



# Inside the 18

## Arlington Travel Soccer Club

Volume 10, Number 1, July 2007



### From the President

As I said in my spring letter in this space, the youth soccer landscape is ever-changing, and if anything the pace of change is quickening. This constant change presents opportunities and challenges for the organizations it affects, and it presents risks for those organizations that aren't positioned to address it. Fortunately for the young soccer players in Arlington, I believe our organization is not only keeping up with the changes, but perhaps beginning to get out in front of them.

All of this starts with the work of our parent organization, the Arlington Soccer Association (ASA) and the remarkable support that youth soccer in Arlington receives from the Arlington

County Sports Office. The ASA, among many other things, runs our recreational league through the neighborhood clubs, where I'm

sure most of our players started playing soccer, and the Sports Office makes available to us the facilities we use, in particular the most outstanding collection of fields to be found anywhere in the area.

Two initiatives that began last winter are now coming together, and the club is just starting to reap the benefits. Last winter my predecessor began a committee (chaired by Scott Krall) to look at developing a club philosophy and a plan for implementing that philosophy. At the same time, ASA began the process of hiring a technical director that resulted in the hiring of Bob Bigney. While the focus of Bob's job is the recreational side of the association, we inevitably are a part of the structure that he is putting in place. Our Director of Coaching, Grant Smith, has been working closely with Bob. They have developed a strong working relationship, and Grant and Bob are now beginning the process of aligning the two organizations to best serve the youth soccer players of Arlington.

From our side, the most important initiative along these lines is our newly formed Coaching Committee. This committee, which is headed by

Grant, includes parents and coaches, and Bob has agreed to be a part of it as well. The goals of this committee fall into to closely related areas: First the committee is tasked with developing a technical development philosophy for the club and developing a technical program for implementing that philosophy. Second, the committee is tasked with organizing our coaching staff to ensure that this technical program succeeds.

I was a member of the committee that helped ASA hire their technical director. My work on that committee convinced me that the key to success for youth soccer players is the quality of coaching that they receive. The size of our club, i.e., our player pool, our first rate facilities, and our technical and administrative infrastructure, gives us the opportunity to attract and retain a top flight coaching staff. This, combined with a comprehensive technical program will provide an environment in which the youth soccer players in Arlington will thrive.

*Steve Lent*  
ATSC President



# ATSC

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*The mission of ATSC is to provide Arlington and Falls Church City youth the opportunity to play soccer at the highest level commensurate with their individual ability, potential, and interest. ATSC goals: Provide an attractive soccer environment that nurtures the highest level of competition. • Provide every interested Arlington and Falls Church City child with the opportunity to qualify to play competitive travel soccer. • Develop superior life skills in ATSC participants through team play, sportsmanship, top competition, and hard work. • Develop elite soccer players who have an opportunity for success at the state, regional, and national levels. • Develop strong Arlington teams able to compete effectively at the local, tournament, state, regional, and national levels.*

# News Briefs

## Coach and Volunteer of the Year Awards

On Tuesday August 21, 2007 at the Club Council Meeting, Chris Smith was awarded ATSC Coach of the Year and Andy Megas was awarded ATSC Volunteer of the Year. Chris and Andy have been dedicated to ATSC and we were pleased to present their awards.



Chris Smith (L) and Andy Megas (R)

Chris Smith is the head coach of the U11 Girls age group and also coached the Intensity Red last season. He is a dedicated coach and also volunteers his time outside of coaching. He is currently the Girl's Coach Representative on the ATSC Board and helped with the field planning for the ASIST Tournament last spring. As a coach, he brings out the best in the girls while developing the team. He is thorough with executing his practice and game plans and has communicated his system to the parents so they are aware of what is taking place on the field. Above and beyond the call: on the Friday before the ASIST Tournament, Chris worked late into the night with a small team of people to clear the snow and ice off 2 fields that his teams were to play on the next morning. Thanks for your dedication.

