

## Under-12 Boys

Ajax 1, Schwaben 0 (OT)

Goals: Ajax- J. Alvarez

GK: Anderson (Ajax), Randazzo (SCH)

Jorge Alvarez was the player with the golden boots for Ajax on Sunday as he struck the wonder-goal in overtime to help defeat Schwaben 1-0 and give his club the Under-12 State Cup championship trophy. Alvarez and teammate Sean LaBahn peppered Schwaben keeper Anthony Randazzo for 60 minutes and throughout both extra periods. The keeper won most of the battles until Alvarez used a hint of a touch to get past Randazzo, who along with his backline mates, pleaded for an offside flag long after the game-winner.

"Schwaben played inspired soccer for the entire match," said Ajax coach Bora Petric. "We had an easy time with them the first time we played them, but today they came out and played with a lot of energy and passion to give us a great game." This match was an entertaining, well-played tournament final, with each side having glorious chances, keepers making brilliant goal-saving stops, and plenty of individual moments when it was hard to believe this was an Under-12 match.

LaBahn was as impressive as any on the pitch, using his ability to run crisp, meaningful runs to slice through the Schwaben defense and cause more than his share of trouble on the day. Runner-up Schwaben counted on the defensive work of Eric Gilbert, Ryan Toher, Sam Kaplan and Josh Galvin to stifle LeBahn and the others, while the speedy duo of Spencer Walton and Tommy Cerri did their best to trouble the Ajax back-line.

Ajax was most dangerous during the first half when Michael Plant, Sean Stevens and Kyle Lindberg would come forward to join the attack, but it was LaBahn and Alvarez later on who would provide the bulk of the touches in close. LaBahn would have a go on 3 straight possessions midway through the second-half before Schwaben's Walton headed a Cerri serve over the bar for their club's best chance of the half.

At the end of regulation, Brian Benjamin had Randazzo all to himself after being sent through, but his miss guaranteed overtime. Once there, both sides played it coy, until Marshall Hollingsworth broke free and in on Anderson, only to see his point-blank drive knocked down by the Ajax keeper. Alvarez made sure this match did not go to PK's when he came in all alone with just 2 minutes to go. "It was an unbelievable soccer match but one that I thought we deserved to win," added Petric.

## U12-Girls Final

Eclipse Select 4, Homer Hawks 0

Goals: Eclipse - Pappalardo, Thomas, Manso, own goal

GK: Morgan (E), Podwell (H)

The meteoric rise of the upstart Homer Hawks in the Under-12 girls division ended abruptly on Sunday morning when the Eclipse Select defeated the Hawks 4-0 to win the State Cup championship in their age group. Carly Manso had a hand in 3 of the 4 strikes the Eclipse were to score, including the 3rd goal of the match just moments after intermission, which proved to be a huge emotional swing for both clubs.

"We've been a second-half team all season, but that quick goal after the break really took the wind out of our sails," explained Homer head coach Rick Lakie, who watched his club advance into the final after defeating the Comets by a score of 2-1.

The victors showed the effects of a tough semi-final match (against the Sockers) struggling in the opening quarter hour, but finally awoke by finding the back of the net twice in a 3-minute span to seal their title.

"We knew the first 10-15 minutes would be tough for the girls because of what they all had to go through on Saturday," began Eclipse head coach Meghan Dames, "but once they got (their) legs, it was our match."

It was too much Manso, and the rest of the Eclipse talent for the Hawks, who looked to counter the ability of their ability, and build their attack by playing over the top for the quick strike. However, the defensive trio of Kara Morway, Erin Holland and Kaila Mack did well to keep everything in front of them, and keeper Kylie Morgan won most 50-50 balls during the 60 minutes of play.

Manso's serve to a willing Olivia Pappalardo proved to be the eventual game-winner at 15 minutes. Then 3 minutes later, a free-kick from Manso allowed Crystal Thomas to calmly bring down the helper, then find the back of the net. Manso finally was rewarded for all of her work early in the match when she broke free just after the second-half whistle to make it 3-0.

