

January 11, 2010

Academy Teams Win Three Games, Get One Tie

U18s win both, U16s win one, tie one

On two cold crisp days the CSA Academy U16 and U18 teams took on Birmingham United on Saturday at Elon Park and then Atlanta Fire United at Davie Park on Sunday.

The U16s conceded an early goal that could have been avoided within 20 seconds. After that the team played fairly well on the ball in the first half, but didn't really match the physical nature of the BUSA team. In second half they stepped up the tempo, won our challenges, and played well. The boys held the majority of the possession, put BUSA under pressure, and really dominated the play in the second half. The U16s scored a great goal to tie the game up when Drew Brown cut in and shot from the top of the box eight minutes into the second half. Time and space was created for Brown by a great overlapping run from Ben Kern. After that, the team pressed for the win and came close with quality chances, while BUSA generally looked to counter with two very quick attacking players. "Taking away the initial goal we could feel satisfied with a solid performance against a good team. The lessons to learn were that we need to begin the first half like we began the second - more determined and more pro-active. Defensively we dealt with some very good attackers. In the attack we really needed to create a little more of our own "luck" by maintaining a little more composure in the final third; anticipating chances a little quicker; and continuing to put pressure on their defense", said Coach Jeremy Gunn. The team consisted of:

GK Stefen Knapp (Jaron Bradley GK)
LB Austin Yearwood
CB Matt Brown
CB Brandon Kardos
RB Ben Kern
LMF Drew Brown (Santiago Patino LMF)
CMF Harper Williams (Bennett Yort CMF)
CMF Roland Minogue
RMF Conor Keeley
CF Asa Kryst
CF Kyle Parker (Zhuvonte Wilson RMF)

Sunday in the U16 game against Atlanta Fire United saw a quality performance from start to finish. The team played well in the first half, created some very good chances and could feel quite hard done by to be a goal down at half-time. In the second half the team continued to play the better soccer, really moved the ball well and brought the full-backs into the game. AFU sat back in a defensive 4-5-1, but the boys passed well, moved well, and continuously kept putting their defense under pressure. The strikers would rather enjoy having space to run into, so it was particularly impressive with how everyone played in a game where they had to play through a team with not much space behind them.

The first goal came from a ball played in by Austin Yearwood. Asa Kryst was quick to react and received the ball across the central defender before driving the ball low past the keeper. Ben Burdon finished beautifully showing great composure in the box - great first touch, and then slotted it home. Jake Keating scored a tremendous strike when he cut inside a defender before burying a tremendous right footed shot into the far top corner. To round things off Connor Keeley challenged well in the air to force a mistake by the AFU keeper to finish the game 4-1.

Gunn commented, "The games are not all about results, but Sunday was an important game to give the team a little confidence and reward for our hard work. We have played some good soccer at times, not always managed to convert half chances, and been punished for the few mistakes we have made. We could have easily had a much stronger record so far and not played as well. This weekend we probably deserved to win Saturday in a game where we played the better soccer, and on Sunday we really dominated in every facet of the game. We can be happy with how we are progressing, knowing that having performed well we still have so much more that we can improve on in every part of the field". The team consisted of:

GK Jaron Bradley (Stefen Knapp GK)
LB Jake Keating
RB Austin Yearwood (Matt Van Dyne LB)
CB Matt Brown
CB Brandon Kardos
LMF Asa Kryst (Santiago Patino LMF)
CMF Bennett Yort (Ben Kern RB)
CMF Roland Minogue

RMF Zhuvonte Wilson (Ben Burdon CF)
CF Conor Keeley
CF Kyle Parker (Harper Williams CMF)

On Saturday the CSA U18s defeated BUSA 3-1 in a convincing performance. The team went up 1-0 after only 8 minutes when Giuseppe Gentile was brought down in the area. Conner Miller stepped up to slot the ball in low past the keeper. The second came soon after when Jake Keating made an overlapping run down the left hand side. Andrew Sperr was on the ball, saw Keating calling for the ball and slipped it to him on the left side. Keating's cross come shot ended up in the top right hand corner, in over the top of the goal keeper. The team defended very well and limited BUSA to only one real chance in the first half.

The second half was much the same as CSA created numerous chance before making it 3-0 with a goal from Brett Luccia. A ball headed on by Jono Grad found Gentile's feet and he worked his way towards the right bi-line. His crossed was pulled back across the goal and Luccia tapped in for the third. BUSA made a run at the game scoring late from a header off of a set piece. "We really controlled the game today", said Richard Butler, head coach. "Our shape defensively was good, we got good blocks in when needed and limited BUSA to very few chances. The one area we could improve on is in the final third where I feel at times that our passes are wasted at times. It is a very important area of the field and we need to be better in that area". The starting team with substitutions in parenthesis was as follows:

GK Nick Hensley (Trent Johnson GK)
LB Jake Keating
CB Thomas Allen
CB James Nero
RB Kyle Searles (Evan Kent RB)
LMF Andrew Sperr (Nick Barnhorst LMF)
CMF Robbie Beatty
CMF Sean Cogan (Jono Grad CMF)
RMF Brett Luccia (Nick Barnhorst RMF)
CF Giuseppe Gentile (Michael Nelli CF)
CF Conner Miller (Alex Leonard CF)

On Sunday it was another good display and could have been more than a 2-0 score line. The boys started brightly but again lacked the deft touch in the final third. The team sustained some good pressure from the Atlanta Fire United team mainly through high balls that were either from corners or long throws during the middle of the first half. The end of the half proved to be the turning point of the game. After a heavy foul about 35 yards out on the left side of the pitch CSA was awarded a free kick in the 38th minute. Brett Luccia curled a good low ball into the near post where Giuseppe Gentile flicked it in with his right boot from eight yards out. Within two minutes Jono Grad made it 2-0. As a ball was cleared from a corner he controlled the ball, put it on his left foot and drove it high into the top right hand corner of the goal. It was a screamer.

In the second half there was again a period of heavy pressure from AFU but the team defended well again in a good shape and individually. Trent Johnson made two very good saves and there were several good blocks from shots from AFU. As time wore on the U18s got hold of the ball, kept possession and pressed for the third goal. "Although we never got the third goal we managed the game and especially the second half very well. There are always going to be times when we do not have the ball. It is those times we must concentrate so very hard and then when we win the ball not give it away", said Butler. "We did that very well today and we are learning to do it better with each game". The line up included:

GK Trent Johnson
LB Tyler Adams
CB Will O'Brien (Nick Hensley CF)
CB James Nero (Thomas Allen CB)
RB Evan Kent (Kyle Searles RB)
LMF Brett Luccia (Conner Miller CF)
CMF Alex Leonard (Robbie Beatty CMF)
CMF Jono Grad
RMF Nick Barnhorst (Andrew Sperr LMF)
CF Giuseppe Gentile
CF Andrew Benningfield (Sean Cogan CMF)

In earlier play the U14 pre-Academy squad beat the U14 BUSA 7-1 in a game dominated by CSA. The next games for the Academy program will be on January 16th and 17th 2011 against Concorde Fire and Atlanta FC Lightning respectively here in Charlotte.