



Wednesday June 2, 2010

ACADEMY TEAMS RETURN FROM SPRING SHOWCASE

Wrap up from Sarasota Florida

The U16 game number one was against the Mustangs from California. We didn't really get firing on all cylinders with the ball, but still did enough to always be in the game. Our best scoring chance came from a header from Conor Keeley off a through ball from Drew Brown. With the keeper well beaten we were unlucky to see the ball bounce off the post to safety. Minutes later the Mustangs countered, put in a cross that wasn't cleared and then buried the rebound for the go ahead goal. From then on we tried to put our opponents under pressure but really couldn't find a way through. The final 1-0 score reflected a fairly unremarkable game.

Game two brought our second California opponents in the Santa Cruz Breakers. The game went back and forth in the first half, with both teams trying to push for dominance. Like the game before, we struggled a little to find our rhythm. Santa Cruz took the initiative with a well headed cross to take the lead into half-time. The second half was such a contrast from the first. Our players stepped into our opponents much more, made them rush their passes and as a result turn the ball over more. Gaining possession more often we then began to get a flow to our game. Our passing was much better, and overall our intensity and confidence on the ball was much improved. Asa Kryst tied the game with a powerfully struck shot, and from then on we pushed for the win. The game ended in a tie, but overall our boys did everything but win the game in the second half. Roland Minogue led the charge with a tremendous midfield display covering ground and linking the team.

We took to the pitch on the final day against Andromeda. Within minutes we were 1-0 up following a Nathaniel Goodwin goal. Zhuvonte Wilson crossed, Kyle Parker dummied, and Goodwin was there at the back post to finish. The team was buzzing and from then on it was one way traffic. Asa Kryst doubled the lead with a skillful left footed lob over the oncoming keeper after Roland Minogue had floated a through ball behind the Andromeda defense. Kryst made it three smashing home a wonderful strike after Wilson had played to Parker who then slipped Kryst through on goal. The first half finished 4-0 with Wilson skipping through the defense before slotting the ball home with ease. The second half saw more of the same with CSA dominating most of the play. Ben Burdon came on and put the icing on the cake with a well taken fifth. Andromeda left the game with a quality consolation goal from a very good individual run, but the final score of 5-1 was a fair reflection on the day's work.

Overall the trip was a major success. The win and tie looks to have put CSA into a very strong position for a wildcard bid for the play-offs, allowing us to go into the final league weekend with less pressure. One of the goals at the showcase was to continue to develop a flow to the game in the hot weather. After a tough start the boys really responded well and played fantastically through the final three halves of the trip. We defended well and looked after the ball in tough conditions. Next up are games against Virginia Rush and CASL as we try to secure second place and an automatic berth into the play-offs.

The U18 team also opened up with Mustang SC from Northern California. As the Academy program evolves better aspects are added and on this particular day Thomas Dooley and Claudio Reyna, both American World Cup veterans, watched our game. We played well, passing the ball and attacking in floods at time. Unfortunately we got no reward as both sides went in 0-0 at half time. It was much of the same in the second half but with no real cutting edge when going to goal. In the 67th minute we conceded from a set piece cross and header. We pushed for the equalizer, came close, but in doing so let a counter attacking goal in with seconds remaining in the game.

Our second game was against a very good passing team in the Santa Cruz Breakers, also from California. They loved to pass and also run with the ball and in turned proved to be a tough team to defend against. We probed the ball well but it was tough to maintain. We scored in the 18th minute when a long throw from Michael Nelli went straight through to the back post where Nick Barnhorst headed home. After the break the Breakers came at us and although we defended well we conceded in the 69th minute when we did not get close enough to the attacker and gave him too much time to get his shot off. At 1-1 we rolled our sleeves up and really went at the Breakers scoring a goal through Ben Burdon with little time left to win 2-1.

Our last game saw us play against Texas Soccer Club (Dallas Texans Huston). In what could have been a drab game we came out very well and took command of the game throughout the first half going close through Michael Nelli, Nick Barnhorst and Connor Miller. It was much the same in the second half with Preston Shahdad hitting the bar midway through the half. The game turned in the 80th minute when James Nero was adjudged to have fouled a Texas SC player 25 yards from goal. From the resulting free kick they scored and the game ended 1-0.

It was a good weekend for the U18s too, although we will not qualify for the play off we played very good soccer from start to finish. There were numerous college coaches in attendance at all of our games watching our players which is testament to them. It is now on to our final two games at home.

The two teams next will play June 5 & 6 at home against the Virginia Rush and CASL.



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