Homer keeper Alyssa Powell make a terrific stop on Mahlea Babjak moments after the Manso strike, but she had little chance late in the match on an own goal in which Erin Holland, Lauren Hall and Haley Johnson all helped create.

"It was great to get a lead, which allowed us to get everyone into the match to gain some valuable experience in a State Cup championship match," Dames would say. "We came in as the obvious underdog, but the girls never let down or gave up," said Lakie, "and we are all very proud of their accomplishment."

#### Under-13 Boys

#### Naperville Lightning 2, Chicago Wind Nationals 1

A second straight final ended in spectacular style. Elliot Totsch, showing a flair for the dramatic, smashed home a stunning long-range drive from 40 yards to hammer home the game-winner against the Chicago Wind Nationals to give the Naperville Lightning their second State Cup championship in as many years. Last season, the Lightning defeated Bloomingdale 4-0 in the championship match in the Under-12 age group.

The Under-13 champ, who had defeated the Nationals by identical 2-1 decisions in each of their last 2 meetings, raced out to meet their hero Totsch just seconds after the final whistle sounded to end what had been a breathtaking 70 minutes of soccer. "We talked all season about getting here, and into the finals again. Then I watched as each and every player, at each position on the field, give 125% effort to their teammates and themselves," said a proud Naperville head coach Brian Kibler.

The Lightning appeared to be headed towards the runner-up spot on the podium after Nationals striker Cameron Offer came down the right flank to find the far inside netting with a cracker from 14 yards just 2 minutes into the match. The Nationals had the better run of things for the first quarter hour of play as Offer and his running mate Mario Castenon forced the Lightning to defend far more than they would have liked. With Luis Barajas running out of the middle, creating and distributing, it seemed the Nationals were prepared to put their opponents away for good before they could mount an attack of their own.

"We were blasted by them (6-0) the very first time we played them, so we know they're capable of scoring a lot of goals," Kibler would say in his pre-match interview. Both Barajas and Alexander Dinca would rattle the woodwork on separate occasions, as the Nationals continued to attack as they looked to increase their lead. However, their inability to find the back of the net one more time before the break eventually cost them. Carson Stafford and Austin Zamora worked a 2 v 1 perfectly to allow Stafford to unload a blast off of keeper Jacob Ginsburg's glove and into the back of the net at 30 minutes.

After intermission, it was clear Stafford's strike gave his club an extra jolt of high octane fuel as they now held the run of the play for most of the second-half while playing stout defense. The Lightning limited the Nationals to just a few good looks at keeper Jonathan Rosenbaum, who

would make a big stop late against a left-footed drive from Dinca. With regulation just a heartbeat away from ending, Totsch came forward to deliver a free-kick at the far touchline in hopes of something good happening. Well, it did.

"I was just looking to get a good serve into the box and maybe finding someone's (head) or get a corner," said a low-keyed Totsch, who still appeared a little dazed long after the post-match celebration. Much to the surprise of Totsch and his teammates, his curving, well-paced left-footed serve would find the upper right corner of the Nationals' net and send the Naperville cheering section into a frenzy. "How about that kid Elliot?" said Kibler. "Yesterday, in the 69th minute, he converts the game-winning PK to defeat the Magic and get us into the final. Today in the 70th minute, he's a hero again... just amazing."

#### Under-13 Girls Final

Eclipse Select 4, Hurricane Premier 0

Goals: Eclipse- Pappas, Rabushka, Ragins, Daly

GK: Amari (E), Hargadon (H)

After capturing a State Cup title last season at Under-12, the Eclipse rolled to a 4-0 victory over the Hurricane Premier on Sunday to earn the crown at Under-13. The victory, in part, was due to the efforts of Haley Pike with her superb serves off set pieces and dead-balls that broke down the defense of the Hurricane throughout the match.

"We have been working on (trying) to score off of corners and free-kicks a lot lately, so it was great to be able to do that today," said an excited Pike whose inward swing corner from the far flag at 13 minutes led to the first goal of the match. Pike's serve to the spot was kept alive by teammate Haley Cooper, which would allow Carli Pappas to fire from close range and past Hurricane keeper Darcy Hargadon who had no chance to challenge. Pike was part of a defensive backline which included Kathleen Kane and Katie Swift that was given the task of making sure both Kate Dunaway and Danielle Vujovic stayed marked and away from keeper Nicole Amari for 70 minutes.

