

Customer Case Study May 2024

**FEATURED**

**DUBLIN AND DISTRICT  
SCHOOLBOYS' / GIRLS'  
LEAGUE**



**SportLoMo**

[www.sportlomo.com](http://www.sportlomo.com)



# The DDSL is one of Europe's largest schools' football leagues.

## Case Study: The Modernisation of the Dublin & District Schoolboys/girls League's technology.

### Introduction

This case study explores the journey of the Dublin & District Schoolboys/Girls League (DDSL), as it modernises operations and enhances efficiency through the adoption of the SportLoMo platform. With 1,500 to 2,000 games scheduled every weekend, involving over 2,900 teams, the league's operational demands are immense.

In 2023 the Dublin & District League opted to leverage technology to streamline processes, improve engagement, and ensure a safer, more professional environment for its youth football community.



# THE DUBLIN AND DISTRICT SCHOOLBOYS'/GIRLS' LEAGUE

## Background

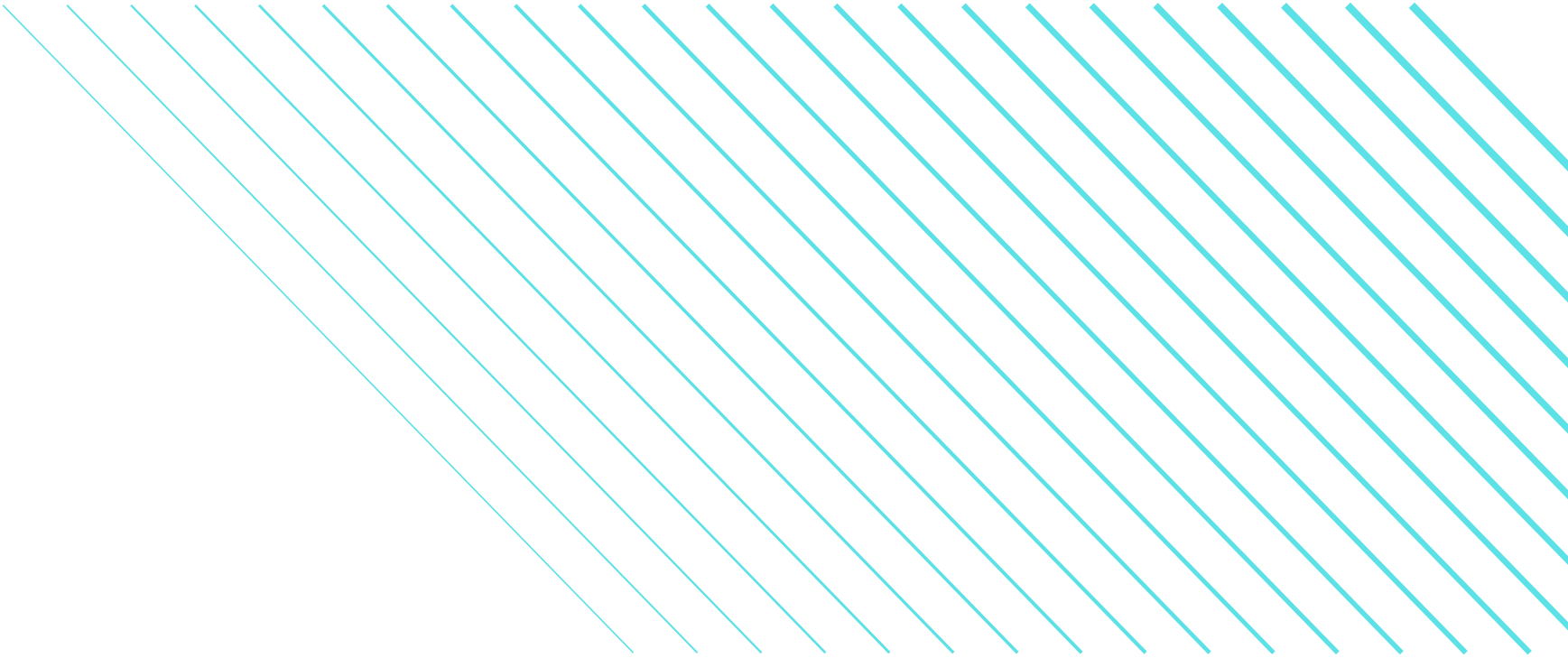
- **Scale:** The largest schoolboys' and schoolgirls' football league in Europe, with approximately 45,000 players and 10,000 volunteer coaches.
- **Activity:** 1,500 to 2,000 fixtures on busy weekends.
- **Participation:** Includes approximately 135 clubs with over 2,900 squads.
- **Founded:** In 1943, caters for boys and girls from 6-18 years.
- **Address:** FAI National Soccer Campus, Abbotstown, Dublin 15, Ireland



