



Stephen Tew, Soccer Section Captain

## Captain's Report

Kung Hei Fat Choy,

The year of the Monkey is upon us... wishing you all good health and prosperity for the year ahead.

All of our senior teams return to competitive football in February with the FA teams back following their exits from the cup on penalties in December.

There are limited games being played at the Club during February due to the CNY holidays and Club Staff Party therefore please check <http://hkfcsoccer.hk/> for fixtures.

This month we have reports from the Boxing Day event and update from the U16's.

Cheers, *Tewy*

# BOXING DAY: Festival of Football



The Cougars and Tigers clash...

## U10 and U12 reports

While Soccer Section Chairman **Kieran Flynn** took a well-earned break on a sun-drenched tropical island, junior soccer players, parents, a good crowd of spectators and general dogsbody **Dave Williams** enjoyed the 2nd Annual Festive Season at the Club on Boxing Day. The annual England v Scotland / Rest of the World fixture was sandwiched between youth games featuring age groups from Under 10s up to Under 16s, with select teams from the Hong Kong Junior Football League (HKJFL) and HKFC doing battle with each other and local opposition in the form of Sun International Athletic Association.

The day started with a four team Under 10s tournament featuring the best players from the HKJFL. HKFC was represented along with Asia Pacific Soccer Schools (APSS), Tai Tam Tigers, Kowloon Cricket Club (KCC), ACC Japan, Dragon Shooters, Major League Football Association and Asian International Football Academy (AIFA). In the semi-finals, the Red Tigers overcame the White Panthers 4-3 while

the Red Cougars edged home 3-2 over The White Lions. The all red final saw the Tigers emerge victorious 2-0 over the Cougars. Winning coach **Martin Haskins** (HKFC P5) was delighted, as were three HKFC boys who won Best Player award – **Mitchell Baker** (P5), **Benjamin Irvine** (P5) and **Henry Chung** (P4).

After an exciting 0-0 draw in the “veterans” game, the U12 boys and U12 girls took to the field. On Pitch 1, **Mark Grainger**'s HKJFL Red All Stars took on the HKJFL White All Stars coached by **Dave Stewart** of APSS. A very close game, with some good football on both sides, ended 1-1 and was decided by a penalty shoot-out in the reds favour. **Aaron Keller** (HKFC) and **Riley Horne** (AIFA) were voted Best Players. Over on Pitch 2, **Mike Sadler**'s HKFC girls played against a HKJFL Select Team and ran out 2-0 winners after another close game. **Lizzie Hau** (HKFC) and **Maia Itakura** (ACC Japan) were deserved winners of the Best Player awards. ■

# The Boxing Day Match: England vs Scotland



... and the England v Scotland game was a lot closer than expected!!

With the Scottish and English National anthems playing over the HKFC stadium tannoy, both teams were in full voice. With the days full programme gaining momentum the match was played in front of a far larger crowd than in previous years.

England were quietly confident, but Scotland had a strong team that would take some breaking down and in turn cause the English defence some uncomfortable moments. **Andy** and **Charlie Hunter** started in midfield and the father and son team won the early battles in that area of the pitch. The pace of **Amro McAbbas** stretched England but too often he was ushered across the pitch as **Lonergan, Lant** and **Beattie** combined to close any potential gaps. **Lonergan (Snr)** after a solid opening 25 mins was replaced by the up and coming **Lonergan (Jnr)**, and the match up between the father and sons in central midfield looks set for next years game. England as usual with a large squad were rotating the team frequently which caused some instability. But it was a game

for both teams defensively. The centre back partnerships of **McGillicuddy** and **Milne** forced England attacks wide whereas the England back four were a match for the Scots forward line. Early in the second half Scotland did have the ball in the net but the build up play was rightly ruled offside.

Much of the attacking play came from both left backs. **Liam Herbert** defended well and constantly got in behind the Scottish defence, while his opposing number **Mark Bavis** was the mirror image for Scotland. For their efforts they both won the Man of the Match Award for their respective teams.

“In the minutes” towards the end of the game, player manager **Scottie Semple** threw both himself and **John Casey** on to try and seek out that little piece of magic to win the trophy but England were more than happy with a scoreless draw and therefore retaining the trophy as tradition has it for the second year running.