The striker duo of the Hurricanes brought a lot of energy and speed up top, but that slowly evaporated as the combination of the Eclipse's ability to defend and control the midfield made it virtually impossible for its opponent to connect with any frequency. After intermission, the Eclipse broke open a close match by striking 3 goals, the first coming 8 minutes after the break when Audrey Rabushka was the beneficiary of a wonderful helper from Georgiana Wagemann. Allison Ragins, who along with Rabushka and Wagemann, scored in last year's Under-12 final, converted on a rebound (save) on an original blast from Wagemann, which Hargadon turned away initially. Moments before Ragins' score, the Hurricane had its best chance of the match when Jackie Alyinovich ran onto a 50-50 ball just ahead of Amari to head into the back of the net before colliding with Amari.

Unfortunately for the Hurricanes, the flag had been raised long before this exciting sequence to signal offsides. Pike would get help in the 69th minute off another corner that would find an awaiting Lindsey Daly.

"This is a great win for this team because of everything it went through," offered head coach Meghan Dames. "Back in the fall, they had a rough go of it with injuries and subsequent results which allowed our opponents to begin to doubt our ability. But the girls never believed that (talk).. only believing in themselves, and today it really showed what type of group of players they really are."

#### Under-14 Boys Final

Chicago Wind Nationals 4, Sockers FC Chicago 3 (PK's)

Goals: Nationals- Guitierrez, Guitierrez, Noval; Sockers- Hollander, Lewytskyj, Boswell

GK: Alfaro (CW), Storm (Sockets)

Not a better script could have been written for the under-14 boys final. Chicago Wind goalkeeper Mario Alfaro, who experienced the highs and lows of his position throughout this terrific match, ended his emotional roller-coaster ride in the fast lane when he struck the winning penalty kick in the 5th round to give the Nationals the win over the favored Chicago Sockets. The Nationals defeated the Sockets 4-3 after a 4-2 margin in penalty shoot-out in a nerve-shredding match that saw each side strike early and often, then incredibly once each in over-time, to set-up Alfaro's heroics.

"It was an unreal soccer match to watch," said long-time Sockets' head coach Batata. "It was so interesting to see the dynamics change, back-and-forth between each team during the match, and to watch from my own side how our guys worked through some difficult times to come back and have a chance to win."

From the onset, it appeared fans were watching a softball game instead of a soccer match as goals rained down from both sides, putting backlines from both clubs on the alert, and raising keepers' stress levels. The Nationals strike force of T-Marco Guitierrez and Bryan Noval, who would each go long spells of high level work, combined to give their club the lead at 6 minutes when Noval would send his teammates through to go easily under keeper Alec Storm.

However, James Hollander drew the Sockets even with a cracking blast in the upper right corner from 20 yards at 9 minutes. The Sockets took their first lead of the match on a brilliant goal made possible by a clever, well-timed center channel run from Nick Lewytskyj who thumped a superb serve from Matt Maturano past an unsuspecting Alfaro in the 21st minute.

But the Sockets were unable to enjoy their short-lived lead when Guitierrez leveled things once again 3 minutes later to bring this match to a 2-2 draw heading into intermission. Both Storm and Alfaro did well to soak up the pressure their opponents threw at them after the break, as each side felt more confident in its attack and more urgent as the second-half went deeper. The Nationals saw a go-ahead strike from Noval waved off by an offside at 45 minutes and then watched a Guitierrez's blast rattle the woodwork moments later.

Alec Storm showed great confidence challenging off his line just after the aforementioned sequence to stop a point-blank drive by Noval to keep things even and help send this match to its two-10 minute overtime periods. Once there, Alfaro turned away a sure goal with an acrobatic save against Josh Pirahmadi from 10 yards. Then he watched teammate Pablo Pesa setup Noval just before the first overtime period ended. But Alfaro's euphoria ended just moments into the second OT when a long serve to the spot was fumbled away by the Nationals' keeper and quickly headed in by the Sockets' Chris Boswell.

