in "mobs" on the pitch. These shouldn't be issues if kids are coached in small-side tactics and techniques. Unfortunately, some coaches don't understand how to instruct players within a small-sided atmosphere. The emphasis should be on learning to find and keep one's space, first touches, various team formations, and keeping the ball contained through strong passing and appropriate dribbling. Kids shouldn't swarm to the ball, although that's where they start off because everyone understands the primary principle of soccer is to possess the ball.

It's up to coaches to teach kids that through planned and spaced formations and using one another to move the ball down the pitch, a team can actually be more productive. That's difficult to do on a big field where coaches can't watch all the players and react to their play quickly enough to show in real time how to improve a particular move or decision. How players learn these lessons will be uneven for the first few years, but good coaching recognizes that kids need to make mistakes to understand what does and doesn't work. They also need immediate instruction. Doing a post-practice evaluation won't help a child whose retention of what went on in a game is limited to probably the last few minutes. The best coaching can be done when coaches can step in immediately and use various actions and outcomes on the pitch as teachable moments. Volunteer coaches are encouraged to use resources and take courses offered by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) beyond the minimum license required. The NSCAA provides lots of educational materials for both paid and volunteer coaches through their website. For our part as parents, we have to refrain from expecting that developmental soccer will be played the same way as competitive soccer. Even though developmental level teams (U-6 through U-12) do compete they are evolving in how that competition is practiced on the pitch. It's important that the emphasis be on skills at first and slowly grow into tactics and formations. Once a player has confident skills and has had the opportunity to practice these in all the positions including the right, left, and center spots then he or she will be fully capable of settling on a position and a level of competition with which they feel most comfortable.

Things will take some time to settle out because changes are always disruptive. To many parents, these changes may seem unnecessary and ridiculous, especially if the message boards are any indication of the opinions out there. The age registration changes do create some upheaval, but overall the actual impact will be negligible despite the "sky is falling" feelings being expressed. Most of the concerns have been addressed and resolved. The benefits include a less complicated and more transparent set of dates and bring the United States into alignment with the rest of the world. Parents may ask if being in step globally really benefits anyone except those few players who move on to the highest levels of play, but I know from personal experience that even younger players compete across national boundaries against teams who follow the FIFA age guidelines.

When my sons were U-10 and U-11, they played in tournaments which included international teams from schools in England, Germany, France, and Croatia. Standardizing the age ranges helps standardize the competition. Small-sided games may seem far from what we all consider soccer to be, but in truth they end up creating players who have a greater knowledge and skill base than players tossed onto a huge pitch. In fact, despite what some parents have complained about, small-sided games don't discourage kids from playing because they actually get far more activity and contact than they would get on a larger pitch with more teammates. The discouragement may actually be an outgrowth of hearing the grown-ups moan about how boring these games are to watch and how impractical they appear to be. Kids who have the opportunity to feel successful, which small-sided games almost universally ensure, are more likely to stick with an activity. Kids learn to respect all the positions on the field, how to interact socially and collaboratively, why certain decisions are made in terms of formation and tactics, and how to enjoy being a fully significant member of a team. I'm hoping people can give this all a chance, look at how some of their concerns are addressed and resolved, and how overall our children will benefit from these changes.

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