

MAY 2026
VOLUME 3

DDSL

INTOUCH

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DUBLIN AND DISTRICT SCHOOLBOYS' / GIRLS' LEAGUE

THE FOOTBALL ROUND-UP MAGAZINE

DDSL CUP FINALS 2026 FINALS WEEKEND

MAY 16th & 17th | MAY 23rd & 24th



**LIFE
STYLE
SPORTS**

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DUBLIN'S
Q102

League Updates
Nearly at the End!

4

Football Round-Up
Heartbreak in
Prague!

9

**A Club Built on
Community!**
Stella Maris FC and
Dublin Port Company

17



FOOTBALL FOR ALL

UPCOMING BLITZ EVENTS

It's been another brilliant and inspiring spell for the Football For All programme, with real momentum building across the DDSL. A standout moment came

through the ADHD Awareness Conference delivered alongside ADHD Ireland, where powerful insights and shared experiences helped drive home the importance of understanding and inclusion within the game.

On the pitch, the energy continued at a fantastic blitz hosted by Castleknock Celtic FC, where over 140 players enjoyed a day full of football, fun, and community spirit—made even more special with support from

Taste of Dublin Sauces.

Next up, attention turns to Swords Celtic FC on April 25th, where another inclusive and action-packed blitz awaits. The focus, as always, is simple—enjoyment, opportunity, and making sure football truly is a game for everyone.





This Month

League Updates 4

A Landmark Season: Hundreds of DDSL
Teams Compete Across the World 5

Grants & Resources 5

Heartbreak in Prague 6

Success in Poland!..... 6

DDSL CUP FINALS 7

Mental Health 10

Something big is coming 12

Sponsor a Trophy 12

Club Focus 14

Coaches Corner 16

Taking Coach Education on the Road..... 16

From Our Coach Educators 17

DDSL & UEFA Working Together 18

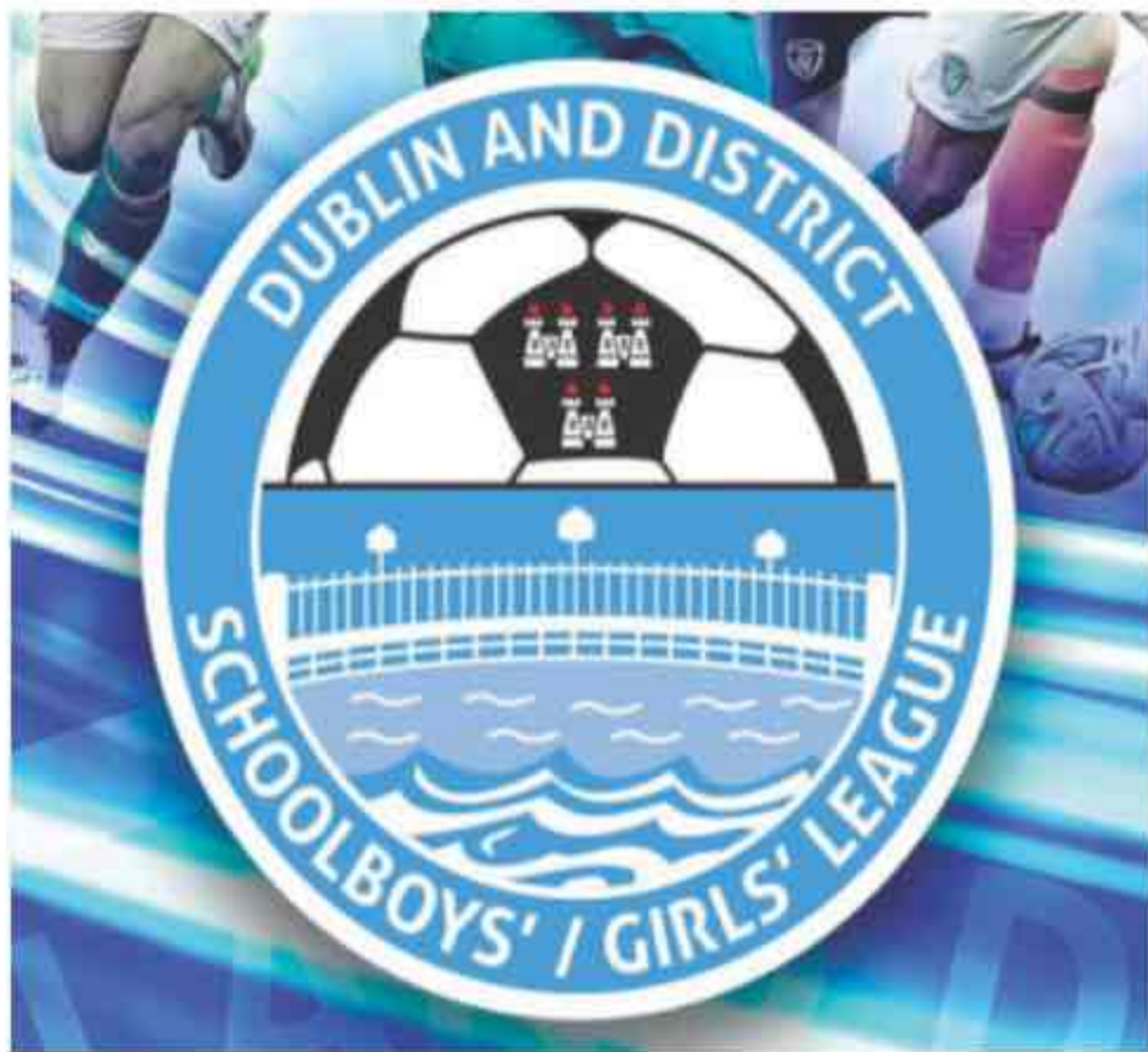
Lifestyle Sports 19

The Future of Refereeing is Here! and it's
Wearing a DDSL badge 20

IT's MY GAME! 21

LEAGUE UPDATES

As we enter one of the busiest periods of the season, clubs are asked to take note of several important updates, particularly in relation to DDSL Cup competitions and fixture scheduling.



throughout the league. It's a massive effort and a brilliant reflection of the energy, creativity, and commitment within our football community.

So while there's still plenty of football to be played, there's also a lot to be excited about – and as always, it all depends on everyone working together to keep the game flowing.

Keeping the Season Moving

The season is flying by and, behind the scenes, there's a real push to keep everything running smoothly and get games played. Mid-week fixtures are now in full swing, helping to clear the backlog and keep leagues on track – which is great to see. But with that comes a reminder: fixtures can't just be moved around whenever it suits.