Once in shoot-out, the drain from 90 minutes of high-energy soccer began to take its toll on shooters from both clubs as wild shots over the bar, from the Sockets on two occasions, and an easy attempt shot directly at Storm made the score 3-2 in favor of the Nationals heading into the 5th round.

Alfaro made his breakthrough shot with a piercing blast high into the back of the net to set-off a wild celebration, which continued long after the Nationals accepted their State Cup championship trophy. "It feels great right now, especially after giving away that goal which tied up the match," said a smiling Alfaro. "I really should have caught that ball, but I didn't make my decision quick enough to challenge and take-charge. But it was great to have a chance to win the match for us in PK's."

Under-14 Girls Final

Eclipse 2, Windy City Pride 1 (OT)

Goals: Eclipse- Aiello (PK), Laxgang (PK); Pride- Scott (PK)

GK: Barranco (E), Boyle (WC)

There's a whole lot of history between the Eclipse and Windy City Pride on the pitch, so it was no surprise when the championship match at Under-14 went to over-time to decide it all. The Eclipse broke the hearts of the Pride when Vanessa Laxgang converted a PK just 5 minutes into the first extra period to insure a 2-1 victory in a match with all of the points coming from penalty kick opportunities.

"As a coach, you never really want PK's to decide a big match like this, but when you look back at the match (itself), it really was a very good soccer match between two very good sides," said Pride head coach Ko Thanadabouth.

"This age group seems to always be an interesting one for us," smiled a relieved Eclipse head coach Rory Dames, who has seen an Eclipse team lose the last two seasons in the Under-14 championship match. "I guess because of what's happened to us (lately) and against (Ko), I am not surprised that our match came down to three separate PK conversions."

Off a furious first quarter hour of play, one would have thought this match would have finished in favor of Windy City, as Emily Scott, Allison Kaim and Katie Nasenbenny each stated their case for player-of-the-match with their individual play. Nasenbenny unloaded a blast in the opening minutes that forced Eclipse GK Samantha Barranco to punch over the woodwork as she prevented a would-be strike. Then it was Scott who hit the top of the roof from 12 yards after she tricked her way inside 12 yards. That, combined with plenty of pace and work away from the ball by Kaim gave the Eclipse defense all it could handle off the opening whistle.

"They (Windy City) got in a few times (early). Then we got in (Christy Patterson and Nicole Aiello) on a couple of chances in the second half and in overtime. But it was one of those games which didn't produce a whole lot of chances in regulation or overtime," Dames would say. Aiello would convert on her PK attempt at the hour mark to make it 1-0 but the Pride, and in particular Scott, would take advantage of a generous extension of injury time to hit the equalizer at 74 minutes.

"We thought an additional 3 minutes was added but when we were looking for the whistle for the match, Emily (Scott) finished her PK attempt," offered Dames. "We thought we had the better run of things for big portions of the match, but we didn't get any really good quality chances to finish on," said Thanadabouth.

Under-15 Boys Final – RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-15 Girls Final

Team Chicago Pizazz 3, Eclipse Select 2 (7-6 PK shoot-out)

Goals- Team Chicago- Fortune, Short; Eclipse- Chelsea, Cooper

GK: Hanold (TC), Vancil (E)

Make it 4 in a row for the Pizazz. Casey Short was on target when it counted for Team Chicago, scoring once in overtime. Then converting the match-winning kick in shoot-out to give the Pizazz a 7-6 edge and the girls state championship at under-15.

"The (core) group of this team has been together for a long time, so this is a great way to go out by winning our 4th straight State Cup title," said a proud Hudson Fortune, Team Chicago's head coach. Fortune found it next to impossible to list all of this club's accomplishments and individual successes while making his way over to the IYSA tent to watch his club accept the championship trophy, but he knows he and his staff have given his players the best training possible, and a great send-off as many of them will be part of an anticipated merger with Eclipse.

