

NN club fills void in soccer
(Reprinted from the Daily Press)

By Ed Richards

May 21 2003

Soccer won't miss a kick in Newport News.

To fill a void left when the Newport News United Soccer Club merged with the Williamsburg Soccer Club, a new organization, the Newport News F.C., began operating May 5.

The Newport News F.C. will be under president Steven Meade and will have a full-time director of coaching for the first time, Al Cousineau.

"We've started the club so Newport News will have a comprehensive soccer club to offer players of all ages and levels," Meade said.

"Right now, we're trying to get the word out that people have a choice to stay local," said Cousineau, the boys coach at Heritage High, who has coached in the Newport News leagues for seven years.

Cousineau said the new club will be open to players in Newport News and surrounding communities. There will be travel teams in every age group from 10 to 18, playing in the Southeastern Virginia Youth Soccer League. There are also plans for a developmental league for ages 7-9.

The Newport News club will have a new part-time coach, Willie Gilgole, a native of Scotland, to run its developmental league.

"Now we have the professional staff to reach the next level and keep it on a neighborhood basis," Cousineau said. "Our people won't have to travel to places like Virginia Beach and Williamsburg to become members of a quality club. For the last 18 years, soccer has thrived in Newport News. You don't have to be bigger to be better."

Cousineau said it will be more affordable for most families to have their kids play on the Newport News teams rather than in Williamsburg.

For its 10- to 18-year-old travel clubs, Newport News offers a flat rate of \$275 a season or \$550 a year for its players. Rates vary depending on the age group and leagues for the WSC. They range from \$300 per season for the U18 Boys Classic League to \$1,050 per year for the U14 Boys Elite.

Chris Friant, assistant director of coaching for the WSC, made a comparison of the U13 and U14 boys premier teams.

"We're higher, \$850-\$950 per year, but we're doing more tournaments," he said.

Friant said "probably over 200 players" from the Newport News, Hampton and York County area have signed up online for the WSC for the coming season.

There has been no pre-registration for the Newport News teams. That won't happen until tryouts begin June 9 and run through June 14.

Those wishing information on the NN club may contact Cousineau at 833-3736.

Ed Richards can be reached at 247-4645 or by e-mail at richards@dailypress.com

Copyright © 2003, Daily Press