



HILTON COLLEGE

View from the
Dugout

NUMBER 48 • 12 August 2018

Having spent a busy weekend at tournaments last week, I have been wondering what impact tournament competition has on youth athletes versus the traditional friendly /derby match. By tournament I mean competitions that advance to positional play-offs and that have an eventual overall winner (trophy winner). Tournaments are becoming increasingly popular in South African high school sports with many of our codes participating in a tournament at some or other time in the year. Some of our codes that play in team tournaments are basketball, cricket, soccer, rugby 7s and water polo. Just recently, in a school boy rugby article I was reminded that in some parts of the country rugby 15s is solely about tournament competition...



These types of competitions do have the benefit of exposing athletes to a higher intensity of competition where the pressure to succeed – make it to the play offs, finish in a high position, win the trophy etc. cannot necessarily be emulated in friendly, derby or festival competitions.

Unfortunately, tournaments do present numerous negatives for the youth athlete as well. Two significant problems include the fact that, as the pressure to perform is much greater at tournaments, 1) the fear of failure is increased and players invariably play with less freedom and 2) coaches are more reticent to rest top players and give all of their squad sufficient game time. Research suggests that these outcomes have a direct link to elite player burnout and to athlete drop out rates. A further interesting observation is that, for the most part, schools that focus on tournament competition boast far less teams than schools that have a robust derby day/friendly fixture list. And this is no accident... Schools who solely focus on tournaments/top teams put no effort into developing players at lower levels and as a consequence they have far lower pupil interest in sports.

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For my mind, and particularly because we deal with adolescents who are more mature, there is certainly a place for tournament competitions at a high school level. Elite athletes will, after all, have to learn how to cope with the pressures of tournaments if they are going to play sport at a high level (almost all varsity, provincial, national competitions are tournaments) - but not every weekend! For me, it all comes down to participating in some tournaments but with a much stronger leaning towards friendlies and derbys where every boy has a chance to play. In this way we will hopefully teach that sport is not solely about winning but it is about developing the character and potential of every boy. Ultimately, school boy sport should be about establishing the foundations for future success – not winning silverware now. This sentiment is also held by most professional outfits, as articulated so succinctly by Claudio Reyna (USA National Soccer Hall of Fame player and current Director of the professional soccer club NYCFC), *“For me, it’s irrelevant if coaches win state cups, regional cups, and national cups. How many trophies they have in their cabinet isn’t important. It’s about the kids, it’s not about you. We care about how many players you develop rather than how many tournaments you win.”*

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SOCCER

The first weekend of August is always a highlight of the soccer calendar as the 1st, U16A, U15A and U14A all involved in top level events. The 1st and U15A travelled to JHB to compete in the St. David’s Tournament, which involves many top teams from various parts of the country. Our U16A and U14A competed in the KZN Age Group Championships on Sunday having taken part in our down-the-line fixture versus Westville on Saturday.

The 1st XI set their hopes on making the knock out stages of the Cup competition - the top 8 teams in the competition. In order to do so they would have to finish 1st or 2nd in their pool which included strong teams from Parktown, Norkem and Waterstone. In their first match against Parktown the boys got off to a good start scoring early in the first half to take a 1 – 0 lead.



The goal came from a well taken free kick from inside our half which was floated into our opponent’s box and firmly headed into the net. Despite this lead the match was very evenly contested with both teams creating numerous chances on what was a small pitch. Michael Makris was denied a cracker of a goal in the second half when he rattled the right hand upright from range. This would certainly have closed out the match had it been scored.

With time running down the unthinkable happened when Parktown ran a last ditch foray into our half which resulted in a score on the stroke of full time. Our second match was against Norkem. Our opponents, clearly a talented outfit, started like a house on fire. We were forced to pull out all the stops, our brave defence standing firm time and time again. As the game wore on we started to create our own chances and Norkem would have considered themselves lucky not to concede with a few cracking shots going just wide of the target.

In the end, a 0 – 0 draw saw us share the spoils for a second time. With the way the pool matches had progressed a draw against Waterstone on our final pool match was not going to be enough to see us promoted to the cup division. A win was needed. In a lacklustre first half against this team, we were more dominant but failed to really trouble the goal keeper. 0 – 0 at the half.

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To our credit we upped the ante in the 2nd period and gradually created more and more opportunities. With time running down we eventually scored only to be cited by the linesman for offside – a tough call. We never gave up and pushed ever harder for the elusive goal. Once again we scored off a well weighted cross headed in on the back post but, once again, we were denied by the officials for an infraction. In the end we had to settle for yet another frustrating draw (0 – 0) and, with that, playing in the plate division. Refocussing our goals we determined to win the plate section. Our boys did exceptionally in these play-off matches beating Clifton 4 – 1, and then St. Stithians 2 – 0. In doing so, we qualified to play in the final of the plate against St. Johns. This was an excellent game with both teams playing an exciting brand of soccer, epitomised by fluid passing and strong tackles. In the end a 0 – 0 draw took the game to penalties. Some steely nerves were required for this contest. A long series of matched attempts ensued and eventually we run out as winners 8 – 7. In the end the boys can be very proud that they finished the tournament unbeaten.



