

Junior Soccer Reports

U13 Year in Review

Early on in the season, both our first and second teams (HKFC1 and HKFC2) stepped right into action in the Hong Kong Junior Football League (HKJFL). As expected, without much training and rustiness from the summer break, our teams did not start off well in the first few matches. However, as we progressed with the HKJFL fixtures, the results started to improve after we commenced our regular practice sessions.

In the words of one of our HKFC2 team coaches:

“It was a difficult start to the season for HKFC2 as the boys transitioned to a 11 a-side full pitch game for the first time. But after lots of hard work and dedication, they managed to turn things around and had a great second half of the season, going on a run of 5 wins, 1 draw and 2 losses to end the season. The improvement over the season has been remarkable and bodes well for the next one.”

Overall, both teams have done well and achieved some notable results for the 2014/15 season:

HKFC1

- **Winner, HKJFL U13 Cup**
- **Runners-up, 2015 Nike Cup U14**
- **Winner, 2015 Lunar New Year Cup**

HKFC2

- **Winner, HKJFL U13 Plate Consolation**

ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO PRACTICE!!

Under the guidance of **Tony Hamilton** and **Mick Lonergan**, HKFC1 either won or competed in the cup final in every competition they entered.

It's been a long road but Tony and Mick in the past few years have recognized that the U13 squad had quality, and were determined to follow the club code of teaching good fundamental football skills often to the detriment of results in the short term.



ABOVE:
2015 HKJFL U13 Cup Final. From L to R: Ajay Pursram, Simon Morris, Hamish Tong, Calvin Wong, Gwion Sexton, Matteo Avitabile, Luke Marcon, Jason Kam, Sean Healy, Sam Pijpers, Josh Mantle, Mathew Isaac, Conrad Szymanski, Edward Hudson, Mark Russell

LEFT:
2015 Nike Cup Final From L to R: Spike Mantle, Jason Kam, Mathew Isaac, Josh Mantle, Hamish Tong, Ajay Pursram, WT Cheah, Simon Morris, Gwion Sexton

Well short term no longer, all that practice and patience paid off big time this year with the U13s playing football that on occasion was far better than the teams who had normally beat them in past seasons.

Not only did the boys go on this year to win the HKJFL title, they also won the Lunar New Year tournament with their only loss coming at the Nike 5-a-side competition where they lost on penalties in the final to Sun Pegasus after leading 1-0 throughout the game.

Lastly, it is always a pleasure and we would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the parents and volunteer coaches who have tirelessly and unfailingly supported the players in ensuring another successful and enjoyable season. A big shout for the boys and we look forward to another wonderful season ahead. ■

By WT Cheah, Y8 Head Coach



HKFC wins inaugural U14 Junior League Cup

Saturday 2nd May 2015

HKFC were matched up with their arch rivals the Discovery Bay Dragons for the inaugural U14 Hong Kong Junior League Cup Final held at the Club.

Slightly anxious start to the morning when due to a combination of reasons (vacation, illness and injury), HKFC found themselves missing 3 key players. **Elliot Topping**, **Alex Ekberg** and **Lucca Steinert**, leaving HKFC with only a squad of just 12 players. Luckily, they grabbed the only two 1st teamers available on the day who made the squad up to 14. It must be noted that the HKFC Junior League Cup team is primarily composed of 2nd team players, albeit a fair number of them have, throughout the season, been picked to represent the Club at Henderson League level, a testament to head coach **Phil Cook**'s policy to encourage fluid movement between the squads where warranted.

The match started off at a frantic pace with Dragons getting the upper hand in the first 10 minutes and created a number of chances, only to be denied by

the courageous antics of the HKFC goalkeeper, **Alessandro Systemans**, who made numerous diving saves at the feet of the DB forwards. A wake-up call had been given to the home team who duly responded and started to compete, becoming more competitive in midfield, **Giovanni Di Clemente** and **Jamie Bruno** of note, and managing a few decent runs down the wing led by **Gabriel Ng** and **Jimmy Standing**. Despite the home team finally starting to play the level of football befitting a Cup final, DB put up a defensive wall and closed down any play by HKFC through the middle of the field making it difficult for lone striker **Jordan Wright** to penetrate. If this was a boxing match, the scorecard would have read 120 - 105 in favour of the DB in the first half.

HKFC came out in the second half with a renewed vigour and focused their offensive along the wings, with admirable runs being created by left back, **Joshua Wright**, and right-wing **Lazlo Yurich**. HKFC created numerous chances, but off target, and the Dragons defence stood resolute. Dragons themselves focused their play mainly through the middle of the field, but found HKFC centre back **John O'Brian** to be a colossus at the back going about his assigned task with competence and unwavering confidence. He was supported admirably by his centre back team mate **Michael**

Shepherdson and lone defensive midfielder - **Zaheu Jacata**.

The match was shaping up to be a classic cup final - free flowing football, end to end excitement and chances on both sides. Both teams were up for the challenge and wanted desperately to take bragging rights and be crowned champions. This was a football boxing match, not in the guise of a Mayweather vs Pacquiao 'hand-bags at 10 paces' dance show, more of a Tommy Hearn vs Marvin Hagler slug-fest, both teams trading punches, taking the blows, but no one willing to go down for the count.

After 60 minutes and the whistle for full-time, game was poised evenly at 0-0. It was up for grabs. This game was not going to be won by tactics, it was going to be won by the team who wanted it more. 10 minutes of extra time beckoned, then the dreaded lottery of penalties.

This exhilarating U14 match needed a knockout punch, and it duly got one in the 5th minute of extra time. **Lazlo Yurich**, who had now switched to left wing to try his luck, took the ball on the touchline and danced inside, past 2 Dragons players and ran towards the goal. From around 25 yards, he unleashed the knockout punch, a sublimely hit ball that rocketed into the net giving the Dragon's keeper no chance. The last 5 minutes were frantic with Dragons piling on the pressure to grab that much needed equalizer, but the HKFC lads kept their focus and saw out the remaining time.

What a final! Highly competitive and played in great spirits - a credit to both teams. It would have been unfair for a final like this to be settled by penalties and **Lazlo**'s amazing strike saw to it that it was settled in the correct manner.

Too difficult to name a man of match, everyone gave 100% and more. They did not let their Club down, but more importantly, they did not let themselves nor each other down. A true team performance.

Congratulation lads, well down. So richly deserved. ■