# CHALLENGES

## Why DDSL adopted a new system

- **Operational Efficiency:** Managing the sheer volume of games and participants was challenging and resource-intensive, with as many as 2,000 games every weekend. This situation highlighted the need for a robust Competition Management system.
- **Referee / Officials Management:** Given the extensive number of games, there was a need for an efficient Referee and Officials Management platform and app.
- **Volunteer Reliance:** The league primarily operates with the help of volunteers and has faced difficulties in recruiting new volunteers due to the significant workload involved. It was hoped the new registration system would increase revenue and allow the league to augment its workforce and help alleviate the burden on volunteers.
- **Understand Membership Numbers:** The league sought a system that would simplify membership management and provide a precise count of its members.
- **Self-Registration** was identified as a means of reducing work for team managers and club officials and moving responsibility to parents.
- **GDPR Compliance:** The DDSL wanted to use a secure method of verifying documents. It was deemed to be much more secure to ask players to upload documents such as proof of age, photo ID etc via a secure / password protected account. Alternative methods of sharing sensitive documents such as email and other processes may be deemed to be non GDPR compliant.
- **Mandatory Insurance Coverage:** The DDSL mandates that every player participating in competitive football within the league must be insured, the league was not confident this standard was being met under the previous system.

- **Electronic Management** of player transfers, discipline and other paper-based processes would further reduce work for administrators.
  - **Outdated Systems:** Previous management systems were not equipped to effectively handle the league's scale, leading to inaccuracies in membership counts and a lack of an insurance and disciplinary mechanism.
  - **Increase Professionalism:** The league sought to enhance their professionalism. Recognising that financial resources are essential for such a transformation they hoped the new system would increase revenues and allow them to hire additional staff to manage operations. The league has taken on 5 new staff since then.
  - **Website and Social Media enhancement:** The league wanted to revamp their website and bolster their presence on social media platforms.
  - **Improve Communication across the football community:** Placing the DDSL in the 'Pockets of supporters' (DDSL app) would allow the league to connect with supporters, players, parents and keep them up to date on matches and training.
  - **Data Storage:** Centralised storage of data in the cloud, with automated back up and redundancy in a secure platform was an important requirement.
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*"SportLoMo saves Clubs 1 hour per registration per player. Up to 500 hours work for a club with 500 players"*

Dublin & District Soccer League

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW PLATFORM

## 1 Step 1

Every DDSL club has to submit an expression of interest (EOI) on an annual basis. The EOI is an annual request by a club to affiliate to the DDSL for the coming season. As part of this process, clubs submit essential information including whether they have public liability insurance, the estimated number of teams they plan to enter into competitions, and other official details e.g. child welfare officers. The EOI submissions for 2023-2024 were managed through the new platform.

SportLoMo set up a club account for all DDSL clubs. Each club then completed an online DDSL expression of interest form. These EOI submissions were routed through an approval process. Once a club was approved on the system, it was deemed to be an affiliated club for this season.

The EOI system allows the DDSL to capture details on all their clubs and issue approvals to qualifying clubs. The system flags EOI's that did not have sufficient information and it allowed administrators to request these clubs to submit more information (via the system). And at the end of the EOI process, 130 clubs were registered and approved.

