

FROM DISCUSSION PAPER – JUNIOR GIRLS DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Further Challenges specifically for New Zealand Soccer

To take the game of Soccer forward in New Zealand is of absolute importance and the writer is convinced that if we can introduce a number of key actions then the game will be fostered and participation at all levels increase, as will the area of refereeing – with that will come the benefits at the international level.

Suggested Key Actions

- 1) Have a focus at age's 4 and 5 – this can be simple and relatively unstructured
- 2) Recognise that parents and kids have options with regards sports – Ballet, Dancing, Gymnastics, Netball and Swimming are the key competitive sports for Girls.

Half the potential playing participants are in general ignored – the Girls are a huge participative market yet untapped – there needs to be a co-ordinated approach from the governing body in New Zealand Soccer, through the Federations and their Clubs for this to market to be captured.

- 3) From a pure business perspective, and following on from 2) is the huge marketing opportunity that resides with this market – Girls are very cognisant of brands, and the purchasing wants and needs are actively pursued from an early age.

Think of the 8 year old girl, who really enjoys her Soccer and what is involved in getting kitted out with her friends for training and Saturday games in her:

- Roxy Beanie
- Lotto Jacket (with Paul Frank ti-shirt underneath)
- Puma Track Pants
- Adidas Gear Bag
- Adidas Shin Pads
- Nike Boots
- Nike Ball

You can replace any of the above brands dependant upon taste, or maybe more importantly Team sponsorship as there is a sense of look good / feel good, and being “cool” to be wearing the brand.

I am sure the marketing directors of the above mentioned brands will understand the message here – Soccer New Zealand needs to show leadership in taking advantage of this commercial opportunity.

- 4) Capturing coaches at all levels is important and where possible Club based coaching Managers or Directors should be qualified to offer the Small Whites coaching courses (Excluding Advanced Junior).

- 5) The registration fees charged by Clubs for Juniors should include a nominal fee of \$5 to be allocated for the coaching of first time coaches or those seeking a refresher.

The message should be that it is not a pre-requisite to have played the game before, to learn to coach soccer – amongst parents there are often a number of former rugby or league players who understand good training structures and team dynamics.

- 6) Involvement and enrolment of the Federations and their Clubs is critical to the development of the Junior game – strong leadership needs to be shown with this.