There have been a few cases of games being switched without approval, and while it might seem harmless, it creates real headaches – especially when it comes to referees, who are already in short supply. The message is simple: if a fixture needs to change, it must go through the proper channels. Get agreement from both teams, approval from your Fixture Secretary, and if a ref has already been assigned, they need to be part of that conversation too. If not, you're risking a walkover and a fine – something no club wants.

At the same time, a bit of forward planning goes a long way. If mid-week pitch availability is an issue, letting the league know early makes a huge difference. It helps avoid clashes, last-minute changes, and unnecessary stress for everyone involved.

Off the Pitch

Off the pitch, we're still waiting on some cup results to come in – and these are crucial. Without them, the next rounds can't be scheduled. So if you've got results outstanding, get them sent in as soon as possible. It's a small job that keeps everything moving for everyone.

And while things are busy now, there's plenty to look forward to.

Nearly At The End

As the season begins to wind down and we head towards its conclusion (insert date), attention will soon turn to one of the highlights of the year – Cup Finals Weekend. It promises to be a brilliant occasion, and you can read more about what's coming in our Cup Final Fever section below.

But the football doesn't stop there.

Across the summer months, DDSL clubs will once again bring the game to life in a different way. From Mini World Cups and summer camps to fun days and tournaments, it's estimated that over 20,000 players will take part in activities organised by clubs



A LANDMARK SEASON: HUNDREDS OF DDSL TEAMS COMPETE ACROSS THE WORLD

What a journey it's been for our DDSL clubs this season—taking football far beyond our own pitches and into unforgettable adventures across the globe.

A massive well done to the clubs and volunteers who made it all happen. Organising trips abroad for young teams is no small task, but thanks to your dedication, hundreds of players got to experience something truly special. From the excitement of travelling with teammates to competing against new opposition, these are the moments that stay with you for life.

With over 200–300 teams representing the DDSL overseas, the impact has been incredible. It's not just about results—it's about friendships, confidence, and memories that will be talked about for years to come. These are the experiences that shape young players, on and off the pitch.

So to every club, every volunteer, and every player—take a bow. You've created something really special.

GRANTS & RESOURCES

Strong partnerships continue to make a real difference across the DDSL, and our recent collaboration with S3 Solutions is a perfect example.

With over 20 clubs represented, this practical and engaging workshop gave clear guidance on the Sports Capital Grant process—helping clubs better understand how to put forward strong applications and secure vital funding for their future. Just as importantly, it created a space to ask questions, share experiences, and build confidence around what can often feel like a complex process.

A big thank you to S3 Solutions for their expertise and support—another great step in helping our clubs grow both on and off the pitch



FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Heartbreak in Prague



The final whistle in Prague cut deep. In a match that carried the hopes of a nation, the Republic of Ireland Men's National Team came up just short in their World Cup qualifying battle. It was one of those nights where effort, pride, and moments of real quality were all there—but football can be cruel, and the result didn't reflect the heart this group showed on the pitch.

For those of us in the DDSL community, there was an added layer of emotion. Watching players who once graced our leagues step out on the international stage is always a source of immense pride. Seeing Troy Parrott, Matt Doherty, Robbie Brady, and Nathan Collins represent their country is a reminder of the incredible pathways that begin right here in our league. From local pitches to the international arena, their journeys inspire the next generation of DDSL players dreaming of wearing the green jersey.

While Prague will sting, this is a squad building something meaningful. There is resilience in this group, a blend of experience and emerging talent that promises brighter days ahead. Nights like these, as painful as they are, often shape the character of a team and lay the foundation for future success.

To the players, the staff, and the manager—keep going. The DDSL stands firmly behind you. As attention turns toward the Euro 2028 campaign, there is real belief that this team can rise, respond, and make the nation proud once again. From schoolboy football to the senior international stage, we're with you every step of the way.

SUCCESS IN POLAND!

What a night for the Girls in Green. In a thrilling encounter against Poland, the Republic of Ireland Women's National Team showed courage, quality, and no shortage of grit to come away with a brilliant 3–2 victory. It was a game packed with drama, but this team never flinched—digging deep when it mattered most and showing exactly what it means to wear the jersey.

Leading from the front was captain Katie McCabe, a former DDSL player whose passion and drive set the tone for the entire performance. Her leadership was clear in every phase of the game—demanding standards, lifting those around her, and embodying the fighting spirit that carried Ireland over the line.

For everyone involved in the DDSL, moments like this are incredibly special. Seeing one of our own lead the national side to victory on the international stage is what it's all about. It's proof to every young player across our leagues that the dream is real—that hard work, dedication, and belief can take you all the way.

This wasn't just a win—it was a statement. A team growing in confidence, embracing big moments, and delivering when it counts. The character shown to edge a tight contest like this speaks volumes about where this squad is heading. To Katie and the entire team—congratulations on a fantastic result. The DDSL is immensely proud, and we'll be right behind you as the journey continues.



3v3 Ireland

Easter Saturday brought something a little different—and a lot of fun—to the Sport Ireland Campus as the DDSL's 3v3 Tournament lit up the pitches. In partnership with 3v3 Ireland, over 70 teams jumped into a fast, high-energy format that kept the ball rolling and the players constantly involved. Quick games, loads of touches, skills on show everywhere—it was football at its most fun. The buzz didn't stop there either, with Charlie Shakespeare wowing the crowd, pulling off incredible tricks and making it a day the kids won't forget anytime soon.



DDSL CUP FINALS

DDSL CUP FINALS

MAY 16th & 17th
MAY 23rd & 24th

Now, all eyes turn to the main event. The DDSL Cup Finals are just around the corner, taking place from May 15th to 24th, and the excitement is building fast.

It's the highlight of the season, where all the hard work comes together—but at its heart, it's all about the players.

Their moment, their stage, their memories. A reminder to everyone on the sidelines to keep it positive, keep it supportive, and let the kids play.

From new formats to big finals days, the DDSL continues to deliver—and there's plenty more still to come.