## 2 Step 2

A SportLoMo club account was created for each of the 130 approved DDSL clubs. Clubs have access to manage their club details (by approved club officials) including maintaining their club profile information (club officers, team details etc), key contact information, and any details the club wishes to share with the public via the DDSL Club portal. This capability for clubs to self-update ensures their account information remains current, benefiting all parties involved.

The League can also report on these clubs, view details of each club while the data is managed and maintained by the club. The DDSL administrator can also support the club and edit key information as configured by the League.

## 3 Step 3

Once clubs are approved, they can then purchase their entries into the various competitions.

The League set up the various competitions and made them available to clubs to complete the entry process. Each competition had a set entry fee. Some larger clubs entered multiple teams into each age grade. The smallest clubs having 5 teams and the largest having 85 teams! The clubs were able to purchase the full set of team entries and at the end of the process they had options to pay for team entry. Payment options were defined by the DDSL. (Pay in full, pay in installments etc.)

During the entry process, each club nominates their preferred venue and the desired start times for their teams' games. This information simplifies the process for the fixtures coordinators when organising competitions later.

## Payment Options

The DDSL is aware that clubs with numerous teams face the challenge of making a significant registration payment. To mitigate this, the league provides clubs with three payment options.

1. Pay offline, usually a bank draft or EFT payment.
2. By setting up a payment plan with recurring credit card payments, individuals can gradually pay off their fees in installments.
3. Full payment by debit or a credit card.



# 4

## Step 4

### The Hopper system

**built exclusively for the DDSL but available to other leagues on SportLoMo.**

The Hopper System (colloquially known) is for Team Placement. Once clubs have paid for competition registration, their teams then appear in the 'hopper system'. The administrator for each age group assigns teams to their respective divisions and has the flexibility to move teams between divisions before the fixtures schedule is finalised.

The system is also used for re-grading during the season.

### How does the Hopper System work?

- When registering teams to take part in a specific age grade, team managers will indicate their preferred division e.g. St. Kevin's and Stella Maris might indicate their first teams want to play in the Premier division and their second teams want to be entered into the "Major One" division and their third selection / teams into Division four etc.
- The League administrator will create the proposed groups for each division, they then have an option to publish the proposed groupings to a hidden webpage on the DDSL.ie website which can be viewed by team managers.
- Clubs view the proposed groups / divisions and were given a time line (in this case between 48 to 72 hours) to confirm they were satisfied to have their teams in the allocated divisions. If a club was not satisfied, they had an opportunity to contact their fixture coordinator and request a change. Each request is considered on a case-by-case basis by the DDSL fixtures secretaries.
- Once finalised the DDSL fixtures secretaries publish the list to the web and they are then able to create their fixtures schedule from this.

# 5

## Step 5

### Self-Registration

The DDSL chose to use SportLoMo's self-registration feature, recognising the challenges faced by their larger clubs, which boast membership exceeding 1,000 players, making individual registrations labour-intensive. Utilising parent-assisted self-registration significantly accelerated the overall registration process, achieving 1,000 to 2,000 daily registrations during peak times. However, this approach encountered some issues:

- In the first year, 10% of the photo information was incorrect.
- The second year is expected to see a reduction in errors, with only 4% incorrect photo information.
- The accuracy of Date of Birth (DOB) information was 99% in the first year.

Overall, the accuracy of registration details was high, as parents provided correct dates of birth, high-quality photographs, and other pertinent information.

With 'Self-Registration' each parent or player was expected to login and select their club within the DDSL and then select one player, two players, three players, depending on how many children they were registering. A form, including a series of FIFA/FAI-mandated questions, needed to be completed and submitted for each registration.

### Managing Registration Approvals

Another useful step was the in-built facility to manage an approval process. DDSL administrators conducted thorough reviews of each registration, ensuring the quality of submitted photos, the accuracy of birth dates, and the correctness of names in alignment with official documentation. Registrations were reviewed on an individual basis by the DDSL administrators. If the documentation was incorrect, administrators had a facility to notify the registrant through the system of the error / missing information. The registrant was assigned a status of "needs more information" and instruction with what needs to be amended before resubmitting. An automated email was triggered to request the registrant to log in and check their status.

