



The official online e-newsletter of Grand Rapids Crew Juniors

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Grand Rapids Crew Juniors
 P.O. Box 8481 Kentwood MI 49518-8481
 Email: info@grcrewjuniors.com

Letter from the President, Premier Division

Hello to players and parents,

We are now through our first half-season of outdoor and well into our winter sessions of the indoor season as Grand Rapids Crew Juniors. And what a tremendous six months it has been. From try-outs to winter training the response has been overwhelming and we continue to see inquiries and sign-ups both at the Select and the Premier level. It all started, of course, before June when we reached an agreement of partnership with the Columbus Crew. We then combined GRASA and GVP into what I believe is the best and most experienced club in West Michigan.

The merging of the clubs has now entered its final stage and will be complete in the first quarter of 2008. Yes, I know that many of you thought it was done and complete, but to fulfill the requirements of both clubs' bylaws there were various items that needed to be complete before we could formalize the merger. One was a new set of bylaws and structure of the future board. So, while the daily operation goes forward as usual (coaching, GM's duties, volunteer work etc.) the general direction of the club will now be overseen by one combined Executive Board consisting of four (4) officers: Tom Grothause, President; Chip Hoebeke, VP; Lori Hawkins, Treasurer; Brian Sinclair, Secretary and up to five trustees for a total of nine voting board members. It gives us a nice initial balance and the right people in key positions to grow the club further and give us a competitive edge on and off the field.

If anyone has an interest in the Trustee's positions and being part of guiding the club to new heights, now is the time to step forward. The board has had some interest already but would consider all interested parties. I will personally take a step back from the daily operation but will have an active role in various things taking place within the Grand Rapids Crew Juniors organization.

As we move forward and bring new success to this great club we want to build an organization that will provide a place for both the recreational player and the best of the elite players. That is not to say that we will be all things to all people but we do believe that within the structure of GVSA, up to the National League (MRL) level and further into the newly established Crew Soccer Academy in Columbus, we will be the best at what we do; helping young people rise to their potential and developing great soccer players. As parents and players of this club you are already a key part in achieving these goals but if you have a desire to involve yourself further I strongly encourage you to volunteer and join the board or help our great group of volunteers in any number of ways that make this organization a success. Your success. Your soccer club!

For the Love of the Game,

Bjorn Hansen

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Last Minute Gift Ideas

GR Crew Junior Gear

Need a last minute gift for your favorite player(s)? Crew Corner (located in Studs Up in East Grand Rapids) is now fully stocked with your favorite Crew wear...sweatshirts and pants, tee shirts, pajama bottoms and boxers, blankets, caps, water bottles, tote bags and car decals are all included. (Cash or check only). Your club appreciates your support!

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Studying the Soccer Game

Studying the Soccer Game
From active.com

By Joey Bilotta

Joey Bilotta is the vice president of EduKick, Inc., which offers cultural soccer exchange programs in countries around the world.

If you're struggling to become a better soccer player, the help you need could come from an unlikely place: study and observation. By watching games on TV, you can see all those drills and soccer techniques you do put into practice. By asking questions about certain techniques, you can find out if you have been applying them correctly to your game.

If you enjoy doing something, you don't just do it. You read about it, talk about it, and drive your friends and family crazy with it, all in an effort to get better. Become a better soccer player sooner by becoming a dedicated student of the game. Here's how to do it.

1) Watch games on television.

One of the best ways to learn something is to watch a professional doing it. Watch the games, but don't just watch them as a spectator. Watch the soccer techniques critically. Observe the attacking and defending strategies the players use. Look at how the team works together, and at what happens when they're less than a well-oiled unit.

Watch the great players. They all have something to give you, whether it's a lesson in how to be a better teammate or how to use those shots you've been practicing in a game situation. Take what they are offering and make it your own.

2) Hit the books.

There are more than 400 non-fiction books about soccer on Amazon.com that include information on skills, techniques, fundamentals, tips, strategies and tactics. Do a little research to find out which soccer books would be best for you, and read them. There's a good chance you'll learn something you didn't know and you can start putting it into practice.

3) Discuss it.

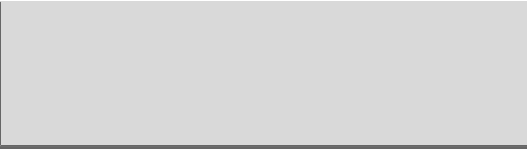
If you're having trouble with a certain soccer technique or want to talk about an offensive strategy, talk to your coaches or fellow players or seek out others who are as passionate about soccer as you are. Talking to somebody who doesn't love soccer as much as you do means they won't take the discussion as seriously as you. Also, go to the Internet to find like-minded people. The web allows niche groups to meet and discuss on blogs and forums, and it shouldn't be too hard to find a community of soccer enthusiasts.