■ *Ashley Dyer*

## U14 and U16 reports

A large crowd rolled up to watch the next match between the HKJFL Under 14 select and the Sun International Under 14 Team. The game was played at a high tempo in the first half and was very close, with only one goal from HKJFL separating the teams at half-time. However, in the second half, HKJFL (coached by **Phil Devereaux** of APSS) played their joker and brought on their full compliment of subs. It proved too much for the Sun International bench and some exhibition stuff saw the game finish 8-0 to HKJFL select. For HKJFL, there were goals each from **Telio Bailleul** and **Matthew Campbell** (both HKFC) and one each from **Lewis Kerr** and **Nico Stewart** (HKFC), **Saul Levy** (APSS) and **Ethan Squires** (KCC). The Best Player awards went to **Noa Fjelddahl** (HKFC) for HKJFL and **Eriko LUM** for Sun International, both of which were well deserved.

The final game was the Under 16 clash between a HKJFL Select Team, featuring 17 players from HKFC and **Iggi King** of APSS, and Sun International. The HKJFL team got off to a very good start and soon went ahead 1-0 after a goal from **Jack Patchell**. They seemed to maintain the upper hand for most of the game but a second half substitution did the job for Sun International, number 31 **Benedict** coming off the bench to score after a fantastic burst of pace saw him break clear of the HKJFL defence and finish into the bottom left corner. The goal would see him awarded the Best Player Award for Sun International. But the game finished 1-1 at full-time and a tense penalty shoot-out in front of the Sportsman's Bar ended with a 3-1 victory for HKJFL. Best Player for their team was **Charlie Stewart** of HKFC. ■



Sun International struggled to hold a strong HKJFL team in the U14 game, with HKJFL running out 8-0 winners.



The girls U12 teams and junior referees line up for the pre-match hand-shake.



## U16s up to the challenge against Australia's Dandenong Thunder FC

**O**n 15th December, our U16 team won a hard-fought match against a touring side from Australia. The Dandenong Thunder FC U16 team, one of the top youth clubs in Victoria whose senior team plays in the Australian National Premier League, provided a nice match-up with our team, which has come top of the HKFA's Henderson League for the past two years.

Dandenong's experience playing in Hong Kong was life-changing for the boys on the team; almost half of them had barely travelled before this and a number of the players are immigrants or refugees from Albania, Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, and other countries. During their Hong Kong tour, the team also played Kowloon Cricket Club, the Hong Kong national squad, Hong Kong International School, and Freeman Football Club.

Our U16 players were coached by **Andy Russell**, a former youth player for the HKFC Junior Soccer Programme and currently a professional footballer with South China of the Hong Kong Premier League.

From as early as the warm ups we could see that Dandenong were going to be a step up from any of the teams that we had played so far this season. They were more developed physically and much more professional in their preparation for the game compared to teams we face week in week out in the HKFA Henderson league.

The game itself was a very cagey affair, with both defences largely coming out on top. The only goal of the game came

midway through the first half courtesy of HKFC defender **Jonny Simpson** who finished well with his right foot after Dandenong had failed to properly clear a HKFC free kick.

Chasing the equalizer, Dandenong made most of the running in the second half, however, were unable to convert that possession into any clear cut chances and HKFC were able to hold on for the win with relative ease.

Dandenong had gone the rest of their Hong Kong tour undefeated including games against the Hong Kong National Team U16s so for our lads to inflict their only defeat with a squad missing three regular starters (including two national players) is great testament to the work they have been putting in recently. More important than the result was the exposure the players got to testing themselves against better players both in terms of physicality and technique and the key learnings they took from this. We look forward to welcoming similar challenges in the future.

Following the match, HKFC showed their guests some good hospitality, with the Junior Soccer Programme sponsoring dinner and drinks on the back patio of the Sportsman's Bar so the two teams could top off the evening with camaraderie and good cheer. Both sides had played a spirited match and benefited from the experience. The players on the Dandenong team, despite the loss, had added to their experience of touring in a place so different from home.

■ **Andy Russell**, U16 Head Coach  
**Thomas Tarala**, U16 Manager