Andy Megas was the ATSC President last year as well as a volunteer Coach for the Dragons. If this was not enough he was one of the driving forces behind the ASIST Tournament which grew significantly in the second year. He also organized the first ATSC Information Night for parents. In addition to working as a volunteer for ATSC, he volunteers on the recreation side as the manager of the Civitans Club in ASA. He started and ran the Player Development Clinics for ASA players. Andy continues to volunteer his time as he is the assistant coach for the U9 Boys Travel teams and is still the ASIST Tournament Chair. Thanks for everything!



# News Briefs

## Arlington Spring Invitational Tournament 2008



The Arlington Spring Invitational will be played March 1-2 for Boys and March 7-9 for Girls in the U10-U15 age groups. Only in its 3rd year, it is the 3rd most competitive in Virginia and rated as a Silver tournament by GotSoccer. Last year's field included a US Youth Soccer regional champion, 3 State Cup champions and 3 State Cup finalists. Over 30 Arlington teams are planning to participate this Spring. A premier and classic level of play will be offered in each age group. This will increase the tournament field to nearly 200 teams. All games will be played on synthetic turf fields. In 2007 most area tournaments were completely cancelled due to wintry weather the weekend of March 16-17, but the Spring Invitational played every match without interruption. The tournament raised over \$20K for ATSC last year to benefit the player development fund and the club's financial assistance needs. It also provides a unique fundraising opportunity for ATSC teams. Teams attracting sponsors receive 50% of the sponsor fee. It's a great way to defer team expenses while providing support to the club. For more information on this year's tournament refer to the club website or contact [tournament@atsc-va.org](mailto:tournament@atsc-va.org).

## Club Council Meeting

The semi-annual Club council meeting will be

held on Wednesday March 12, 2008 in the Yorktown HS cafeteria. The Council, composed of each team's coach and manager, meets twice a year to review the Club's activities and prepare for the upcoming season. Major changes in policy must come before this body for ratification. It is also an opportunity for representatives from our teams to hear league reports, ask questions and become better informed about the Club's direction. Please be sure your team is represented at the meeting.

## Annual ATSC Coaches Game

The Annual Coaches game was played Saturday 9/15 at Quincy Park in perfect weather conditions. We had the largest turn out of coaches



since our first coaches game in 2002. The crowd was fantastic and the players really showed their support for the coaches with great vocal cheering and awesome home made signs.

Early in the game it looked like the White team was going to win by a large margin. They took control of the match early and sent their attack through the middle of the field to create and finish a number of scoring chances. At halftime, the score was 4-2 in favor of the White team.

The second half began the same as the first with the White team scoring 2 more goals in the first 10 minutes of the half. The Blue team finally got



on track with about 15 minutes remaining to score 3 unanswered goals to make the match exciting. Both teams had a few more good scoring chances, but no more goals were conceded. The final tally was 6-5 in favor of the winners, team White.

I want to thank our coaching staff for putting on a wonderful exhibition of good soccer for the players and families. The atmosphere was fun and competitive with the usual good natured ribbing and slight trash talking. The coaching staff we have in the Club is excellent and the level of soccer they played on Saturday was high. I am really proud of the way these people present themselves and participate in our Club activities.

I want to extend a special thanks to our referee group Steve Etkin, Anthony "A-Train" Megas and Alex Lindeman. Also, thank you to Ariel Schwartz, Justin Etkin and Seamus Hooban for their great work during the halftime festivities. The contest they set up was excellent and run very smoothly.

The Club appreciates all the support of the ATSC families. This is a great place to play soccer and it is because of the people we have involved here that make it that way!



# Director of Coaching Update

## Characteristics of a Good Coach

I attended a meeting this week held by Gordon Miller, VYSA Technical Director. The meeting included many of the technical directors and directors of coaching for clubs in Northern Virginia. One of reasons for the meeting was to share ideas and discuss how we, as a group of professional coaches, could promote and nurture the quality of play of our players in Virginia. There were several open ended questions he used to get us started and the group had many interesting ideas about how to achieve that goal. It also allowed the DOC/TD's the chance to get together and discuss programs within their own Clubs that help develop their players.