DDSL CUP FINAL SCHEDULE 2026

A SATURDAY 16th May 2026 (MORNING)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home	RM	A	RM	KO	Pitch
11	Condron Cup	1	SAT	Cherry Orchard FC	n/a	St Joseph's FC	n/a	10.30am	1A
11	Brendan Coyne Cup	2 & 3	SAT	Cherry Orchard FC	n/a	Trinity Donaghmede FC	n/a	10.30am	1B
11	Hackett Cup	4 & 5	SAT	St Joseph's FC	n/a	Railway Union FC	n/a	10.30am	2A
11	Graham Farrelly Memorial Cup	6 & 7	SAT	Kilnamanagh FC	n/a	Belmont FC	n/a	10.30am	2B
12	Tom Kavanagh Cup	F	SAT	Cherry Orchard FC	n/a	Templeogue Utd	n/a	10.15am	3A
12	Tony Ryan Cup	M/M1	SAT	St Francis FC	n/a	Cherry Orchard FC	n/a	10.15am	3B
12	Tommy Coady Memorial Cup	1 & 2	SAT	Dalkey United FC	n/a	Cherry Orchard FC	n/a	10.15am	4A
12	Paddy Farry Cup	3 & 4	SAT	Leixlip United FC	n/a	12	n/a	10.15am	4B
13	Donie Harmon Cup	6 & 7 & 8	SAT	Trinity Donaghmede FC	1	Wayside Celtic FC	9	10.30am	5
13	O Leary Cup	3 & 4 & 5	SAT	Blessington FC	2	McKelvey FC	10	10.30am	6
13	Gerry Murphy Cup	1 & 2	SAT	Dunboyne FC	3	Ballyculster Utd FC	11	10.30am	12 AW
13	Matty Langan Cup	5 & 6	SUN	Dromcontra FC	4	Finglas Utd	12	10.30am	8
13	Paul Byrne Memorial Cup	7 & 8	SUN	Verona FC	5	Glasnevin FC	13	10.15am	9
13	Michael Dempsey Memorial Cup	9 & 10	SUN	Clontarf FC	6	Dundrum FC	14	10.15am	10
13	Jimmy Flood Cup	M & M1	SAT	Leicester Celtic FC	7	Cherry Orchard FC	15	10.15am	11
13	Liam Brady Cup	F	SAT	Cherry Orchard FC	8	St Kevin's FC	16	10.15am	13

C SUNDAY 17th May 2026 (MORNING)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home	RM	Away	RM	KO	Pitch
11	Paul Fitzgerald Cup	1 & 2	SUN	St Machta's FC	n/a	Knocklyon United FC	n/a	10.30am	1A
11	Lee Kavanagh Cup	3 & 4	SUN	Kilbeston/Donnycarney FC	n/a	Lakelands FC	n/a	10.30am	1B
11	Paddy Brennan Cup	5 & 6	SUN	Parivale FC	n/a	Balbriggan FC	n/a	10.30am	2A
11	EES Ltd Cup	7 & 8	SUN	Blessington FC	n/a	St Kevins FC	n/a	10.30am	2B
12	Stephen Barrett Memorial Cup	1 & 2	SUN	Portmarnock AFC	n/a	Kilbeston/Donnycarney FC	n/a	10.15am	3A
12	Topflight Cup	3 & 4	SUN	Knocklyon United FC	n/a	Finglas Celtic FC	n/a	10.15am	3B
12	Jean Kennedy Cup	5 & 6	SUN	Finglas United	n/a	Hovth Celtic FC	n/a	10.15am	4A
12	Allen Hughes Memorial Cup	7 & 8	SUN	Sheff YC	n/a	Broadford Rovers FC	n/a	10.15am	4B
16	The Leo Duanne Cup	F	SUN	Crumlin Utd	1	St Josephs FC	9	10.30am	5
16	Paul McGrath Cup	M & M1	SUN	Mount Merrion Yc	2	St Kevins FC	10	10.30am	6
16	Neville Cup	1 & 2	SUN	Arklow Town FC	3	Malahide Utd	11	10.30am	12 AW
16	Masterson Cup	3 & 4	SUN	Corduff FC	4	Collinstown FC	12	10.30am	8
16	In Memory of Eyan Reynolds	DV & S	SUN	Palmerstown Rgrs	5	Blessington FC	13	10.15am	9
16	Billy Behan Cup	A1 & A2	SUN	Ashbourne Utd	6	Balbriggan FC	14	10.15am	10
16	Fionn Dooley Memorial Cup	A3 & A4	SUN	Belmont FC	7	Kilnamanagh FC	15	10.15am	11
17	Schuster Cup	M & M1	SUN	Wayside Celtic FC	8	Graystones Utd	16	10.15am	13

E SATURDAY 23rd May 2026 (MORNING)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home		Away		KO	Pitch
G16	Skelly Cup	2 & 3	SUN	Cloose Utd	1	Tallaght Town	10	10.30am	13 AW
G14	Jack Stakely Cup	P & M	SUN	Stella Maris FC	2	Rathcoole FC	11	10.30am	5
G14	Colin Higgins Cup	M1 & D1	SUN	Bohemians FC	3	Leicester Celtic	12	10.30am	6
G14	James Lee Cup	D2, D3 &	SUN	Dunboyne FC	4	River Valley Rgrs	13	10.30am	4
G15	IRISH RAIL Cup	P & M	SUN	Shelbourne FC	5	Lucan Utd	14	10.30am	8
G15	Dick Lynch Cup	M1 & D1	SUN	Donnycarney Celtic FC	6	St Kevins FC	15	10.15am	9
G15	Sean Compton Memorial Cup	D2, D3 &	SUN	Blessington FC	7	Bohemians FC	16	10.15am	10
15	The Menton Cup	F	SAT	Belvedere FC	8	St Josephs AFC	17	10.15am	11
15	Conway Cup	M & M1	SAT	Cherry Orchard FC	9	St Kevins FC	18	10.15am	13

G SUNDAY 24th May 2026 (MORNING)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home		Away		KO	Pitch
G11	Johnny Bates Memorial Trophy	1 & 2	SUN	Kilnamanagh FC	n/a	Cabinfealty FC	n/a	10.15am	1A
G11	Paul O Connor Cup	3 & 4	SUN	Balbriggan FC	n/a	Templeogue FC	n/a	10.15am	1B
G11	Nora McMahon Memorial Cup	5 & 6	SUN	Cherry Orchard FC	n/a	Ashbourne Utd	n/a	10.15am	2A
G11	Joe Redmond Cup	7 & 8	SUN	Graystones Utd	n/a	Belmont FC	n/a	10.15am	2B
G13	Albert Johnston Cup	P, M & M1	SUN	Malahide Utd	n/a	Portmarnock FC	n/a	10.30am	3A
G13	Brian McCabe Memorial Cup	D1 & D2	SUN	Tyrellstown Utd	n/a	Blessington FC	n/a	10.30am	3B
G16	MMI Cup	P & M	SUN	St Francis FC	1	Newbridge Town	10	10.30am	4
G16	Tony Murray Cup	M1 & D1	SUN	Knocklyon Utd	2	Rathcoole FC	11	10.30am	5
18	Ferrari Cup	PREM	SUN	Corduff Utd	3	Finglas Utd	12	10.15am	13
G18	George Goodson Cup	P, M & M1	SUN	Kilbeston/Donnycarney	4	Bohemians FC	13	10.15am	12 AW
11	Gerry Donnelly Cup	1 & 2	SUN	St Kevins FC	5	Portmarnock AFC	14	10.15am	8
13	Dublin Bus Cup	3 & 4	SUN	St Francis FC	6	Dundrum FC	15	10.15am	9
14	O'Neill's Cup	D1 & D2	SUN	Malahide Utd	7	St Francis FC	16	10.30am	10
14	Troy Cup	D3 & D4	SUN	Verona FC	8	Peamount Utd FC	17	10.30am	11
15	The Tansey Cup	D1 & D2	SUN	Crumlin Utd	9	Corduff FC	18	10.30am	6

