



Football Convenor & Captain of Football **Report for Season 2017 / 2018**

The KCC Football Section has continued to experience further growth during the 2017/2018 season and now has more than 550 active players across its Junior's, Colts, Young Women and Adults football programs. We continue to also have waitlists at a number of youth age groups! Within our Adult Section we have over 200 registered KCC members.

Our section continues to offer a complete pathway for young sportsmen and women to join and follow a programme that facilitates the complete development across all age groups from 4 years old to senior! The range of accredited coaching programs - from Junior Boys and Girls, Colts and Young Women to our Adults has enabled the Football Section to develop players as they compete through the ranks of the Hong Kong Junior Football League (HKJFL), the Hong Kong Football Association's League and onto the Yau Yee League, and Hong Kong Legal League. Coaching and Refereeing Courses for our Colts and Young Women further expand their knowledge of the game and allow them to be more involved. The only thing missing remains a KCC Women's Team, but the formation of this remains very much on the radar for future seasons.

We have continued to work alongside Asia Pacific Soccer Schools (APSS) with our junior and youth development programs, ensuring qualified coaches for all players and we engage professional independent coaches for our adult teams. Across the programme we have Juniors (U6-U14), Colts (U15-U18) and Young Women (U15-U18) in our Youth Programme, competing mainly in the Hong Kong Junior Football League (HKJFL) and the top HKFA leagues, with many other leagues and tournaments entered both in Hong Kong and overseas. Again, KCC hosted 9 Junior football tournaments, attracting thousands of players and parents to the club and these were extremely well managed and run by many of our "JS" and "SS" members. Our venue is very popular for these events and our Youth Football Team along with the Club Staff ensure everything runs very smoothly. They are a spectacle to behold!

This season we have seen 8 of our Young Women's players selected for Hong Kong national squads up to U18 level and many of these players were part of the historic HKFA Cup victory in May 2018. The players a number of which are "JS" Members have been a valuable asset to KCC and we will look to retain them in coming seasons as the Young Women & Women's game gets more and more competitive in Hong Kong as its growth expands rapidly with the support of the HKFA. KCC continues to foster this relationship with key personnel at the Football Association and we will also look to get our KCC Youth Football Programme accredited under a new scheme that we are advised will be unveiled soon.

On the senior side, the KCC Dragons saw a number of long term players retire, so a new look team set out to consolidate and survive this season finishing in 9th place in Yau Yee League (YYL) Division One, albeit only a couple of points off 6th position! Some key injuries and suspensions cost the team a higher finish.

The KCC Knights in contrast enjoyed a fantastic season winning the Yau Yee League Division 2 title and conceding only 13 goals in the process, the least of all teams across 4 divisions! Manager J.B.Roy and Coach Stevic, found a way to build fantastic team spirit in a new and youthful team and their passion and commitment was well rewarded. The KCC Knights also won the Shield at YYL 6's in May 2018.

The KCC Cavaliers, our youth development team, bridging the gap between Colts and Adults joined the KCC Royals in the Division Two of the Legal league. They finished a credible 5th, level on points with 4th, drawing one and win one against the Royals in the “Cox’s Road” Derbies! The team scored quite freely, even without a recognized striker, but they also conceded many; 2 areas to concentrate on in future. The team has some very talented young players that need to be nurtured and integrated into the other teams in the coming seasons.

The KCC Royals finished 8th in the Legal League 2nd Division, and the KCC Vets finished 6th in the Legal League Legends Division, as Manager Dave Christmas continued to juggle a large squad or around 30 players for these 2 teams, which is needed due to the many games; 36 in total, plus cup games. In the Cup competitions The Royals beat League 1 opposition “J Leaguers”, but the Corinthians ended any chance of glory, however the KCC Vets progressed to the Champions League Cup Final, losing out narrowly to the HKFC 0:2.

The KCC Masters were again invited to join the Citi HKFC International Soccer 7’s and we welcomed 2 ex-professional players to join our team, Jan Michaelsen, ex-Danish International and ex-National Team U17 Youth Team Coach as well as Allan McManus, current Head of Youth Development at St. Mirren. It was a very tough tournament as many teams brought in 4-5 ex-professionals, really upping the ante this time around. KCC scored a great 0:0 draw against the eventual Masters Cup winners, being the only team to prevent them from scoring in the whole tournament, but sadly it was not enough and we bowed out in the group stages. It was still a fantastic weekend and great for the KCC to be represented alongside some of the world’s top professional clubs, all shown live on Now TV. The Ex-Pros along with the players / staff of Italian Serie A side Cagliari, laid on a great “Special” training session for some of our selected youth players. Jan and Allan left us with some great memorabilia to raffle at our End of Season Ball and they took part in an informative Q&A evening at the Pavilion.

