

Aurora Youth Soccer Girls win premiere international tournament



By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Youth Soccer Club was represented at the Under-12 Girls level last week at the Schwan's USA Cup in Minnesota.

By the end of the weekend, they were the champions of the largest youth soccer tournament in the Western Hemisphere.

The 2004 Stingers met players from around the world in a week-long visit to the international tournament, featuring almost 1,200 teams from 19 different states and 19 countries. During the opening ceremonies last Tuesday, the team was given the opportunity to meet players from Japan, Argentina, Brazil, and Hawaii, exchanging pins and taking pictures before the real action began.

That same day the Stingers opened the tournament against the Orono Thunder of Minnesota, dominating in a 5 ? 1 victory. They followed up with draws against Minneapolis United and Blaine Fury, both also from Minnesota, to conclude an undefeated group play and finish at the top of their standings.

Entering the knockout rounds as the top seed, the Stingers first met with the eighth-ranked Maplebrook Impact, the 2015 Schwan's Cup champions. The defending champs' run was ended early.

?AYSC handled their Quarter Final game extremely well,? said Assistant Coach Anna Bisogno-Coutts. ?While showing off a very good brand of soccer that had to be one of, if not the best, in the tournament.?

A rematch with the Blaine Fury was scheduled for the semifinal matchup, who had finished the group stage tied with the Stingers but fell to second as a result of goals-for. This rematch was a cakewalk for the Aurora squad, who completely dominated a 7 ? 2 game.

After five days, the tournament came down to the championship match on Saturday against Centennial Explosion from Lino Lakes, Minnesota. Poor weather conditions made the situation even tenser.

?Severe thunderstorms had tournament play suspended for long hours,? said Bisogno-Coutts. ?The girls waited patiently in the team hotel to find out when or if they would be able to play their championship game. What was supposed to be a 3 p.m. kick-off turned to 5.45 p.m.?

The game kicked off with the weather improving, yet neither team could get on the board in the first half.

With only six minutes remaining on the clock, Aurora was able to slide one in past the Centennial keeper, and held the lead for the remainder of the game.

“Centennial was the best team the AYSC came up against,” said Bisogno-Coutts. “A very similar brand of soccer. The game was fast, creative and free flowing from both sides. It was a nail biter right to the finish.”

The U12 Girls were the third Aurora team to bring home the award.

Bisogno-Coutts credits the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) program of the AYSC to the team's success.

“In 2012 when the new LTPD “no scores and standings” rules began, the 04's were the first group to fall under this new system at the Aurora Youth Soccer Club, a system which was disliked by many but that the club continued to enforce. To watch how these girls play now at the age of 12 is proof that LTPD does work.”

To learn more about the program, visit www.aysc.ca.