The meeting opened with a presentation from Coach Miller about what characteristics you will find in the top coaches in the world. These coaches included Marcello Lippi (Italian National Team), Sir Alex Ferguson (Manchester United) and Arsene Wenger (Arsenal FC). He

pointed out that there are some common threads with these fine coaches and that we can apply



these values in our own approach to coaching youth players and teams. As a leader and teacher, it is our responsibility to bring the right tools to our trade to enhance the soccer experience and create a nurturing environment for young people as soccer players and human beings.

The coach as guide must be first and foremost a leader. He/She must lead by example through words and actions. There must be integrity and compassion in every decision and the players must feel like they all have an equal chance to advance within the group. The coach must be open and approachable and be ready to provide consistent feedback and evaluation to his/her players.

There must be a clear philosophy in their approach. There need to be rules and standards that apply the same to every member of the team. That philosophy must be discussed so that the players understand what the expectation is for each player and the team as a whole.

The coach must bring experience and talent to their craft. Carlos Parreira, Brazilian National Team Coach, was quoted as saying, "It takes talent to manage talent". Part of what he meant by that was as your players grow in talent, you, as the coach, need to grow in talent and experience along with them. Continue to be a student of the game and attend courses, seminars and conventions to broaden your soccer perspective. Soccer is a dynamic game and never the same in any given situation. That is one of things that make it so popular and one of the reasons we need to continue to seek knowledge as coaches.

Finally, a coach must bring personality to the

profession. This is extremely important when coaching youth players. Get to know your players and bring energy and enthusiasm to your training sessions and team functions. The players must feel like they have a caring and passionate guide to get the most out of them. We must love the game and share that love with our players to help them see soccer in a certain way, a feeling they can have their entire life about the game.

I thought the presentation was interesting and wanted to share some of the meeting with you all. We can always grow as coaches and people and we can pass our growth and passion to our players. I think this is a wonderful time in US Youth Soccer and we have a responsibility to create the best environment we can for our players in ATSC. They will take what you have taught with them inside and outside the game of soccer.

See you out on the fields!

Thanks,  
*Grant Smith*  
*Director of Coaching, ATSC*



# Season Wrap-up

## U15 FC Arlington Caps Successful Fall Season with Division Championship



The U15 FC Arlington boys completed the team's most successful season to date by winning the fall NCSL U15 Division 3 championship with an 8-0-1 record. Powered by a dynamic offense that produced 30 goals and a stingy defense that yielded only 5 goals, FC earned divisional advancement for the third season in a row and will play in Division 2 this coming spring. In addition, FC reached the quarterfinals of the fall Virginia State Cup tournament with a 3-1 record, where they lost to the eventual state runner-up. Congratulations to FC Arlington Coach Farzad Mahmoudpour and his players!

### "Spirit On Three"

When we first met the 11 girls on the Spirit in the summer of 2006, we knew we had a fun group right off the bat. The girls were "spirited" to say the least. From their endless list of questions during practice to their goofy and loveable mannerisms on and off the field, one thing was

clear, they were all eager to improve their game of soccer.

In our first season of coaching (Fall 2006), we focused on the basic skills such as passing the ball accurately, trapping the ball, dribbling and other basic concepts of soccer. During our first game of the season we then realized our team did not understand the basic soccer skills when one of our forwards did not know how to take a kick-off. Needless to say, not only did the girls have a lot to learn, but so did we as coaches. Even though our first fall season was arduous and our stats were not up to par, our team smiled, sweat and had fun through it all. We were amazed at the overwhelming positive attitudes of the girls and parents and we realized early on that this team was rare in its ability to work positively together.

During the first two weeks of practice of the fall 2007 season, the girls seemed to be dragging as though they had forgotten how to play soccer over the summer. We were nervous as coaches considering we had a pre-season tournament two



weeks into the season. The girls showed up for the tournament eating, breathing and sleeping soccer. They were connecting passes, making runs, supporting their team-mates on and off the ball, communicating to one another on the field and scoring goals. It was a great start to which lead to the ending of a phenomenal season. Throughout the fall 2007 season, the Spirit went undefeated winning every game and only tying two. We were so impressed at how the girls progressed with their skills and even taking it to the next level of putting corner kick plays together and reading the game to know where the next pass needed to be.