### Privacy

For privacy purposes (GDPR) SportLoMo is configured to remove copies of personal documents from the system following an individual's registration approval. Once uploaded documents are reviewed and approved, the system is setup to purge the documentation, the passport etc from the system entirely, so that it's no longer stored in the Database. SportLoMo will automatically Date and Time stamp the record to confirm the documents were reviewed and were acceptable. SportLoMo will also record details of the DDSL administrator that approved the documents.

DDSL administrators estimate you can review and approve approximately 30 to 40 members in an hour. They have commented that the approval process was 'quite quick to use and very straightforward'.

By early September, the overall number of registrations was approaching the 40,000 mark.

# POPULAR COMPETITION MANAGEMENT FEATURES



## Fixtures Creation

The SportLoMo's Fixtures Management tool is utilised to generate the schedule for each competition within the league. This scheduling feature has been a crucial element of our Competition Management system since the beginning.

SportLoMo's useful fixtures creation tool (simple to use), can create fixtures with a click of a button. For example, if you want to create an 8 team, round robin competition with home and away games:

1. the admin selects the teams entered into the competition (or select the group from the "Hopper" if using that model).
2. selects the date for the first round of games.
3. indicates if the games are scheduled at regular intervals (e.g. a game every Saturday).
4. sets a default KO Time.
5. adds any additional settings such as default venues etc.
6. specifies breaks in the calendar such as Christmas/Easter etc.

The system then constructs the Competition Schedule accordingly and you can edit and/or opt to publish the games schedule to your website. The Fixtures Creation module integrates fully with the Referee Management module which is used to assign referees to games (more later).

# Creating Squads

This is the final step for the clubs in the DDSL.

The DDSL would not allow a club to fulfil a fixture until they had the correct number of players to actually play that fixture. DDSL are able to review any squads and check that the requisite numbers of players are assigned to a panel i.e. 11-a-side game / 11 players. The system allows them to filter across the system i.e. Show me all teams that have submitted a panel that have less than 11 players. If a team did not have the requisite number of players listed on a panel by Thursday lunchtime (for the upcoming weekend), they were not allowed to fulfil that fixture. For the first few weeks there was a number of cancellations of games but clubs quickly got to understand the system and this is now working smoothly.

At the moment there is nearly 3,000 squads in the system. The DDSL have an oversight of this, they can use a very easy filter which allows them to view a club, a team and a player.

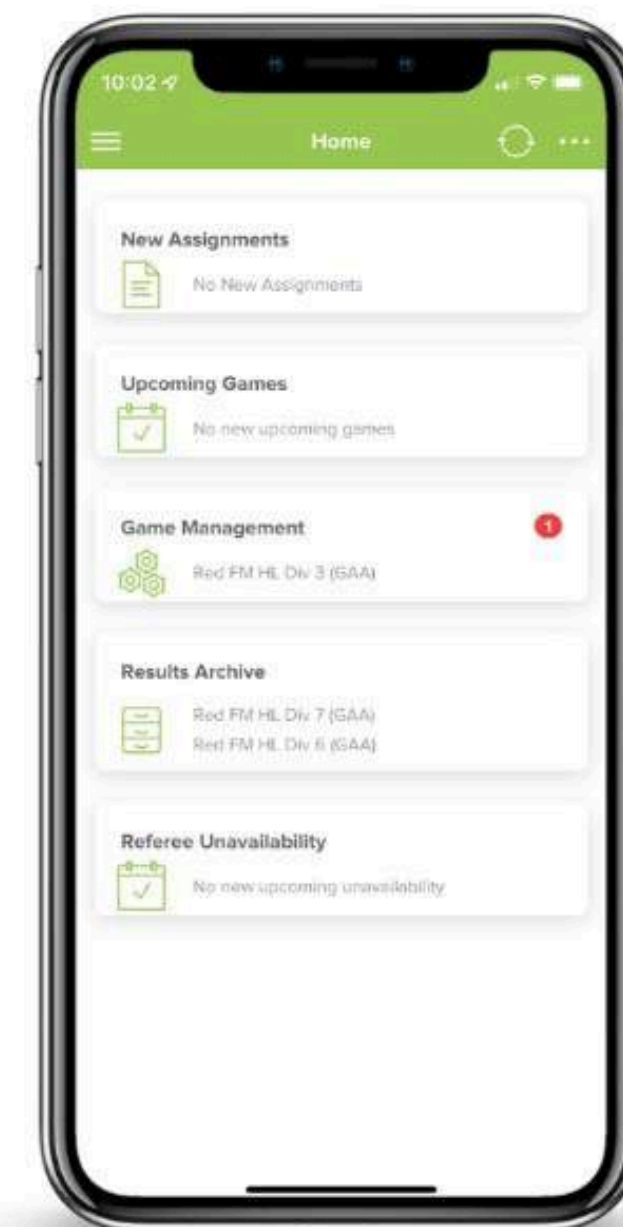
The feature also allows clubs to print PDFs' of their squads if they wish and clubs can record team sheets for each individual game which DDSL hope to progress to in the future.

