

## **UHCF Junior Report 2020**

Like everything in 2020, the junior football had its challenges.

### **Pre Season**

We started the season with a very successful Fun Day which saw good numbers of kids turn up for the various activities and registration. Bubble soccer, face painting and 'dunk your mate' were as popular as ever. The addition of the Thunderball game was a great success. Much thanks to Kate and Jules and team for their organising efforts

Junior player across First Kicks to U15 were again over 600, as the club continues to have very strong representation in the Hutt Valley and Wellington leagues and is one of largest, if not the largest, junior club in Wellington

Selection for the Wellington 'Travel leagues' were held in March and was a very competitive process. By late March all teams, travel league and social league, had been selected, training had commenced and we were 1 week from starting the season when it all came to a halt as we moved to Level 2 restrictions.

### **The Season**

The lockdown certainly changed the feel of the season and post lockdown it was great to see the kids out on the fields, running around and enjoying themselves. The break really seemed to heighten the sense of fun and enjoyment for the season once we got going in July.

As with every season there were several successes and areas for improvement. Across all grades, all teams had some great moments, whether it be great individual and team performances, improved skills and teamwork, or just having fun with teammates.

It was great to see UHCF teams doing well tournaments and to see the teams pitching their marquees next to each other and doing shared lunches. A big thanks to the team managers for arranging this. Special mentions to the U9B team on winning their division at the Wynton Rufer tournament and to the U9B, U10A and U13A on winning their Douglas Villa tournaments, all on the same day; and an extra bonus for the U10A team which actually won the U11 division. U12A who made the final at West, and lastly well do to the U9A team at Taupo, who finished second on goal difference to Petone.

A special mention also needs to go to the Fun Football section (First Kicks, U7 and U8). Gathering limits meant that the usual Saturday morning gatherings at the turf could not go ahead. But thanks to the great work of Belinda, Kara and Jules and their helpers, and lots of disinfectants, the programs continued with great success.

The on-going success of the Junior section is wholly dependent on an army of volunteers – team coaches and managers, match referees, grade managers and committee members. Without the support of well over 100 volunteers the success of the club would not happen. Roles were of course more challenging this year with extra planning, extra washing of equipment, maintaining attendance lists and trying to run training while social distancing but everyone raised to the challenge and delivered a fun and success season for the kids.

Thanks to Pedro who was ever present at trainings helping coaches and players improve their skills, however COVID did curtail some of the usual academy programs during the season. To his credit Pedro is now running session across Term 4 and likely again in Term 1 to give players an opportunity

to catch up on last sessions. The school holiday programs continue to be well supported was is a great credit to Pedro, as other clubs had to cancel theirs due to lack of numbers.

## **TDP**

The 2020 season saw the introduction of the Talent Development Leagues (TDP) in Wellington. This was open for club to apply to Capital Football for a license and compete in the U13, U15 and U17 leagues. UHCF successful applied for a license and competed in U13 and U15. Unfortunately, efforts to form an U17 team fall short with a lot of the local kids of that aged group representing their schools. Its always great to good and watch Stream v HIBS and see so many UHCF kids on the pitch. We have managed to entry an U17 team in the Ivan England tournament held in Term 4 each year.

## **Club Gear**

A special thanks to Dean Groves, our very patient Junior gear guy, who oversaw the development of the new playing kit and the new training tops and sweater shirts. Trying to corral and coordinate orders for over 600 tops and a 100 odd for the times is a major task. Feedback from kids, parent and supporters has been very positive. Great work Dean.

## **Your Committee**

Things just would not happen without the junior committee. Massive thanks to the following the all their efforts throughout the season.

Belinda Warrington (First Kicks & Girls development)	Kara Tait (U7)
Jules Baird (U8)	Kate Raggett (U9)
Mark Bloomfield and Glen Manson (U10)	Karena Teddy (U11)
Rebecca Pickett (U12)	Glynn Paling (U13)
Matt Hunter (U15)	Dean Groves (Gear & Equipment)
Jon Winkworth (Boys development)	Pedro Garcias (Junior Director of Football)

## **2021**

Fun Day 2021 will be held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February so mark the diary and come on down for the fun.

Announcements on Term 1 programs, pre-season training and team trails will be posted on the web page and on grade Face Book pages as dates are confirmed. Keep an eye out.

The season in start in April, date to confirmed, but likely Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April, which is the weekend after Easter..

Looking forward to another great year, in 2021