B SATURDAY 18th May 2026 (AFTERNOON)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home	RM	Away		KO	Pitch
11	Michael Griffin Trophy	B & B	SAT	Castletown Celtic FC	n/a	LarkView Fc	n/a	2.30pm	1A
11	Mick Sheridan Cup	10 & 11	SAT	Terenure Rangers FC	n/a	Mount Merrion Youth FC	n/a	2.30pm	1B
12	Maurice Price Cup	B & B	SAT	Walton Lane District Yc	n/a	Beechwood FC	n/a	2.30pm	2A
12	Lee McEvoy Cup	7 & B	SAT	Lusk United AFC	n/a	Collinstown FC	n/a	2.30pm	2B
G12	Andy Wardick Cup	F & M	SUN	Swords Celtic Fc	n/a	Bohemians Fc	n/a	2.15pm	3A
O12	Knel Deeb Memorial Trophy	M1 & Dv	SUN	Portmarnock Fc	n/a	Clontarf Fc	n/a	2.15pm	3B
G12	Willie Prout Memorial Cup	Div 2 & 3	SUN	Ballyfermot Utd	n/a	Ashbourne Utd	n/a	2.15pm	4A
G12	Tony Keyes Cup	Div 4 & 5	SUN	Mid Sutton fc	n/a	Rosamount	n/a	2.15pm	4B
14	Hollywood Cup	1 & 2	SAT	Wayside Celtic FC	1	Portmarnock FC	9	2.30pm	5
14	Paisley Deering Cup	3 & 4	SAT	Hewth Celtic FC	2	Trinity Donagheade FC	10	2.30pm	6
14	Scott Skinner Memorial Cup	5	SAT	Dynamo Dublin FC	3	Terenure Rangers AFC	11	2.30pm	12 AW
14	Noel Donohoe Cup	5&6	SUN	St Joseph's FC	4	St Francis FC	12	2.30pm	8
14	The Brian Fitzmaurice Cup	7&8	SUN	Rathcoole FC	5	Killegland FC	13	2.15pm	9
14	Brendan Harmon Cup	M/M1	SAT	Bohemians FC	6	Leitlip Utd	14	2.15pm	10
14	Fran Ray Memorial Cup	P	SAT	Mount Merrion FC	7	Ashbourne United FC	15	2.15pm	11
18	Christopher Cup	M & M1	SUN	Collinstown Fc	8	Hewth Celtic fc	16	2.15pm	13

D SUNDAY 17th May 2026 (AFTERNOON)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home		Away		KO	Pitch
11	Andreas Tram Trophy	B & 10	SUN	Marino AFC	n/a	River Valley Rangers FC	n/a	2.30pm	1A
11	Paul Smith Memorial Cup	11 & 12	SUN	Arthur Griffith Park	n/a	Blessington FC	n/a	2.30pm	1B
11	Hillary Cup	13 & 14	SUN	Peamount United FC	n/a	Marino AFC	n/a	2.30pm	2A
11	Grehan Cup	15 & 16	SUN	Clontarf FC	n/a	Parkvale FC	n/a	2.30pm	2B
12	Johnny Keegan Memorial cup	11 & 12	SUN	Harolds Cross	n/a	Rathcoole FC	n/a	2.15pm	3B
12	Paddy O Malley Cup	13 & 14	SUN	Finglas United	n/a	Ardmore Rovers FC	n/a	2.15pm	4A
G11	Brian Cummins Memorial Cup	9 & 10	SUN	Dunboyne Fc		Cambridge FC		2.15pm	4B
18	Mark Milligan Cup	Div 1 & 2	SUN	Balbriggan Fc	1	Ballyouister Utd	9	2.30pm	5
18	Joshua Wilserhan Memorial Cup	Div 3 & 4	SUN	Lusk Utd	2	Parkvale Fc	10	2.30pm	6
18	Billy Young Memorial Cup	Div 5	SUN	Broadford Rvrs	3	Trinity/Donagheade	11	2.30pm	12 AW
17	Paddy Hughes Memorial Cup	Div 1 & 2	SUN	Esker Celtic	4	Knockmitten Fc	12	2.30pm	8
17	Mark Howard Memorial Cup	Div 3 & 4	SUN	Stamullen Fc	5	McKelvey Celtic	13	2.15pm	9
17	In Memory of Gerry White	Div 5 & 6	SUN	Ardmore Rvrs	6	St John Vianney	14	2.15pm	10
17	Mick Byrne Cup	Div 7	SUN	Enniskerry Fc	7	Rathcoole Fc	15	2.15pm	11
17	PFAI Cup	PREM	SUN	St Josephs Fc	8	St Kevins Fc	16	2.15pm	13

F SATURDAY 22nd May 2026 (AFTERNOON)									
Age	Cup	Division	Day	Home	RM	Away	RM	KO	Pitch
12	The Butch Cleary Trophy	9 & 10	SUN	Parkvale Fc		Leicester Celtic Fc		2.30pm	3A
14	The Pat Tiernan Cup	9 & 10	SUN	Peamount Utd Fc	1	Kinsealy Utd Fc	10	2.30pm	4
O13(1)	Enda Mullen Memorial Cup	P & M	SUN	Peamount Utd	2	Kilnamanagh Fc	11	2.30pm	5
O13(1)	Freya Fitzpatrick O Doherty Cup	M1 & D1	SUN	Lakefields Fc	3	Leicester Celtic	12	2.30pm	6
15	Paddy Fenlon Cup	1 & 2	SAT	Peamount Utd	4	St Josephs AFC	13	2.30pm	10
15	Cox Cup	3 & 4	SAT	Kilrester Donnycarney FC	5	Tallaght Town FC	14	2.15pm	8
15	Thomas O'Brien Cup	5 & 6	SAT	River Valley Rangers FC	6	Verona Fc	15	2.15pm	9
G18	John Duncan Memorial Cup	Yths 1 & 2	SUN	St Rias Fc	7	Rathcoole Fc	16	2.15pm	12 AW
15	John Egan Memorial Cup	D3 & D4	SUN	Beechwood FC	8	St John Vianney FC	17	2.15pm	11
15	Tommy Quinn Memorial Cup	D5	SUN	Terenure Rangers FC	9	FC Eagles	19	2.15pm	13

EVENT IS TICKET ONLY EVENT - TICKETS ONLY AVAILABLE ON LINE

STRICTLY NO DOGS PERMITTED AT VENUE

CAR POOLING IS RECOMMENDED AS EVENT LIKELY TO SELL OUT

TEAMS/SUPPORTERS SHOULD PLAN ONLY TO ARRIVE 1 HOUR BEFORE GAME.