In the 2025/25 season each squad will now include 1 coach/manager as well as the registered players.

# Referee Management App

The SportLoMo Game Management app has made the management of referees more efficient. It allows referees to indicate their availability, preferred venues, and accept or reject assignments via push notifications. It also allows referees to return match scores. The system ensures efficient match officiating allocations and up-to-the minute scoring/tables.

The Referee Management system is fully integrated with competitions, fixtures, venues and competition schedules. The app recognises approved match officials and each game is given a unique ID. The app only accepts / recognises data from approved referees/officials - ensuring only 'accurate and official' data is recorded. The app also has functionality to allow referees to carry out additional tasks which will likely be used by DDSL in the future (Discipline / Injury tracking etc.).



## How does the Referee Game Management App work?

Referees enter their availability and preferences into the app, they can accept or reject assigned games. They can also indicate their holidays, periods when they are away, times they are available to referee, and times they are not. The system takes all this information and their location into account before allocating games. So if a referee has a preference for refereeing in a particular Division or area (Dublin D2 / D3) they can specify this and they will be matched with suitable venues/games. This is very beneficial for the Referee co-ordinators' as a referee is far less likely to refuse an allocated fixture.

Also when a Referee co-ordinator selects a venue, the system gives them a list of the referees that like to referee in that area.

SportLoMo will also show you where a referee is already refereeing that day, it won't stop you allocating them as there are many referees that will do two, three games in a day. However, if the aim is to distribute assignments evenly among referees to ensure all have games, the system will indicate if a referee is already scheduled to officiate on a particular day. It will also flag if a referee is heavily involved in a particular club, so you can decide if you wish to allocate them or not. For instance they may have been a player previously with the club.

Another helpful feature of the app enables a Referee Coordinator to swiftly ascertain (via a red/green tick box system) whether a game has been assigned a referee or requires reassignment. Game assignments that have not been accepted by a referee are marked with a distinct red X. Given the importance of managing rejected assignments, the system automatically generates an email to the Referee Coordinator, notifying them whenever a referee has rejected a game assignment.

**Live Competition Data:** Club fixtures, results, tables, matrix view and form

FIXTURES		RESULTS	TABLE			MATRIX VIEW	FORM
Position	Team	Pld	W	D	L	Pts	Form
1	Stepaside FC	13	10	1	2	31	W W W W L
2	Tallaght Town AFC	13	9	1	3	28	L W L W W
3	Lakelands FC	12	8	1	3	25	L W L W W
4	Newbridge Town FC	12	5	2	5	17	W L L D W
5	Raheny United FC	12	5	0	7	15	W W W L L

## Search/Filter Fixtures

### FIXTURES

HOME / FIXTURES

**FROM DATE** 11-06-2024 **TO DATE** 18-06-2024

**SELECT REFEREE** Select Referee

**SELECT GENDER** Select Gender **SELECT AGE GROUP** Select Group **CLUB SEARCH** Type Club Name

Date Sort Competition Sort Venue Sort

Stepaside FC 2 VS 3 Newbridge Town FC  
18 Apr 2024

# The 'Mercy' Rule

Another newly added feature, colloquially known as the 'Mercy Rule' appears to be popular.

