

Aquinas Newsletter July 2020

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CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Hello folks,

Welcome to our second edition of our Newsletter.

The club continues to follow best practice in terms of Covid updates from both local government, sporting bodies and the Irish Football Association. As these get continually updated, we will continue to adapt to ensure we maximize opportunities to play football but in the safest possible manner.

The highlight for many is the return to training and the ability to play competitive matches from 17th July. There are still a large number of restrictions and these will limit parents' ability to watch or be involved and we hope you have patience with us through these challenging times.

In addition, we have appointed a number of Covid officers to reflect the size of the club and various sub-areas within. If you have any concerns or questions please address these directly to the Officer for your child's age group.

I personally would like to thank Maurice Delaney for his contributions to mini-soccer and now wishing to take a break from Saturday morning football. Maurice will continue to coach with the 2004 team.

We are always on the lookout for new coaches and we offer a pathway for IFA certification for anyone interested in helping.

Best wishes,

Hugh McKillop

TEAM PROFILE

Coaches – Tell us about your team

This is your chance to tell everyone at the club about your own team – the players love this bit. Just provide some information in relation to the key points listed and we'll try to get it included in an upcoming edition. It couldn't be easier!

Team name, and key sponsors
Highlights of last season
Anything interesting you did over lock-down
Ambitions for next season
Answers to be returned to

Newsletter@aquinasfc.net

PROFILE - Aquinas Ladies and Girls Football

The 2018-2019 season marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Aquinas Football Club, and also marked the establishment of three age groups of girls playing football in the famous blue and black. Aquinas has always had a strong family tradition and many of the girls who train and play have brothers in the Club, which has undoubtedly helped with home-based training during the pandemic.

The club has always been lucky to have a nucleus of experienced coaches who are happy to share their knowledge and experience with their players, and to encourage parents to become involved. The Lead Coach for the U9 girls is Denis Kelly, who has previously brought three boys teams from U9 to U19. He is assisted by Jenny Finlay, Ciaran Harvey, Joe Kennedy and Connor Cummins, all of whom have daughters playing in the team. The U9s play IFA development football on Sunday mornings, and have shown great strides in their football skills. Their sheer enjoyment at both training and playing matches has never waned.



Our U-9's and Coach Denis Kelly, modelling the pink Aquinas hoodies



The U11 girls are lucky to have John O'Rourke and Danielle Hegarty in charge, and this pair of coaches represents a mix of longstanding Aquinas experience and new blood. The U11s play IFA Development in on the pitches at the Olympia, on the Boucher Road, and have held their own against established teams. In spite of defeats to teams who have been playing together for a number of years the determination to improve, score and defend has never stopped.

The U15 girls are coached by Philip McAteer, Paul Moriarty and Eoghan Taggart. The girls range from 12 to 14 years of age, and in spite of the varying ages and levels of experience have gelled together into a team that showed resilience, grit and flashes of absolute genius. Similarly to the U11s the U15 team were up against established teams some who had been playing together for many years. Over the course of the season the Aquinas Ladies started nipping at the heels of those teams, the goal margins narrowed, and there were wins to be savoured.



Overall the players involved in the three squads have enjoyed the experience and have grown in skill and stature. The standard blue and black strip has had the addition of an Aquinas FC hoodie in striking pink; definitely strikes fear into the opposition's heart. The parents of all of the girls involved have been engaged and enthusiastic at training and particularly at games. While we are currently in uncertain times, we hope to get back to training soon, and look forward to welcoming many more girls to an expanding female football squad.

SPONSOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT – CHARLES HURST

Sponsorship is critical to our club – but the arrangement should benefit both parties. Our many sponsors provide much needed financial support to us, and in return we as a club and as individual members, should support them as much as we can.

Charles Hurst is a household name in N Ireland. With its headquarters at Boucher Road, it is the biggest car dealership in the province, with franchises covering multiple brands of vehicles.

And it is a key sponsor of the Aquinas Senior teams. Specifically, its Budget Direct Branch supported the senior club for the first time in 2019/20.

This Branch specialises in quality used cars under £6,000. All vehicles come fully valeted, serviced and with a warranty. And you are assured of a very professional and personal service. I can attest to that having purchased from them myself!

However – and this is important – if you are seeking a vehicle with a value of more than £6,000, that is not a problem. The guys have full access to the whole Charles Hurst stock and will work with you to find the car you're looking for.

Call in or ring them at 02895 882974 and ask for Kevin or Martin and tell them you're from Aquinas



Pictured are Charles Hurst & Aquinas Reps with the new sponsored Senior Team kit and Senior player, Dee Fitzpatrick, after purchasing his new Volkswagen Golf from the Club Sponsor.