VENUE WILL OPEN AT 9.15AM - PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFOREHAND.

EXPECT TRAFFIC DELAYS AT VENUE AND SURROUNDING ROADS.

HAVE YOUR TICKET READY FOR SCANNING AS YOU APPROACH VENUE _ THANK YOU !

MENTAL HEALTH

DDSL SPOTLIGHT SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH AWARENESS AND ACTION

The Dublin District Schoolboys/Girls League is always exploring ways to better support the wellbeing of our players, coaches, and wider football community. Recently, we came across a valuable resource developed by Youth Suicide Prevention Ireland (YSPI) titled "Let's Talk About Mental Health – A Guide to Understanding and Coping with Common Mental Health Issues."

This booklet reinforces something we strongly believe in across grassroots football: mental health is just as important as physical health. Below, we've highlighted some key takeaways that we feel are especially relevant for young players and their families.

Coping with Anxiety

Anxiety is something many young people experience, whether it's linked to sport, school, or social situations. The YSPI guide reminds us that anxiety is a normal human response, but it's important to manage it in healthy ways.

Some simple coping strategies include:

- **Talk it out** – sharing worries with a trusted friend, coach, or family member
- **Focus on breathing** – slow, controlled breathing can calm the body and mind
- **Stay active** – physical activity, like football, is a powerful way to reduce stress
- **Break things down** – focusing on one small step at a time can make challenges feel more manageable

Coping with Exam Stress (Leaving Cert & Junior Cert)

Exam time can be overwhelming, especially for players balancing school and sport. The booklet highlights that stress during exams is common—but manageable.

Helpful tips include:

- **Create a realistic study plan** – structure helps reduce panic
- **Take regular breaks** – rest is essential for focus and performance
- **Keep perspective** – exams are important, but they don't define your future
- **Maintain balance** – staying involved in sport can actually improve concentration and wellbeing

Football can provide a vital outlet during exam periods, offering both routine and release from academic pressure.

The Power of Active Listening

One of the most powerful messages in the YSPI resource is the importance of active listening—a skill that everyone in our football community can develop.

Active listening means:

- **Giving someone your full attention**
- **Not interrupting or judging**
- **Acknowledging their feelings**
- **Showing that you genuinely care**

In a team environment, this can make a huge difference. Whether it's a coach supporting a player, or teammates looking out for each other, simply being there and listening can help someone feel understood and less alone.

Let's Keep the Conversation Going

This resource is a reminder that:

Talking about mental health is a strength—not a weakness.

At the DDSL, we are committed to creating an environment where young people feel safe, supported, and heard both on and off the pitch.

For more information on this excellent resource and the wider work being done in this area, we encourage you to look up Youth Suicide Prevention Ireland (YSPI) and explore their materials.

Final Thought

As coaches, players, and parents, we all have a role to play. By building awareness, encouraging open conversations, and supporting one another, we can make football a space where everyone thrives—not just physically, but mentally too.



IN GOOD COMPANY

SOMETHING BIG IS COMING ...

There's a real buzz building behind the scenes at the DDSL... and we're not quite ready to reveal everything just yet.

Next month, we'll be launching exciting new partnerships that are set to bring added value to players, coaches, and clubs right across the league.

This isn't just another announcement – it's something that will open up new opportunities in both sport and education, helping our football community grow on and off the pitch.

Think support beyond the game. Think opportunities that last longer than 90 minutes.

For now, this is your sneak preview... but trust us: it's worth the wait.

Keep an eye on this space – something special is on the way.



COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to
JAMES DOHERTY
DRUMCONDRA AFC


oneills
SINCE 1912

Correct Answer: CORK DISTRICT LEAGUE

James is the winner of the DDSL O'Neills Voucher competition from our last edition.
A huge thank you to O'Neills for providing two fantastic prizes and continuing to support the DDSL community.
Enjoy the prize, James – and thanks to everyone who entered!

SPONSOR A TROPHY

Every club has its heroes—the volunteers, the legends, the people who gave everything to the game and helped shape what your club is today. Now is your chance to honour them.

Following the great success of this initiative last season, we're inviting clubs once again to celebrate those special individuals by sponsoring a trophy in their name.

It's a lasting tribute—one that will be presented year after year, keeping their legacy alive and inspiring the next generation.

Let's remember those who built the game we love—and make sure their impact is never forgotten.

Contact gm@ddsl.ie for more information.

SPONSOR A TROPHY

REMEMBER A CLUB VOLUNTEER, CREATE A MEMORIAL CUP FOR A FAMILY MEMBER, BECOME A SUPPORTER OF THE LEAGUE WITH YOUR BUSINESS OR INDEED YOUR CLUB!



WE ARE OFFERING A PACKAGE THAT INCLUDES:

- A personalized league Trophy in one of the DDSL boys or girls leagues.
- The cost of the trophy and engraved to suit from MMI the leagues partners.
- A guarantee of the naming rights for a minimum of 5 years.
- A personalized acknowledgement on the DDSL memory wall for a min of 10 years.
- Opportunity to present every year to the winning team/club.



A CLUB BUILT ON COMMUNITY



What a summer it's shaping up to be across the DDSLI

A huge well done to all our clubs who are going above and beyond to give children incredible opportunities to play, enjoy, and fall even more in love with the game. From exciting Mini World Cups to fun-filled summer camps, there's football everywhere you look—and it's all about creating smiles, memories, and a real sense of community.

With nearly 20,000 DDSL players taking part, it's brilliant to see clubs opening their doors and making sure there's something for everyone throughout the summer months.

If you're looking to get involved, be sure to check in with your local club—you won't want to miss out on the action!