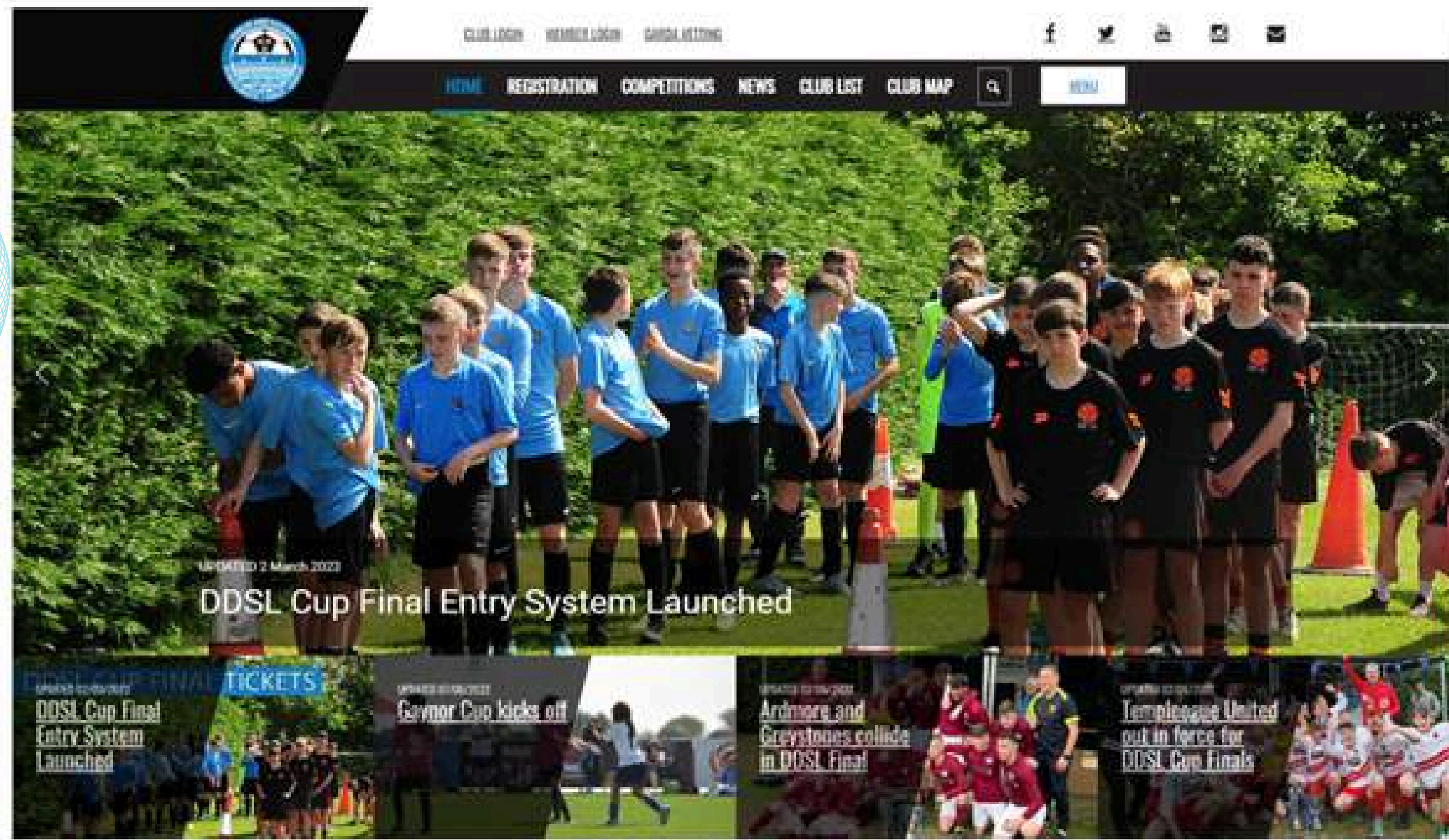
Many leagues do not want to display excessive winning margins on public facing websites or mobile apps, particularly for competitions with young children.

