

US YOUTH SOCCER PRESIDENTS CUP NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Schaumburg & Ajax Advance To Presidents Cup Championships

Chris Jamroz,
Illinois Youth Soccer

After winning the 2010/11 Illinois Presidents Cup, the following teams moved on to represent Illinois at the 2011 Midwest Presidents Cup:

- ! FC United Premier (U14 Girls)
- ! Little Illinois Soccer Club (U14 Boys)
- ! GLSA Libertyville Premier Orange (U15 Girls)
- ! Little Illinois Soccer Club (U15 Boys)
- ! Schaumburg Premier (U16 Girls)
- ! Little Illini Soccer Club (U16 Boys)
- ! O'Fallon Kixx (U17 Boys)

Because O'Fallon could not attend the US Youth Soccer Presidents Cup Midwest Regional Championships, U17 Boys Finalists Rock Run attended the events as did U16 Girls finalists, Ajax FC, who played in the Girls U17 Division.

"Just as it was sinking in (that Ajax had lost in the State finals), we were offered the opportunity to represent our state as a U17 in the Regionals," Carlos Carrillo, Ajax FC head coach said. "I immediately accepted knowing that we were able to compete in the division."

And compete they did, winning their opening round game 2-1 over St Louis Scott Gallagher Red of Missouri. From there on, the youngest team in the age division rolled thru the competition allowing only one more goal in the tournament and outscoring their final two opponents 7-0, including the 2-0 win in the championship match over the Thoroughbreds of Kentucky.

"We went in with the mindset that we had nothing to lose and everything to win," said Carrillo. "Our girls really believed that, and as we faced good teams our girls worked hard and played smart. Making it to the championship game at Regionals was a huge accomplishment but the competitor that I am, I wasn't going to allow them to just be satisfied with just getting to the championship game. It was an unbelievable feeling to win the Regional final and know that we were on our way to the National Championships."

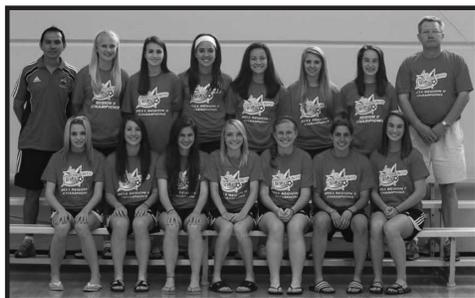
The team that defeated Ajax in the state finals, Schaumburg Premier, was also fighting their way to a Midwest Regional Championship. With only four teams in the U16 Girls Division, the Regional champ would be determined by the winner of group play. Schaumburg ensured their trip to Des Moines for the US Youth Soccer Presidents Cup National Championship by winning each of their three group games, each by a one goal.

"It felt like a dream come true," said Tressa Palcheck, a member of Schaumburg Premier. "No one on our team could even believe that we were actually headed to a National Tournament. Winning a Regional Championship was something that had never been accomplished by any of us or any of the teams in our club. We were extremely proud to win and winning each of our games at Regionals by one goal, was a great stepping stone for Nationals."

Although no other teams won Regional titles, all played very well and FC United Premier advanced to the final match in the U14 Girls Division, falling 2-0 to Tri-State Premier of Ohio-South, who later advanced to the finals at the National Championships.

The 2011 US Youth Soccer National Championships were held in Des Moines, IA and featured four teams in each of the age groups, with the top two teams in group play competing for a second time for the National title.

Riding the momentum of their one-goal victories at Regionals, Schaumburg Premier opened the National Championships with a 1-0 win over Penn Legacy Black of



U16 Girls Midwest Champions: Schaumburg Premier

Alexa Ben, Alyssa Berry, Stephanie Buga, Rachel Garippo, Colleen Geller, Amanda Kelly, Alexandra Kuykendall, Emily Longo, Victoria Marinelli, Tressa Palcheck, Kayla Severinsen, Rachel Turuc, Stephanie Washko, Drew Wentzel, Riley Williams; Coaches: Charlie Wentzel & Alex Pavon