Some Jerseys Mean More - Dublin Port's Partnership with Stella Maris FC

In the DDSL, we often talk about football as more than just a game and every so often, a story comes along that brings that idea vividly to life. This week, we're proud to shine a light on one of our founding clubs, Stella Maris FC, and a partnership that continues to make a real difference both on and off the pitch.

With over 450 players pulling on the famous colours each week, Stella Maris has long stood as a pillar of schoolboy and schoolgirl football in Dublin. From first kicks to under-18 competition, the club embodies everything the DDSL was built upon: opportunity, community, and a genuine love of the game.

A Club Woven into the Fabric of the League

As a founding member of the Dublin and District Schoolboys'/Girls' League, Stella Maris isn't just part of our history it continues to shape our present and future. Generations of players have come through its ranks, many going on to achieve remarkable things in the game, while countless others carry forward the values they learned at Richmond Road into everyday life.

And that's the magic of clubs like Stella, success isn't measured solely in trophies, but in people.

A Partnership That Delivers More

For the past seven years, Dublin Port Company has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Stella Maris, supporting its mission and helping the club continue to thrive in the heart of the community. Their latest celebration of this partnership was something truly special.

What began as a jersey presentation quickly turned into a moment those young players won't forget anytime soon.

Through a powerful tribute video, some of the club's most celebrated alumni — including Keith Andrews, Áine O'Gorman, and Noel King, reminded everyone watching just how far Stella roots can reach. From legends like Johnny Giles and Eamon Dunphy to more recent stars such as Troy Parrott, the club's legacy speaks for itself.

But the standout moment? A surprise message from Andrews himself, speaking directly to the next generation. His words, centred on joy, hard work, and community, captured exactly what grassroots football is all about.

Voices from the Heart of the Partnership

"Dublin Port works with many sports, education, and community groups in our immediate vicinity. We are delighted to build on our partnership with Stella Maris, who have a long tradition of developing young players and supporting young people in the wider Port community."

Those words from Dublin Port's Community Engagement Manager perfectly capture the spirit of the collaboration, one rooted in long-term commitment and real community impact.

From within the club, the message is just as powerful:

"Stella Maris is about more than football. We believe in giving every child the chance to get the most out of the sport, in a safe and supportive environment. Dublin Port has stood alongside the club for years, and this partnership helps us to keep building for the next generation of boys and girls coming through our gates."

More Than a Jersey

At DDSL level, we see jerseys every weekend. Different colours, different clubs, different dreams. But moments like this remind us that jerseys can carry something extra, history, pride, and a sense of belonging that lasts a lifetime.

Stella Maris continues to provide a safe, supportive, and ambitious environment where young players can grow, not just as footballers, but as people. And with partners like Dublin Port investing in that journey, the future looks every bit as strong as the past.

The Heart of the Game

We are incredibly proud to have Stella Maris as part of our league. Their work, their people, and their unwavering commitment to their community are exactly what makes the DDSL so special.

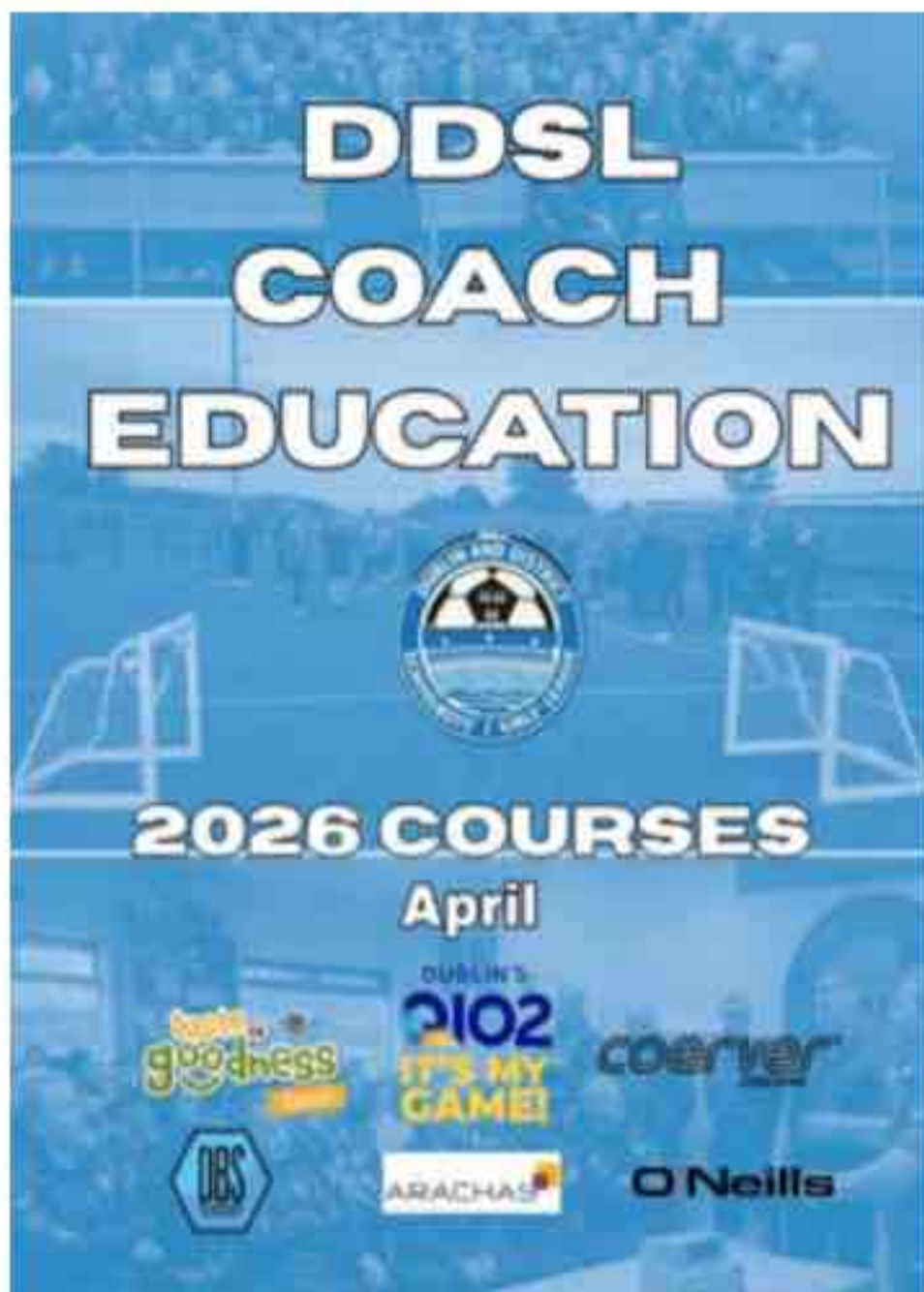
Because at the end of the day, football in Dublin isn't just played on pitches, it's built in clubs, carried in communities, and worn with pride on jerseys that truly mean more.



