

New Coaches, General Info

Equitable bracketing, Competition is what makes a successful tournament!

The Coast Soccer League for example, has approximately 2,200 + competitive teams, 240 premier/gold teams, and 2,000 + teams in the lower divisions and 38,000 + players. . The small tournaments with less than 300 teams entering and with one bracket per each age group will be won by those gold teams most of the time. The gold's teams entering small tournaments are usually those gold teams with losing records. Gold teams are accustomed to competing against teams that approximate their skill level. The typical result is that those silver and bronze teams entering small tournaments with the assumption that the gold teams competing are candidates for defeat find out the hard way that the gold teams are better than their losing records might indicate. The reality is that gold teams have traveled a road unfamiliar to most of their less skilled silver and bronze opponents. Experience has taught the gold team to use stealth, determination, and the fact that they are gold to defeat bronze and silver teams. Psychology has always played a major role in youth soccer.

The \$700.00 tournament entry fee paid by a gold team to enter a small tournament may result in that gold team winning the trophy and actually accomplishing nothing of significance. Expensive lessons are paid for; however, little is learned and very little is gained.

THEREFORE, gold, silver and bronze teams should only compete in tournaments against opponents with an approximately equal skill level. Only tournaments with 50 teams or more per age group can successfully seed teams in brackets that match their ability to compete. While the fantasy of a bronze team defeating a gold team in a small one bracket tournament is appealing, the appeal quickly fades when the bronze team is snuffed out by the gold team.

Our younger teams should also be allowed to experience the pleasure of playing competitive tournament matches. Gaining experience, learning soccer skills, and having fun should be the main objective for the younger soccer players. Younger players need to practice and learn the basic skills that will improve their play. The younger player in possession of the ball, if only for a second, is the quarterback. The younger players in the quarterback's immediate vicinity are the wide receivers and should learn to move accordingly. Upon release of the ball by the quarterback, that quarterback becomes the new wide receiver and the recipient of the ball previously in the quarterback's possession, becomes the new quarterback. This process is repeated as the youngsters move down the field toward the goal. When the offensive team loses the ball, they then become the defensive backs. The learning process continues as players understand the principles and effectiveness of juggling left foot and right foot equally, dribbling, ball control, take-overs, fake-overs, wall-passes, give and go, putting pace on the ball,

absorbing offensive and defensive tactics, along with the art and science of accommodating referees. Players learn that being kind to the all-too-human referee, through expressions of good manners, including the words "yes madam" or "yes sir" along with making a conscious effort not to complain about calls, has its benefits. The team's combined mental attitude and good conduct, have decided many a close match. Coaches can also learn at tournaments. Coaches should never attempt to converse with referees during matches. It is both unprofessional and unbecoming. The coaching staff, team supports and players should never thank referees for fouls called in favor of their team or complain about fouls called against them. Calling fouls is the express domain of the referee. Remember, the temperament of teams and parents is usually an extension of the personality of the coach. This learning process is best taught by playing against teams that possess substantially equal soccer skills. When a younger gold team defeats a younger bronze team in a small tournament because there is only one bracket in that age group, this potential learning experience and the ability of teams to improve is lost.

When your team is considering a tournament to enter, please remember that Celtic Cup has over 800 teams each year entering the tournament. Celtic Cup, each year, seeds all of its flights, including the Hibernian and Druids flights with one goal - that goal is Equitable bracketing, Competition.