A NEW SENIOR 4TH TEAM FOR SEASON 2020-21

After a very positive senior season (at least we think it's over!) we have decided to introduce a 4th team to the senior set up, making Aquinas one of the very few clubs in Ireland that can field 56 senior players every weekend. After the great interest generated by the 3rd team last season, and with very high numbers attending training every week, it seemed sensible to provide another team for players to become or keep involved with the club.

Recent attendances at our socially distanced training sessions have reached over 70 players – a magnificent turnout and evidence that setting up a 4th team has been a good decision. We've been delighted to see all our favorite faces returning and a few new ones too. During these sessions we've also invited some youth team players to train with our senior squads and they've fitted in perfectly.

There are many wonderful players at Aquinas at all age groups and seeing more of our own player's progress to senior level is something we want to improve. A key aim of the 4th team is to provide an opportunity for the club's junior players, who have the potential to play senior football, to do so at their own club. This 4th team provides a clear pathway by which to integrate young players into senior football at Aquinas and to develop their footballing potential further.

Luke Kelly has taken on the role of 4th team manager after working with Connor Cummins and the 3rd team last season where they developed a great partnership and led the team to an unbeaten campaign, prior to 'lockdown'.

Luke (in the centre of the photo) has had great experience and success as a manager at Aquinas. He has coached U16's and U17's to League and Cup success in the SBYFL in recent years and brings that experience and tremendous enthusiasm and desire to the senior set-up.

If anyone is interested in training with the squad with a view to playing for Aquinas, they should contact Luke on 07734 454145.



HIDDEN TALENTS – Noah Wu

Sometimes a player just has that

‘X FACTOR’



Noah Wu, a member of our 2005 squad, is a special talent on and off the pitch. When he recently launched his debut music track on Spotify and YouTube we were all blown away by his incredible musical ability, which few of us had any knowledge of! To write, produce, record and release your first single is a thing many teenagers dream about but will never do. His single “Sometimes”, which was released during the lockdown, is available on all the usual platforms and well worth a listen.

Fifteen-year old Noah has also been a sensation on the pitch this year. There is no position he can't play. Normally he is our attacking left back but we may have to renegotiate his contract following our last game against Tullycarnet, when he played up front and scored 5. On and off the pitch Noah has been an Aquinas star.

Do any of our other club members have a special talent that most of us don't know about? Please tell us!! We'd love to hear all about it.

SUMMER CAMP

The Aquinas Summer Camp is back and will take place during the week commencing 27 July. As usual, it'll be at the YMCA, and will run on Monday to Thursday, from 9am to 3pm; and from 9am to 2pm on Friday.



Alas with coronavirus, there will be some differences and Neil Donaldson will be in touch with parents to provide the administrative details of the Camp and any assurances required.

One important difference is that everybody must be signed up in advance, through the website. We will not be able to take children who just turn up on the day.

Never worry, though, once we've all gone through the good old bureaucratic hoops, it'll be loads of fun, as usual.

Drills in the morning, football competitions in the afternoon.

MINISOCCKER SAYS THANKS TO MAURICE AND CIARAN

For many years now at mini soccer Neil Donaldson's right-hand man has been Maurice Delaney, assisted ably by his younger son, Ciaran, now 14. While Neil looked after the younger ones, Maurice oversaw the oldest year group each year and prepared them for life in the IFA Development Centre, at under 9.

Maurice and Ciaran have now decided to take a breather from their Saturday morning duties and step away from the mini soccer set up. All of us involved in mini soccer over the last many years want to extend our thanks to Maurice and Ciaran for all their efforts and commitment over many years. They were, of course, also stalwarts of the Easter and Summer camps.

To Maurice and Ciaran ... thank you both, good luck and we'll maybe see you again around Aquinas some wet Saturday morning!!!

Club Directory – A runner or not???

It's been an idea of mine (John McAuley) for some time to have a club directory for the use and benefit of club members and their families.

Our club is often described as a 'community' or a 'family', and I believe there are ways that we can support and help each other as family members should. One of those is through a club directory.

How would it work?

Simply put, any members who have their own business or work for a business which offers services that members might be able to avail of, simply register that business in a directory that will be available to club members.

Members would then be encouraged to use those businesses when in need of those services. Simple really. It's a very easy way to promote our businesses among our own club members.

For example, if I'm looking to buy a house, I could use one of 'our' estate agents, and one of 'our' solicitors. Or at least give them a chance to get my business.