CALAFORT ÁTHA CLIATH
DUBLIN PORT

COACHES CORNER

BREAKING NEWS



A brand-new April session took place with great success.

Participants joined Hugo Faria – better known as the “King of Fun” – for a high-energy and engaging technical workshop focused on bringing sessions to life.

The session featured fresh ideas, plenty of interaction, and practical takeaways that coaches could bring straight back to their players.

The event took place in Abbotstown on April 22nd from 7pm to 9pm and, best of all, it was completely free.

Places filled up quickly, and some coaches were disappointed to miss out, so we encourage all coaches and managers to check out the DDSL website and get involved.

Coach education is alive and kicking in the DDSL—and it's making a real difference where it matters most, on the pitch.

This season, the DDSL Coach Education Programme has been buzzing with energy, bringing coaches together to learn, share, and grow. From those taking their very first steps into coaching to experienced faces looking to sharpen their edge, the focus has been simple—give every coach the confidence and tools to create the best possible environment for their players.

And it's been anything but boring.

Across the year, we've seen coaches dive into everything from planning full “seasons of sessions” to getting hands-on with small-sided games, building core skills, and even exploring the finer details of nutrition and performance. There's been speed and movement work, specialised goalkeeping sessions, and plenty of practical ideas that coaches can take straight back to their teams. It's all about learning by doing—and enjoying every minute of it.

With Abbotstown acting as the beating heart of the programme, the standard has been set high, and the appetite to keep improving has been even higher.

Because better coaches mean better experiences for players—and that's what the DDSL is all about.

TAKING COACH EDUCATION ON THE ROAD

In addition to our base in Abbotstown, this season saw a major step forward as we brought coach education directly to clubs.

By selecting host clubs and delivering workshops both north and south of Dublin, we've made learning more accessible than ever. Running sessions every two weeks, this approach has allowed more coaches to attend without the barrier of travel – strengthening connections within clubs and encouraging shared learning within local football communities.

This initiative has been extremely well received and continues to grow in momentum.



FROM OUR COACH EDUCATORS

We've been fortunate to have an outstanding group of coach educators delivering these sessions throughout the year. Here's where we will hear directly from them:

JJ Glynn:

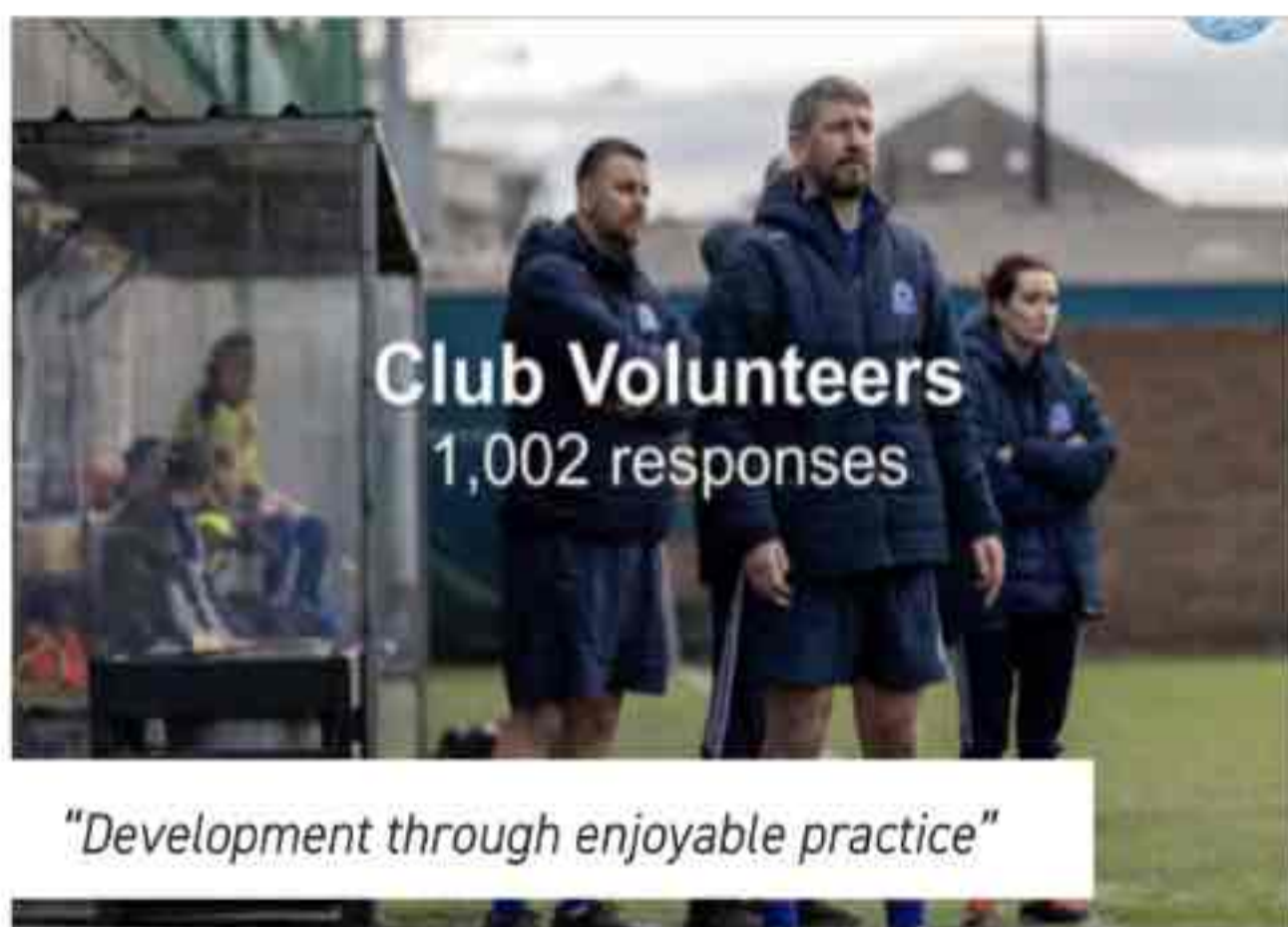
(I have been fortunate since January of this year to assist Barry and Sean in the development of the coaches working with clubs in the DDSL. The workshops consisted of a theory element in which these were delivered both in person and online throughout January. The workshops are aimed at 2 groups, those working in the 8-12 age groups and those working with 13-18 age groups. The theme of the workshops is to assist coaches on not only what sessions they do, but also a focus on how you deliver your sessions. I have delivered 6 in total to date and have found the coaches to be very much engaged in finding ways to assist them with the content of the sessions (passing - Dribbling - Control) for the 6-12yrs, then small group work with the older age groups but still with the focus on technical work over tactical. I will continue into April with the workshops and hopefully for longer as I feel as passionate as Barry and Sean in assisting DDSL coaches provide their players with Fun engaging training sessions on a weekly basis.)