During the Season the Section remained very active with many events / social gatherings well attended by players and section supporters. We commenced with the popular Graham Archer Memorial 7’s at KCC in August, with a record number of teams signing up. This event was followed closely by our season opening Poolside Party. The Football Section “team” won the Inaugural KCC Sports Quiz and we supported the Club’s Oktoberfest celebrations with good numbers turning up to down a few pints! We further combined 2 players “stag parties” into the “Saigon” Football Tournament Trip before a busy December where we had our inaugural “Santa Soccer” Weekend, incorporating a Charity Tournament for adults on the Saturday and a Charity Football event for the Youth payers on the Sunday. We then closed out 2017 in style with the annual Rock n Bowl Christmas Party, held this year on the Bowling Green, with kind permission of the Lawn Bowls Section. The annual Bangkok Tour was arguably our most successful as over 40 “tourists” flew the KCC flag high and proud. We won the Interport Trophy in a 3:1 victory over RBSC and then won the Plate in the Open Competition. The season will end with our AGM, but in a revised format this season we brought back the Annual Football Ball, with a 2018 World Cup twist, “From Russia with Love”. The event was a great success with 99 participants who enjoyed great F&B during a night of awards, games, charity raffle, music and dance! Our Youth Football season ended with 2 award ceremonies, one for the Juniors in the Sports Hall and one for the Colts & Young Women at the Pool, jointly attended by well over 300 people.

We closed out the season with the AGM in the middle of June as we help to promote the World Cup Football celebrations at KCC over the summer. The Football Section hosted or attended events almost every month of the season, keeping everyone very busy!

We offer our thanks and immense gratitude to the following people this season:

- To all the professional coaches from APPS and Asst Coaches, Junior Referees, volunteer parents and everyone else who have assisted in the Junior Boys and Girls, the Colts, Young Women and Adult sections throughout the season.
- To the members of the Football Section Subcommittee who have worked tirelessly in taking the section forward to greater heights throughout 2017/2018.
- To all the relevant Club Staff from Sports Dept, Grounds, Housekeeping, F&B and the Offices, who work tirelessly behind the scenes.
- Anyone else we missed!

Our Partnership with “Sprouts Foundation” and other charitable causes, continues to grow and through our inaugural “Santa Soccer” Christmas Tournament we were able to raise over \$30,000. This was split between Sprouts and The SCMP Operation Santa Claus. We further raised over \$8,000 for Sprouts at our End of Season Ball. During the season we also self-funded the Sprouts Kids to join the Santa Soccer and KCC May Day event, allowing them an amazing opportunity to have fun at KCC. The smiles on their faces will live long in the memory.

Summer “Sunday” football, summer tournaments and youth football open days will keep us all busy through June to August, as we plan for another season of growth and development in the section. We kick off the summer football on the 2nd Sunday of July and our Youth Open mornings will be on 11th & 18th August with our season kicking off on 25th August. Our Season calendar has been locked in for the 2018/19 season with thanks to the KCC Grounds Committee that we continue to participate in.

Our Football Committee continues to grow within our Section and we added the 10th Member during the season. This Committee will further grow to 12 in 2018/19 as we incorporate 2 new positions in an attempt to share the ever-increasing workload. This in turn has caused the issue of full time employee at KCC for the Football Section to be reviewed again. It is a justified position, but its funding likely to be the main challenge in its implementation. We further foresee other challenges over the coming seasons as possible changes in the Clubs membership scheme(s) may affect player recruitment and the muted status of Kings Park continues to be questioned.

To the incoming Sub-Committee, under our Convenor Luca Merlone, we look forward to working with you all and further driving the Football Section forward to bigger and better things in the coming 2018/19 season.

Overall, we conclude our 44th Season of Football at KCC and 24th Season playing in the Yau Yee League in great shape. We have a very cohesive and vibrant section with great camaraderie amongst our players and supporters. We will continue to strive to improve the quality of the whole KCC Football Program and create more initiatives to benefit both our section members, the Club members, the HKFA and the community at large.

Luca Merlone
GC Representative

Daniel Schick
Captain of Football