Our U15A boys also enjoyed their time in JHB. Although many of the results did not go our way we made excellent progress throughout the competition. Our final game against St. Peters was a highlight. A comprehensive and very attractive 3 – 0 win.

The U16A finished on top of their pool of at the KZN Champs. They won 2 matches (vs Crawford 5 – 1 and Hillcrest 1 - 0) and drew 1 match (Port Shepstone 0 – 0) in this first stage.

Unfortunately, our time in the knock-out was short lived. A 0 – 0 draw against Pinetown forced our quarter final match into penalty “roulette”. In the end we lost the shoot-out 2 – 3.

Our U14A were our team of the week. These boys also topped their pool at the KZN Champs disposing of Reddam (2 – 0), Northwood (2 – 0) and Port Shepstone (2 – 0) to sail into the knock-outs. Our boys followed up this good form by beating Clifton 2 – 0 in the quarters and Hillcrest 7 – 0 in the semi-finals. In final we squared off against Westville. The same team we had drawn against just 24 hours earlier in our domestic derby. This was a thrilling match but in the end we proved too strong, winning the match 3 – 2 and the title of U14 KZN Champions for 2018. Awesome stuff boys!



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This Saturday we were fixture to play in our big derby against Michaelhouse. All our teams travelled to Balgowan for the encounter for what is traditionally a very closely contested affair. This past Saturday proved to be no different with the final tally being 7 wins, 7 losses and 5 draws. The 5th, 6th and 7th teams continued their good form by running away with resounding victories. In winning 5ths remain our top team of the season thus far - boasting a 100% win ratio! Another team that has excelled this season is the U14C. These boys scored some brilliant goals on Saturday to secure a comprehensive 4 – 2 win.

Possibly our team of the day was the U15A team. These boys lost to Michaelhouse just a week earlier but they put in a vastly improved performance on Saturday. They gave as much as they got from their opponents and had to repeatedly come from behind to secure a 3 – 3 draw. The U14A were desperately unlucky in their game. A dominant second half display saw forge a 2 – 1 lead. In the dying moments Michaelhouse were awarded a fortuitous penalty and the game ended 2 – 2. The 1st XI had to show real character in their match after a late first half flurry from Michaelhouse put the reds 2 - 0 up. Our boys fought hard and we pulled one back early in the second half through a brilliant set play up the right hand side of the pitch. Not long afterwards we scored another and the momentum was truly on our side. It seemed certain that we were going to take the lead such was the dominance we displayed. It took a full stretch save by the House keeper to keep the scores level after a curling effort by Simi Bhembe and this turned out to be a defining moment. Soon afterwards a small lapse in concentration saw the Reds exit up the right flank, outstrip us wide and cross into the box. This was duly converted and we were 2 – 3 down. Try as we might we could not find a reply.

Sometimes it just doesn't go your way! Nevertheless, we remain extremely proud of our boys for the superb way they represented their school on the day and we look forward to what remains of their season.



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REPRESENTATION

Swimming

Congratulations to Ben Mason and Christo von Loggerenberg on being selected to represent KZN School's swimming team. They will be competing in an inter-provincial gala at the beginning of October.

Cricket

Sashwath Rangaswamy has been selected for the Botswana U19 cricket squad. He will be attending a training camp at the end of the month in the hope of making the competition team that will take part in an ICC U19 International Tournament. We wish him the best of luck.

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REPRESENTATION

Rowing

Congratulations to Patrick and Rory Plunkett, and coach Ernie Steenkamp, on their performances at the World Junior Championships. The boys ended in respectable 18th place out of the 28 countries that were represented. This is an exemplary achievement considering that they are still under age for this event. Well done boys!

Golf

Mbo Malinga and Joshua Chandler represented Inland Golf at the KZN Championships on Sunday. This tournament also serves as selection for the provincial teams (top 12 players in the province). Josh played particularly well and has subsequently qualified for the KZN U19B team.

UP AND COMING...

We are looking forward to the following events this week:

- The De Wet tennis cup vs Michaelhouse will be played this coming Tuesday. Our boys will be giving it their all to try and retain the trophy that they had won in such dramatic fashion last year.
- Inter-House Soccer will be played on Monday 13.8 (Juniors) and Tuesday 14.8 (Seniors).
- Inter-House Athletics will be held on Wednesday 15.8.
- Inter-House Golf will be held today (13.8).
- Inter-House Golf longest drive – Juniors (Tues 14.8), Seniors (21.8).
- Treveron, Carter, Howick, Estcourt will be playing soccer next week.

Tony Shuttleworth

Executive Director - Sport