

Under 9 - 98 Blues



Front row (from left to right): Jacob Briand, Alek Kanwisher, Anthony Tannous, Carter Faust, Ryan Csapo, Erik Kanwisher and Matthew Renaud;

Back row (from left to right): Javier Escoto, Adam Thompson, Christian D'Agnillo, Johnny Nikolovski, Colin Penney, Anthony Scussolin and Bogdan Suci;

Coach: Saso Nikolovski

WINDSOR STRIKERS '98

GREAT LAKES SOCCER LEAGUE - SPRING SEASON

First competitive experience proved to be disappointing for many players and their parents. Playing versus two and a half years older teams (on an average) is just not wise. Our players need environment in which they can learn through challenges and success. Challenge was too great, so the success was absent. It brought frustration which prompted many parents to look somewhere else to engage their children in sport.

My suggestion for next generations of players of this age group: Form teams of 11 players on the roster (three teams, if needed) which will play in the league of teams of the same age and similar quality (or little bit better).

Playing versus much bigger, heavier, stronger and faster, but not technically skilful, even sometimes clumsy kids, is not benefiting our players in learning soccer, or even having good time, as sometimes it is not safe for them. Children at this age are very emotional and we need to be very careful when designing program for them.

CANTON TOURNAMENT

We played in the third division (of the four), but all of the teams were very strong. This proves that this competition is of very high quality. We played the same age teams, which made this to be much closer and more interesting contest.

WINDSOR SOCCER CLUB - HOUSE LEAGUE U10

In this competition we had little more success. Erosion of self esteem from the fact that we didn't win any games yet was having impact on the team's performance at this competition, as I believe we could do better.

WOODSTOCK TOURNAMENT

June 16th was the date of our first game of the tournament and our first win as a team! We played the hosts of the tournament and the score was 4:3. It was very close game and very exciting indeed. Even though the opponent was very physical, we proved that good technique and determination can win the game.

LONDON TOURNAMENT

We repeated the success from Woodstock, by winning our first game again. The other two games were pretty close, but the end result was we could not win.

After this tournament eight players left the team, but we were fortunate that two new players joined the team, so we could play our games in the Fall season of GLSL. Requirement to travel to U.S. for every game was too much for some of the parents. Having negative winning record was also a factor in many parent's decision to leave the team. Too long program, with almost 80 practices and almost 40 games was commitment many parents could not afford, although the season was clearly outlined to them during the try-outs.

GREAT LAKES SOCCER LEAGUE - FALL SEASON

With one crossover game left to finish the season as of the time of writing this report, we have a record of 6 wins and 3 losses. This time playing versus one and a half year older teams (on an average), we did much better than in the Spring season. Technical skills improved dramatically, tactical awareness was more mature, emotional toughness was evident. Physical fitness is worth of special mentioning. Having a roster of 8 players, it was given that we played all of the games without substitutions. But we had games that we played with 7, 6 and even 5 players, and we were winning those games! Especially is remarkable our win of 6:1 in Livonia with only 5 players versus 8 of almost two years older kids.

It seems that team played even better when playing with fewer than 8 players. The sense of solidarity for each other, interdependency on each other, and especially the sense of something big is in making if they win, showed their mental fitness to be matched only by the best professional athletes. I congratulate to all of them from the bottom of my heart.

At the end, I would like to remind parents of the Windsor Selects' policy regarding skill development (long term goal) versus winning (short term goal):

"Remember your child is the one playing soccer, not you. It's very important to let children establish their own goals and to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose your own standards and goals on them." - Windsor Soccer Club Parent's Code

"Please remember this program is designed as a learning experience. Winning while wanted is not our main objective." - Windsor Selects Policy / Letter to parents

"It is the Windsor Selects philosophy to teach individuals' skills, rather than concentrating on forming a winning team. If we do our function correctly and your child attends practice, not only will a skilful group of players emerge, but also a winning team." - Windsor Selects Policy / Letter to parents

"The Select program is intended to improve the individual player skills even to the detriment of a winning team. This has proven to be the correct approach as many of our players have gone on to compete and win at provincial, nationals, universities and the professional level." - Windsor Selects Policy / Letter to parents.