A league might decide that the max winning margin that will be displayed to the public is a 5-goal margin, this value can be stored in the system and it will automatically adjust scores returned by referees to display no more than the max winning margin.

For example, if the referee returns a score of 16-2, while we store this actual value in our database, the score displayed on the public website / results app will be automatically adjusted down to 7-2 to show a max winning margin of 5. This max value is configurable by the league administrators.

Retaining the actual result in the Database facilitates grading of teams for future competitions, but displaying a maximum score difference reduces potential for bullying or embarrassing younger players.

# DDSL website developed by SportLoMo





The DDSL website displays club results, fixtures, tables, matrix and form views in realtime. Competitions are managed on SportLoMo and API's of LIVE competition data is auto-published to the website and DDSL app (no work for admins).

SUNDAY 09 JUNE 2024

U14 Girls Div 1						
St Francis FC		3	0		Granada FC	John Hyland Park
Peamount United FC		2	0		Cherry Orchard FC	Greenogue

U14 Girls Div 5						
Mulhuddart FC		0	3		Broadford Rovers FC	Ladyswell Park

THURSDAY 06 JUNE 2024

U14 Girls Div 2						
Kilnamanagh AFC		2	0		Phoenix FC	Ned Kelly Park, Kilnamanagh

## COMPETITIONS

HOME / COMPETITIONS

SELECT AGE GRADE

Select Age Grade

SELECT GENDER

Select Gender

SEARCH COMPETITION

Search...

DUBLIN AND DISTRICT SCHOOLBOYS/GIRL'S LEAGUE

### COMPETITION

VIEW ALL RESULTS >

VIEW ALL FIXTURES >

U18 Boys	U18 Girls Youth	U17 Boys	U16 Boys
U18 Boys Premier →	U18 Girls Youth League 1 →	U17 Boys Premier →	U16 SFAI Cup Boys →
U18 Boys Major →	U18 Girls Youth League 2 →	U17 Boys Major →	Nilfisk Elite Premier Cup U16 →
U18 Boys Major 1 →	U18 Girls Youth League 2 →	U17 Boys Major 1 →	U16 Paul McGrath Cup (Maj/Maj 1) →

## Matrix View

	FIXTURES	RESULTS	TABLE	MATRIX VIEW	FORM		
	CABINTEELY FC	ENNISKERRY FC	LAKELANDS FC	NEWBRIDGE TOWN FC	RAHENY UNITED FC	STEPASIDE FC	TALLAGHT TOWN AFC
Cabinteely FC		0-3 18-Apr-24 19:00	0-3 21-May-24 19:00	1-3 21-Jan-24 11:30	0-2 12-May-24 00:00	1-6 18-Feb-24 12:00	0-3 26-May-24 00:00
Enniskerry FC	2-1 28-Jan-24 14:00		0-3 09-May-24 19:00	6-0 12-May-24 00:00	0-2 28-May-24 00:00	0-3 15-Mar-24 20:00	1-3 25-Apr-24 19:00
Lakelands FC	4-1 10-Mar-24 14:00	3-0 05-May-24 11:30		1-0 04-Feb-24 14:00	4-2 21-Apr-24 10:00	1-1 24-Mar-24 12:00	4-2 12-May-24 00:00
Newbridge Town FC	2-2 14-Apr-24 14:30	2-1 18-Feb-24 14:00	2-1 19-May-24 00:00		5-1 24-Mar-24 14:00	0-3 28-Jan-24 10:00	2-2 21-Apr-24 14:00
Raheny United FC	2-0 02-May-24 19:00	2-0 26-May-24 00:00	4-5 28-Jan-24 14:00	5-1 25-Apr-24 19:00		2-3 10-Mar-24 00:00	4-6 09-May-24 18:30

# BENEFITS OF SPORTLOMO

These are the most common benefits mentioned by our DDSL users.....