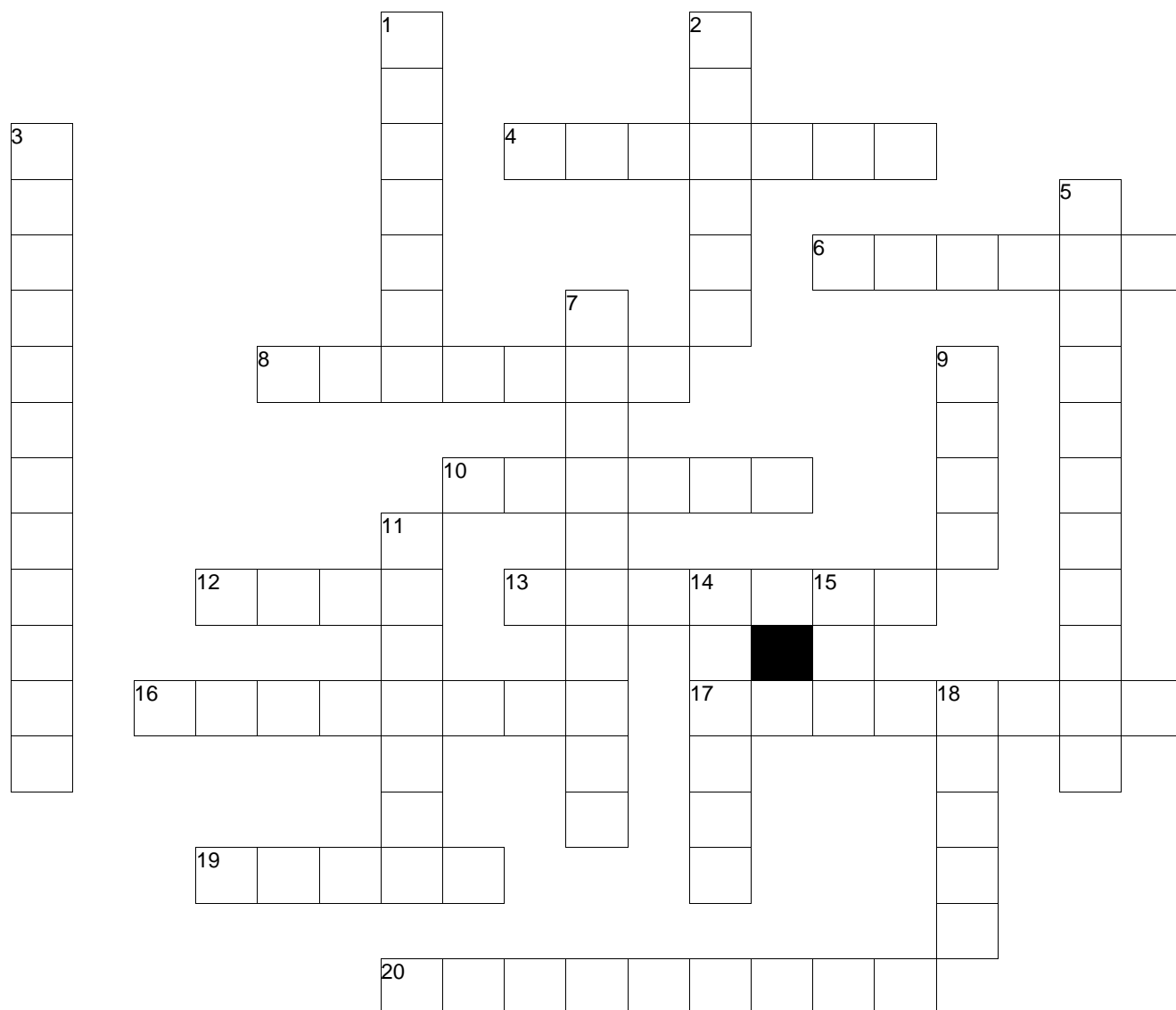
Eventually the Directory would contain contact details of our sponsors too, as another means of garnering their continued support.

Our club currently has over 450 junior members, about 80 adult coaches and 90 senior players. Add to that the parents and family members of this large grouping and this represents a significant market for those of us with businesses and who work for service providers.

As I say, this is just an idea at this point and I'm happy to progress it if there is a decent interest in it.

So, please drop me a line at newsletter@aquinasfc.net, if you are interested and would be willing to register on the directory. A simple 'yes' would be enough to gauge interest. I'll provide an update in the next newsletter.

Aquinas Crossword



Across

4. The coldest pitches in Co Antrim?
6. Where 2005's went for European training?
8. Chairman's premier league favourites?
10. Who plays at Craven Cottage?
12. Home of mini soccer
13. Where the Reds train
16. The best thing about the summer camp?
17. Home ground of senior team
19. Playing surface-artificial or *****?
20. Nearest South Belfast GAA club

Down

1. What is blown to start and end a game?
2. Two of this colour and you're OFF!
3. What are the club kit colours?
5. Home of NI football
7. Who wears number 1?
9. Build it before a free kick?
11. Senior twins?
14. What should you do before a match?
15. A throw in after the ball goes ***?
18. The GOAT

Many thanks to Shauna Hegarty