U15 Boys State Champions: Little Illini Soccer Club

Tony Castro, Saul Downie, Eziquio Flores, Darian Gingold, Randall Hornbaker, Caine Huart, Vanji Moise, Lucas Newman-Johnson, Jack Thurman, Robert Welch, Diamond Williams, Ryan Withers, Jiayu Yao, Jack Young; Coaches: John Moore & Andrew Peralta



U17 Girls Midwest Champions: Ajax FC

Emily Bromagen, Jessie Conkright, Kaitlyn DeLa Cruz, Veronica Frey, Cassidy Hacker, Jillian Hettfleisch, Allison Kightly, Rebecca Knodell, Bianca Rivera, Kristina Schroeder, Meredith Seidel, Emma Smith; Coach: Carlos Carrillo



U17 Boys State Champions: O'Fallon Kixx

Kyle AuBuchon, Jacob Brauer, Dillon Czech, Benjamin Edith, Evan Figueroa, Blayne Fullem, Steve Green, Lukas Harrison, Ryan McLean, Roman Meduga, Taylor Michel, Kyle Pierson, Chris Rowland, Kyle Szopa, Dylan Tenladdo, Andrew Wise, Nathan Zeisset; Coach: Jared Eden

“The Presidents Cup was such a great experience that I’ve already recommended it to many friends coaching in other clubs and to teams in our own club. It definitely gives every team the opportunity to compete. I know our parents, players and myself will never forget it.”

-Carlos Carrillo

Ajax FC Head Coach

Pennsylvania. They found themselves on the wrong end of a one-goal differential in game two falling to AHFC 95G Blue of South Texas. Needing a win to get into the finals, Schaumburg was overpowered by eventual champion Super Nova of Idaho 8-0.

Their 1-1-1 record earned them a rematch against Penn Legacy in the third place match, which Schaumburg won on PK's.

"The competition at Nationals had an intensity that I don't think anyone on the team had ever seen before," Palcheck said. "Everyone was talented and everyone deserved to be

there. It was crazy because we knew we would have to play our best games ever, because everyone else was good too."

In the U17 division, one win earned you a spot in the finals and Ajax FC took care of that with in the opening round game with a 2-1 win over Bucks Mount Blazers of Pennsylvania. A final record of 1-1-1 in group play set-up a rematch with La Roca Premier of Utah, the team that had beaten them 2-1 in the last group play game, for the U17 National Presidents Cup title. Unfortunately La Roca was able to persevere again taking home a 3-1 win and the National title.

"I believe Utah and Illinois were the two best teams," Carrillo said. "In the National Championship game we played well and created many opportunities that I believe could have put the game away in the first half. But, in the game of soccer you don't win by creating opportunities, you win by scoring goals which is what Utah did."

The Presidents Cup provides teams an alternative to the US Youth Soccer National Championship series. It allows talented teams from smaller clubs the chance to play for a State, Regional or National title which they otherwise may not get, which it did for Schaumburg Premier, Ajax FC and all the Illinois teams that played in the event.

"(The Presidents Cup) offer teams a confidence builder, notoriety and it is a very good item for college exposure," Charlie Wentzel, Schaumburg Premier Head Coach said. "I would absolutely recommend it to other teams like ours that are good enough to compete in State Cup but it is unrealistic for us to beat (the top-level clubs)."

"I thought the experience as a whole was really great," Palcheck said. "Not only did the team receive some high

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including getting the best of his next 1-on-1 match-up against Roman by making a spectacular diving stop at the 21st minute.

Roman would only be contained for so long though, as another dazzling solo run ended with him juking past a diving Perez-Lopez and sending the go-ahead score to the back of the net 32 minutes in.

An intense and physical second half, saw bodies from both sides flying all over, sending many players off for ice packs and many trips onto the field by the medical staff carts.

The Magic looked to gain a two goal advantage on their first possession of the second half, but Mathew Swift prevented that by backing up his keeper and kicking a potential score off the

goalline. Calum Bishop, Fernando Aguirre and Renato Albuquerque started to gain momentum and confidence as the second half wore on, leading the Magic's offensive attack and providing a plethora of offensive chances for their side.