## Players/Supporters Scoreboard App

Another big winner, this app is for general use (separate to the Game Management app) it is used by the players, parents and supporters. Users can save their 'favourite' club / competitions for easy quick look up. There are approximately 20,000+ downloads of the app as of March 2024, which is quite a sizable number considering there are only 45,000 players in the league.

## The Referee Game Management App

This is getting great feedback from the referee coordinators and referees. As explained earlier, referees can input their availability and preferences into SportLomo, allowing for optimal match assignments based on location and availability. The app is also used by referees to return scores following a match, and the results go directly to the DDSL database / websites and the Players/Supporters Scoreboard app.

**The Mercy Rule:** Many Leagues decide they do not want to display excessive winning margins on public facing websites / apps so find this new feature useful (see more above).

## Split Pay Feature

SportLoMo's 'Split Pay' feature stands out as a game-changer for parents and clubs alike. It simplifies the registration and payment process by consolidating club fees and DDSL fee/player insurance into a single transaction. For instance, a club fee of €200, along with the DDSL fee of €30, totals €230 at checkout— and as a parent pays, the €200 will credit the club's account, and the €30 will go to the DDSL and credit their account, all done in one transaction. Parents no longer have to go to two different places and register and pay twice.

Split pay was developed by SportLoMo in 2017 for Rugby Canada. It is used by many of our international customers. It has become widely adopted by clubs and leagues to streamline registration. It offers a convenient solution for parents, who now only need to register once. Registration fees are automatically divided at source (by sportlomo/stripe) and directly deposited into the club, association, governing organisation's bank accounts - everyone receives their funds quickly and efficiently.

DDSL clubs have now begun to use this Split Pay feature to collect fees.

## Increased Revenues

Increased Revenues: Split pay fees ensure DDSL registration fees are collected upfront, guaranteeing that all players are promptly paid up and possess comprehensive insurance coverage. This instils confidence among parents, knowing they are supported by Grade A insurance – The DDSL has one of the most comprehensive player insurance policies in the country.

Mandating that players be registered and have their membership paid before they can be assigned to teams or squads for participation in official competitions has substantially boosted the league's revenue. These additional funds are now available to support the continued development of the league.

## Increased Professionalism

Increased Professionalism: The increase in revenue stemming from the new registration process has allowed the DDSL to augment its workforce, adding five more full-time staff for League Management and also alleviating the burden on volunteers. The increased digitisation underscores the league's commitment to evolving into a more professional entity.

## New DDSL Website































The new website launched in August 2023 has been designed for swift navigation and ease of use. Given the extensive number of DDSL competitions, the site has a number of search filters which appear when you load the competition section. You can filter by gender; by age grade, or you can free type in the name of the club or competition. You can filter by referee if you're looking for referees or fixtures, etc. The new website is completely mobile responsive, the previous DDSL website was difficult to use on a mobile phone.

# SportLoMo Club Services - provided free to clubs with the support of the league

- Club Membership
- Event Registration
- Access to DDSL App
- No setup fee
- No annual club licence fee

VIEW CLUB LIST OR VIEW ON MAP

All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	R	S	T	V	W	Y
 AFC Belgrave								 Ardmore Rovers FC								 Arklow Town FC				 Arklow United FC		
 Arthur Griffith Park FC								 Ashbourne United FC								 Ayrfield United FC				 Baldoyle United FC		
 Ballybrack FC								 Ballyfermot United FC								 Ballymun United FC				 Ballyoulster United FC		
 Ballyowen Celtic FC								 Beech Park FC								 Beechwood FC				 Belmont FC		
 Belvedere FC								 Blessington FC								 Bluebell Knockmitten United FC				 Bohemian FC		
 Booth Road Celtic FC								 Broadford Rovers FC								 Cabinteely FC				 Cambridge FC		
 Carriglea FC								 Castleknock Celtic FC								 Celbridge Town AFC				 Cherry Orchard FC		



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## DDSL Partners

**oneills**

**ISPCC**  
**Childline**

Dublin & District Schoolboys'/Girls' League proud partners  
with ISPCC Childline



**SportLoMo**

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