Lar:

(This season, we went on the road with our fortnightly coach development workshops. Since September, we have visited twelve different clubs and, in a new addition to the programme, have also hosted two Zoom sessions. The common thread running through these was the development of skill through enjoyable, player-centred practice.

In the workshops before Christmas, we focused solely on the development of touch, bringing the same session to every venue. This move followed up on Barry Ferguson's plea to clubs and coaches at the start of the season to devote the first ten minutes of every session to individual skill, preferably to one-ball-per-player practice. Since January, we worked on the development of individual and team skill in games and presented Zoom sessions on working with the youngest players and the improvement of coaching skills.

More than three hundred coaches in total attended the workshops and all brought a level of interest and enthusiasm that made every one of them hugely enjoyable. If we've influenced all of those coaches, even in the smallest way, in a way that will make the training and playing experience of their thousands players more fulfilling, the workshops will have been hugely successful. Looking forward to next season's already.)



Red, Coerver Coaching:

(Over the past eight months, Coerver delivered a comprehensive football coaching education program for DDSL coaches, designed to support and upskill grassroots coaches a long side the DDSL Vision on grassroots developments. The program focused mainly on the Coerver methodology, key coaching competencies, including session planning, player-centred development. By combining theory-based workshops with on-field practical sessions, coaches were able to apply new knowledge directly in their local environments.

Throughout the delivery period, strong emphasis was placed on creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where coaches could share experiences and build confidence.

Delivering Coerver workshops for the DDSL has been a rewarding blend of strategic coaching and community connection. Each session centred on foundational skills—possession, passing accuracy, and decision-making under pressure—while also weaving in small-sided games to apply concepts in a game-like context. The workshops have emphasized inclusive participation, with age-appropriate drills that build confidence, technique, and a love for the game. What stands out most is the collaborative energy of the coaches; they share a common goal of development and enjoyment.)



New Publication

This is the third book in the **BIG PICTURE COACHING** series, following **GET THE PLAYERS PLAY!** and **MOVE THE BALL!**

In **MOVE YOURSELF!**, we see how players can progress to playing more creatively, by adding an extra layer of mobility, speed and wit to their attacking play. We look specifically at how the three staple moves of inventive attacking play—one-two, overlaps and crossovers—can be taught. As in the two previous books, coaches are taken, step by step, through what to teach, the order in which to teach it and, vitally, how to communicate this information to young players.

Format: Softback and PDF Download Size: 210 x 297mm
Pages: 124 Illustrated: Colour

Available Now
from

Big Picture Coaching Ireland
www.bigpicturecoachingireland.com

GOOD NEWS STORIES

DDSL & UEFA WORKING TOGETHER



Something special is happening—and it's only just getting started.

What began as a powerful idea within the DDSL is now catching the attention of European football's biggest stage. Our It's Our Game workshop, delivered in partnership with Q102, is going global... and UEFA are watching closely.

At the heart of it all is something simple, but incredibly powerful. It's about reshaping the sidelines, turning them into places of encouragement, positivity, and support.

Let the children play. Put the child first. Stay quiet when needed, cheer when it matters, and trust them to make their own decisions on the pitch.

That's where real development happens. That's where confidence is built.

And now, that message is going far beyond our own league.

UEFA have recognised the impact of what's being created here in the DDSL, and we've been working closely with them to highlight just how important this approach is—not just in Ireland, but across Europe. There's a growing belief that this is the future of player development, and it starts with the environment we create around the game.

It's a movement.

And this is only the beginning... watch this space.





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GOOD NEWS STORIES

THE FUTURE OF REFEREEING IS HERE—AND IT'S WEARING A DDSL BADGE.

Our JMO (Junior Match Official) programme is flying, and the numbers tell their own story. Over 120 young referees are out there every single week, taking charge of games, making big calls, and doing a seriously impressive job. Behind them? A growing team of more than 200 registered JMOs, all stepping forward to be part of something special.

This isn't just about filling a gap—it's about building a pathway.

These young officials have been putting in the work, taking part in training, learning the game from a completely different angle, and developing confidence that goes far beyond the pitch. We've backed them every step of the way too—making sure they're fully equipped, supported, and ready to go. And they've delivered. Big time.

The pilot programme has already been a huge success, and once it wraps up, we'll be officially launching it next year. But there's no slowing down now.

We're calling on clubs across the league—keep an eye out for the next wave. There are future JMOs in your teams, on your sidelines, in your communities. Encourage them, support them, and help them take that first step into refereeing.

Because this is the DDSL tackling the referee shortage head on—and doing it in a way that's creating confident, capable young leaders along the way.

JMO—remember the name. This is only the beginning.



BE A LEADER IN THE DDSL!

BORN TO LEAD

- Become a Junior Match Official for DDSL games
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- Earn up to €150 per weekend/6k per season
- Start Officiating games safely in your Own club!

TO REGISTER CLICK HERE



www.ddsli.e



IT'S MY GAME!

A reminder to all parents, coaches and supporters that our partnership with Q102's "It's My Game" campaign continues with upcoming Silent Sidelines Weekends.

Silent Sidelines is a simple but powerful initiative. On these weekends, supporters are asked to step back from match-day instructions and commentary, allowing players to make their own decisions, communicate with teammates, and enjoy the game in a positive, pressure-free environment.

Encouragement is welcome – coaching from the sidelines is not.

The aim is to:

- Give players ownership of their game
 - Reduce sideline pressure
 - Support referee development
 - Create a more positive match-day atmosphere
- Upcoming Silent Sidelines Dates:
- February 21/22
 - March 14/15
 - March 28/29
 - April 18/19
 - Full Month of May

Clubs are encouraged to promote these dates across their teams and social channels.

Let's continue working together to create the best possible environment for our young players – because at the end of the day, **it's their game.**





DDSL

INTOUCH

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DUBLIN AND DISTRICT SCHOOLBOYS' / GIRLS' LEAGUE

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