

AYSC's June Fest celebrates club's Golden Anniversary



By Jeff Doner

For 50 years the Aurora Youth Soccer Club has given many of Aurora's finest young athletes a safe and fun environment to learn and play the game of soccer.

In conjunction with their annual June Festival, the AYSC had a massive celebration commemorating their anniversary, with over 3,000 house league soccer players from ages five to 18 taking part.

"I think that June Festival overall was a huge success and I think it had a lot to do with the weather," said AYSC promotions director, Louise Dyer. "It just went really smoothly and the birthday party celebration part was just great. From the club perspective we all thought it was a big success."

All weekend teams battled for tournament supremacy at various soccer fields throughout Aurora and wrapped up the championship games on Sunday afternoon.

But Saturday was the real party, with dignitaries attending a ceremony that included MP Lois Brown, Mayor Geoff Dawe, along with several Councillors, who both presented plaques recognizing the club for their 50 years of service to the community.

"Looking at the 50th anniversary, which is an incredible milestone, you look at the thousands of kids that we've put through and all the kids that earned and enjoyed scholarships," said AYSC public relations director, Roy Cohen. "It's very gratifying, because I've been associated with this club for about 15 years and the culture change in regards to being more open to having everyone participate has been great."

Aside from plenty of game play on Saturday, there was also plenty for the whole family, including ice cream, bouncy castles, competitions, face painting, a DJ and much more.

When the sun went down, the fun didn't stop. The U15 girls and two U15 boys teams banded together and split up to make two teams for a big matchup that went late into the night on Saturday.

"They had a great time," said U15 girls coach, Paul Cunningham. "We made our way to the turf around 10 p.m. and then they played with and against the two U15 boys teams. The girls were taking on the boys and it was quite a game really. That game ended at about midnight and then the girls just kept on playing afterwards. It was a great night and a lot of fun."

After the championship games were all completed on Sunday, the event wrapped up with a game that featured some celebrity cache.

Former TFC players Jim Brennan, Danny Dichio and Paul Stalteri all stopped by to take part in the coach's game.

?It was just a great night Sunday,? Cunningham recalled. ?The rain stayed away for us and the turnout we had, there was about 32 coaches, players and celebrities and quite a few people came out to watch. It was a great night.?

The June Festival is over until next year, but the fun is really just beginning with the soccer season finally getting into the swing of things.

For more information on the AYSC and their soccer programs, visit www.aysc.ca