



Tuesday April 14, 2010

U16 ACADEMY TEAM WINS BOTH ON THE ROAD; U18's go 0-2

From Coach Gunn:

On Saturday the U16s played IMG Academy in very warm, humid conditions. The team started brightly and were able to create many chances in the first half. Most impressive was the way the players swapped and changed between positive direct play and patient build up work. Passes were crisp and well timed, and at times we played some very flowing soccer. The good play was rewarded in the fifteenth minute when Kyle Parker headed home an Austin Yearwood free-kick. The first half ended 1-0 despite several players coming close to doubling the lead. The second half started brightly again with Charlotte putting IMG on the back foot immediately. The second goal, and eventual game winner came in the fifty-fourth minute – another header from Kyle Parker. Ben Kern played a perfect ball forward for Ben Burdon to latch onto. Burdon lifted the ball over the oncoming keeper, only to see it bounce off the cross-bar. Parker was there to bury the rebound with a very smart diving header. IMG finally notched a goal with a well placed finish with ten minutes to go, but could not find a second way through a resilient Charlotte defense. The final result was a fair reflection of a well played game from start to finish.

On Sunday the 16s were hosted by the Clearwater Chargers. The first half saw the game played fairly evenly, with a few chances at both ends. In the second half Charlotte finally kicked into gear and stepped up the tempo. More pressure was put on the ball, and as a result Clearwater were defending more. The pressure paid off when Ben Kern floated a great cross in for Kyle Parker to challenge. Unfortunately for Clearwater the ball was helped home by a defender, but much credit could still be given for a good cross and great pressure. Charlotte came close with other chances, Clearwater defended well and gave as good as they got. By the later stages of the game either team could have easily added to the score line, but the game ended with the 1-0 shutout.

A very good weekend of play was rewarded with two more wins, with everyone on the trip playing important roles. Stefan Knapp and Jaron Bradley both earned wins with very solid performances, while all of the outfield players worked tirelessly through the heat and humidity.

From Coach Butler:

On Saturday we played a very good IMG team that had talent, skill and athleticism. We started well and combined well at times going forward. Our defending was good until the 26th minute when the right sided midfielder turned inside on to his left foot and curled home a special goal into the top right hand corner. We responded well when in the 33rd minute Robby Beatty hit a volley from the left side into the top right hand corner to make it 1-1. Unfortunately it was not to last long when a good shot from 20 yards out beat Nick Hensley. However, with the score 2-1 at half time we still felt we were in the game. After the break IMG started the livelier and added a third from a headed goal crossed from the right. Although we had chances we could not convert and IMG scored in the 90th minute to make it 4-1.

On Sunday we played in very hot conditions at the Clearwater Chargers and again found ourselves 1-0 down early in the game. The response was good as Brett Luccia combined for a 1-2 in the area and was hauled down in the 16th minute. He stepped up and converted the ensuing penalty. We let in a poor goal in the 39th minute when a long ball was not dealt with well and allowed the center forward to run at the team and shoot from distance to make it 2-1 at half time. We again lost concentration down our right side and let a Clearwater player wriggle down the line and cross to finish. We responded immediately when from the kick off Alex Leonard found Nick Barnhorst with a searching ball. Barnhorst lifted the ball over the advancing goal keeper to make it 3-2. It was not to be our day as Clearwater scored three more before the end in a 6-2 loss. Overall not a good weekend for the U18s. In both games they kept it close for long periods but failed to defend well enough to win the game. We must learn from these two defeats and make sure that we all take some responsibility.

The two teams next will play away on April 17 against Greensboro.



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