Talk with them about systems of play, soccer tips and techniques, and offensive and defensive strategies. You'll get a broader perspective about what works in which situations, and they may bring up ideas and tactics that you hadn't previously considered.

4) Apply it.

All the study and observation in the world won't help you become a better player if you don't get out to practice and apply what you've learned. Practice your techniques daily in order to develop ball familiarity--where your body gets so used to the ball that it naturally adjusts to the ball being there. Juggle for 30 minutes each day and kick the ball 500 times a day--250 times with each foot.

Studying, observation, discussion and practice are all important elements of becoming a better soccer player. By studying the game, watching it and talking to



others about it, you'll discover new ways of practicing that you may not have considered before. And when you combine those elements, you'll become a better, more well-rounded player.

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The Importance of the First Touch

The importance of the 'first touch'
From active.com

By Charles "Chugger" Adair Associate Head Coach-UCSB Women's Soccer

What first touch can do for you:

Paying attention to the first touch will increase the player's ability to maintain possession, improve their speed of play, and allow them to be more successful at the higher levels. 'First touches' can be improved by planning things like where is the best place to go with your touch, how to take the first touch, which is the proper foot, how should my body be turned, etc.

Location of the first touch:

Where is the best place to take your first touch? This space I call the "positive space" or the optimal space which allows the player more possession time. The positive space can be away from pressure, over pressure or by pressure. Players receiving the ball need to identify where the opposition is, where their own teammates are and how best to move the ball.

Seeing possible options prior to receiving the ball will give you the best chance to do this. Taking your touch out of pressure will give you additional time to make a better decision. Questions to ask yourself: Where is the pressure coming from? Where do I want to go? How do I want to take the ball and at what speed do I need to do it at? Do I need to change the point of attack? Do I want to attack the goal?

Using your downfield foot:

The process of receiving the ball into a positive space can be the difference between getting a good shot off and missing an opportunity altogether. At UCSB we stress the importance of receiving the ball with the downfield foot. When turned side on, with your back to the sideline, the downfield foot is the foot closest to the goal you are attacking.

If you are on the left wing the downfield foot is your left foot, and if you are on the right wing then the downfield foot is your right foot. Focusing on the downfield foot allows you to have your body open to see more of the field, hence allowing more opportunities for connecting with your teammates. Also, by using this technique you are able to put the defenders under pressure by going at them on the dribble.

The drop-step technique:

In other situations receiving with the downfield foot can make your second touch a shot on goal or a dangerous cross for a teammate. A second type of touch we focus on at UCSB is the drop step. This is usually done in the center of the field and is used when the player is looking to change the point of attack, or go straight to the goal. The drop step is done by starting half- turned and facing the goal you are attacking-- with your body in an open stance. As you receive the ball let the ball role across your body to your second foot and guide the ball to the opposite side of your body using the inside of your foot. This will allow you to receive the ball from one side of the field and take it to the other side.

Practicing the first touch:

Learning how to receive the ball and how to find the positive space takes time and training in situations that force you to act. Our players enjoy a game called 'flying

changes.' This game involves two-on-two with goalkeepers on a field 30 yards by 24 yards. The game is played continuously with a new ball brought into play as the old ball goes out of bounds.

For example: a new ball always starts off the right post. When a ball goes over the end line, the team whose end line was crossed then is given a new ball and end up replacing their two teammates--with the other team's two players staying on to defend. If the ball goes over the sideline, then four new players come into play, with the team who would have had a throw- in bringing the ball into play and now being put on attack. (See diagram)

This game is great for a number of reasons: it involves important skill sets such as two-on-two defending, decision- making in the attack, combining around the goal, finishing and crossing. We progress by adding target players and flank players to make it even more realistic and fun. This game puts players in pressure positions that force them to have a good "positive" first touch in order to get to the goal and be successful.

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GRICS 3 v 3 Holiday Indoor Blast

Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer along with SoccerZone are offering the 3 v 3 Holiday Indoor Blast

This is a 3 v 3 tournament held on December 27 & 28 at SoccerZone in Jenison. All proceeds are to benefit Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer, one of a few soccer programs who bring soccer to inner city children in Grand Rapids. This event allows GRICS to provide soccer gear and supplies to inner city kids along with training sessions and summer camp. GRICS has served over 350 children in the Grand Rapids area since they began in 1999, and continue to provide needed gear to the kids, along with donated clothing (winter coats, gloves, etc.).