"Sockers is a great team that we respect," said Valle. "The instructions to the boys (for the second half) were simple, do not forget what happened in the MRL Championships. After a good first half, we had a drop and ended up losing that game. We did not want that to happen again, and we needed to keep the intensity until the end."

Roman's third goal was set-up by Albuquerque, who found Roman streaking into the box for the match's final score, placed the ball precisely in front of him leading him to an effortless shot and a 3-1 Magic lead at the 56th minute.

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half," McElligott said "We had a great first five minutes of the game and got the early goal, but after that I thought the rest of the first half was pretty much 50-50 with both teams creating chances"

In the second half, Catalano, Christian Hanock-Berhanu and Lloyd Chatfield looked to get the Fire

offense going but the aggressiveness was matched my the Mayas twin attack of Jose and Sergio Fuentes.

Not only did the twins seem to ignite the Mayas attack but corner and set kicks opened scoring chances for the Mayas but despite getting quality shots and looks they were unable to convert any of those chances.

The Fire was able to extend their lead to 3-0 when

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chance from out wide, hitting the post. Another play from Stork came from his own awareness on the field when he flicked the ball with his head to himself—putting him in the position to take Sockers keeper Alex Ruckstaetter on 1v1, who made a brilliant diving save

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exposure but we were also able to stepped our game and play at a much more competitive level. The Presidents Cup was really a great opportunity for us to improve ourselves and grow closer together."

"The Presidents Cup was such a great experience that I've already recommended it to many friends coaching in other clubs and to teams in our own club," said Carrillo.

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NSA keeper Jessica Phillips.

The match suddenly turned into a spectacle of offensive skill, where both teams battled until the whistle blew, and the regulation periods had come to a close with a 1-1 tie.

"When we scored to tie the game everyone was pumped, yet nervous going into overtime. The coaches wanted us to score quick goals and hold NSA back. The pressure was on, but it didn't seem to faze anyone," said Stuenkel.

Once the first overtime period began, both teams seemed focused and determined to put the first goal on the board.

Eclipse West was able to absorb the advice given by their coach in order to reach that objective. McCoy, being a huge offensive threat herself, also had a deadly talent: a flip throw. She used her skill to chuck the ball to the opposite side of the box where it plummeted onto the foot of Aspyn Repp, who powered the ball into the back of the net.

This put Eclipse up early in the overtime period 2-1, but they still had to endure the duration of the overtime.

In the 108th minute a free kick was

while colliding with the oncoming Stork. "I would like to congratulate Sockers for the great effort and for being a great opponent. And to my players and their parents, I would like to thank them for their support and commitment to the program," Valle commented.

"Joining the Presidents Cup was the best decision. It definitely gives every team the opportunity to compete. I know our parents, players and myself will never forget it."

The Girls Presidents Cup is currently underway, registration for the Boys tournament, played in spring, is now available online. For more details go to Events under the main menu of www.illinoisyouthsoccer.org

awarded to Eclipse in their own half. The ball soared up to the top of the 18-yard-box where Maya Neal was waiting to challenge. She captured the attention of the NSA's back line and goal keeper while managing to flick the ball over to McCoy, who made a streaking run and found herself with an empty net putting her team up 3-1.

Abbie Boswell and Lexi Pelafas of NSA still remained unwavering as they kept pressing for a goal. Boswell provided a corner that went into the net, but unfortunately the wind initially had carried the ball out of bounds as it hung over the cross bar, so the goal was called back.

In the second overtime to seal the lead for Eclipse West, McCoy had found herself 1v1 making her run from half field. She ran side by side with an NSA defender who miscleared the ball into the back of her own net for the 4-1 score.

"Everyone on the team was so relieved. We all felt the own goal sealed the deal for us winning. We all learned that our hard work in this game really paid off," said Stuenkel.

"Personally, I am glad we learned that because when games get harder we all need to think about the NSA game. From being down 1 to 0 to winning 4 to 1 in overtime."

Catalano was tripped up inside the box by Jose Alvarado, resulting in a PK that Catalano converted to the low right of the goal.

Red and yellow cards against the Mayas resulted in Cicero having to play two-men down for the duration of the match, allowing the Fire to control possession and run out the clock.