The Pizazz appeared relaxed and comfortable on the ball during the opening quarter hour of play in which they dominated and stayed that way even after the Eclipse took the lead at 13 minutes when Rachel Quon delivered a wonderful serve to the spot for teammate Cline Chelsea who showed great poise to thump a header into the back of the net. The Chelsea strike was one of the few highlights from the Eclipse attack, which struggled for long periods of play as the Team Chicago defense proved nearly impossible to break. Allie Vernon, Heather Marik and Erin

Jacobsen were a terrific three-some along the backline for the Pizazz while its counterparts on the other side, Lauren Mathy, Kellie Gavigan and Mallory Feece deserve praise for soaking up over 100 minutes of pressure.

Team Chicago's Leah Fortune drew her club even in regulation, but Fortune, along with the aforementioned Short, and a dynamic midfield could have struck for more if not for some bad luck, as well as the Eclipse's defensive tactics. In the second 15-minute overtime period, the Pizazz struck first when Short chipped Eclipse keeper Taylor Vancil after reaching a long free-kick before Hanold would. With the match nearing an end, Libby Cooper guaranteed the shoot-out when she unloaded a cracker from 25 yards just inside the near post.

Both sides were near perfect in the shoot-out, with each club missing just once in its first 7 attempts. Claire Hanold would stop Ali Hall in round 8 to set-up Short's heroics, and the ODP midfielder did not disappoint by blasting a well-paced shot off Vancil's glove for the victory.

Under-16 Boys Final – RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-16 Girls Final – RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-17 Boys Final – RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-17 Girls Final – RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-18 Boys Final

Chicago Magic 87/88 4, Sockers FC Chicago 1

Goals: Magic- Masteller, Kolzow, De LaCerde, De LaCerde; Sockers- Carden(PK)

GK: Rickman (Magic), Gullo, Claxton (Sockers)

The Chicago Magic asserted themselves right from the start, and its opponent, Sockers FC Chicago melted under the onslaught as the Magic rolled to a 4-1 victory Sunday morning in Rockford to capture the Under-18 boys state title.

Luis De LaCerde produced a pair of scoring strikes after intermission to put this match away for good but it was teammates Andy Masteller, Steve Kolzow and captain Kyle Knotek who helped cut through their opponents defense, time after time, in the first 45 minutes which helped set the tone in this match. "In matches with the Sockers, it's usually played very tight... with one goal being the difference in the end," began the NIU-bound Knotek. "But the great thing about this team is that each and every player enjoys being a part of the team, playing with each other, while playing with a lot of energy. That energy (boost) we had coming out today really seemed to be too much for the Sockers today."

Kolzow almost opened the scoring shortly after kick-off when he headed a De LaCerde serve off the side netting just 4 minutes in. He and his teammates had a chance to celebrate just after the quarter hour mark when Masteller and Hunter Van Houten combined to record a spectacular goal. Van Houten's long crossfield freekick initiated from the far touchline found an unmarked Masteller at the far post where he would redirect with a crashing header past a helpless Sockers' keeper Jim Gullo.

"That early goal gave us a great start and really sent a message that we came to play today," commented Knotek. Kolzow's mechanical timing and patience made it 2-0 when he waited long enough for Gullo to challenge off his line before going under the Sockers' keeper from 12 yards to make it 2-0 at the 47th minute. Kozlow and Masteller each recorded helpers on De LaCerde's first strike after the duo kept things alive inside the Sockers' box long enough for their teammate to finish in the end. Then the Magic striker made it 4-0 just after the hour mark.

With the match well in hand, it gave head coach John Hannon a chance to rest his first-11, and keep them stay healthy and card free. A late penalty-kick conversion from Lucas Carden prevented Magic's keeper Patrick Rickman from recording the shutout.

Both clubs advanced into the Midwest Regional tournament hosted this summer by Fox Cities in Wisconsin, with each having an eye on the national championship tournament in Des Moines, Iowa in mid-July.

Under-18 Girls Final - RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-19 Boys Final - RECAP UNAVAILABLE

Under-19 Girls Final - RECAP UNAVAILABLE