Please plan on participating at the SoccerZone, 596 Baldwin, Jenison during the school holiday break. You can sign up by calling Holly B at SoccerZone in Jenison 667-1919 or Diane P 616-292-3633, and we will get your team registered. Registration deadline is December 20.

Age groups are U8 (Co-ed); U10, U12, U14, U16 & U19 Boys and Girls teams. This year we are offering a Men's, Women's and Coed Division.

It costs \$100 per team. Teams are made of 4 - 6 members per team. T-shirts will be provided, and each team will receive a trophy, and each member will receive championship metals.

Thank you again for supporting GRICS which allows us to bring soccer to low income and inner city kids. If you have any questions feel free to call Diane 616-292-3633 or SoccerZone 616-667-1919.

Diane Parks
Grand Rapids Inner City Soccer
dparks1059@aol.com
hbonnema@soccer-zone.com

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Studs Up Holiday Special

Merry Christmas from the staff at Studs Up!

We are proud to present an exclusive holiday special for all GRCJ players and families. As you ponder gift ideas for your little (or big) soccer player think of Studs Up! as your best soccer resource for that new pair of cleats, socks, shin guards, shorts and branded apparel.

Studs Up! would like to participate in the gift of GIVING this season!

For every purchase of \$75.00 + Studs Up! will give you a free soccer ball (up to \$30.00 in value) as our present to your soccer playing family!

Come one, come all. Ho Ho Ho. Offer expires 12/25/07

Have a Merry Studs Up! Christmas and a safe and blessed New Year.

Studs Up! is located at 654 Croswell SE (EGR).
Tel: 616 451 7079

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Recap of U14 Boys' Florida Tournament

The #8 nationally ranked Grand Rapids Crew Juniors U14 Premier team traveled to

Orlando Florida over the Thanksgiving Holiday to defend their title at the Disney Junior Showcase Tournaments. All 18 players and their families made the trip to enjoy the weather conditions of sun and 80 degrees. Other than soccer, families enjoyed a few extra few days of fun at Disney World and Universal Studios.

The Disney Junior Showcase Tournaments, played at the Disney Wide World of Sports complex, is one of the highest nationally rated tournaments. The Showcase Division included five of the top fifteen nationally ranked teams which are from Michigan, Texas, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina and Georgia. The Crew Juniors pool included the #3 ranked Solar 94 Red from Dallas, Texas, the #15 ranked Texas Fire 94 from Houston, Texas, and the South Charlotte 93 Gold from Charlotte, North Carolina.

The start of the tournament was a close match against Solar 94 Red with The Crew getting a 3-2 win. Matt Harkema scored the game opener 11 minutes into the game on a spectacular cross from Sean Conerty. The second goal was scored by Sean Conerty to open up a two goal lead 20 minutes in. Solar Red finished the first half scoring on a penalty kick at 32 minutes. 13 minutes into the second half Solar Red tied the game by tapping in a ball that rattled off the cross bar. Sean Conerty sealed the win with a direct kick with four minutes left in the game.

The second game brought on the Texas Fire with The Crew winning 3-0. The game was evenly played in the first half until Caleb Postlewait scored a header from Sean Conerty's corner kick at 25 minutes into the first half. Sean Conerty put the Texas Fire on their heels by scoring less than a minute later with a scorching shot from 30 yards out. Caleb Postlewait finished the scoring with another header from a Jason Stacy cross.

The final pool game came against the surprising South Charlotte Gold who came into the game upsetting both Solar Red and the Texas Fire. This created a showdown with the game winner moving on to the semi-finals. The Crew won the hard fought battle 3-0. Jason Stacy had the game winner at 18 minutes into the game with a breakaway chip shot over the goalies head. For the next 40 minutes the teams played evenly until Trevor Osburn scored with a long chip shot over the goalie. Trevor also finished the scoring at the 37th minute.

In the Semi-finals The Crew drew the very tough tournament champion Dallas Texans Red. The Texans knocked off The Crew 5-1. The first half was a very tough battle with Jason Stacy scoring the first goal at 32 minutes into the first half. The Texans scored the equalizer in the 4th minute of stoppage time of the first half. This was the jump start that the Texans were looking for as they came out and scored four goals in the first 15 minutes of the second half to put the end to The Crew's repeat hopes. The Dallas Texans won the tournament by defeating Solar 94 in the championship game.

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