It came down to our last game of the season. "Spirit on three" was the last cheer we heard from the player's right before the second half kicked-off that determined whether or not we would finish in first place as the Division II Champions in ODSL. We were winning by one and all we needed to do in order to win the division was to end the game with a win or a tie. The girls played their hearts out and left everything they had out on the field. Probably one of our best games played this season.

We have been coaching the Spirit for three seasons now and we fully believe that "third times a charm." Our third season coaching the Arlington Spirit has come to an end and thanks to Jordan, Sydney, Brodie, Nina, Zoey, Maddy, Lauren, Betsy, Sam, Alex, Emily and Greer, we are the Division II Champions. Spirit on three!

*The Spirit Coaches (Stefanie, Corinne and Kaela)*

# Season Wrap-up

## **U-15 Blitz Has Highest Finish Ever in League and State Cup**



Despite losing several players to long-term injuries at the start of the season, the U-15 Blitz was able to make some adjustments and have a banner season. As a quarter-finalist, the team went further in the State Cup than ever before, and also had its best-ever league finish (runners-up in Division 2).

Highlights of the season included defeating the #4 seed in State Cup, the Richmond Kickers Elite, after a tough 1-2 loss last season to the same team. The Blitz showed great spirit in scoring 3 spectacular 2nd half goals, after falling behind in the first half. The Blitz also defeated the other top teams in Division 2 of WAGS (a 3-2 win over SYA Arsenal, and a 2-1 victory over the Potomac Storm).

The season was really all about the players coming together as a team and stepping up to adjust to the injuries to their team-mates. Fortunately, all the injured players are now healthy, and the Blitz is looking forward to the challenges of like-

ly competing in Division 1 for the first time ever in the Spring. Congratulations, Blitz!

## **ATSC Arlington Earthquakes Boys U-14 Are ODSL Division II Champs**



The Arlington Earthquakes finished the fall season with a 7-1-0 record. The boys won their division with consistent play, overcoming an early loss that could have relegated them to a no-better-than second place finish. The boys played solid defense, only allowing 8 goals, and were successful on offense, converting on 26 scoring opportunities this season.

The Earthquakes prepared for the fall campaign by participating in the August Cup Tournament. The boys did not lose a game in that tournament, although their 2-0-1 record was matched by another team in Flight F. That team advanced on tiebreakers and won its game in the next round. The Earthquakes held that team to a scoreless tie, noteworthy since it scored 24 points in its other three tournament games. The Earthquakes can be proud of their pre-season accomplishments at the August Cup.

This is the Earthquakes second consecutive ODSL Division title, both of which were earned

under Coach Keith Moser. In the Spring, the boys finished with a 7-0-1 record in Division III of ODSL's U-13B group. The boys are expecting to return to ODSL, likely rising to U-14 Division I play. The Earthquakes will train in the off-season and are looking forward to getting back on the pitch for another campaign in the Spring.

## **Arlington Eagles Finish Inaugural Season Undefeated**



The Arlington Eagles, the newly formed U14 Girls team competing in ODSL, completed the 2007 Fall campaign without a loss. The team posted 3 shut outs on their way to the unique record of 0-0-8, giving up the 3rd fewest goals in their division. Highlights included tying the division champion CYA Blast, who came into the game at 7-0 with 15 goals for and only 1 against. The strength and resolve of the players was evident in their finale against ASC Celtic Gold, when the Eagles scored late to gain a 2-2 tie, and did so with a game day roster of just 13. The Arlington Eagles are Liana, Emily, Sarah C., Kat, Alex, Naomi, Samantha, Brittany, Phoebe, Megan, Grace, Sarah R., Katie, Kendall and Rachel. The Eagles head coach is Jeff Erickson and they are trained by Shomit Mukherjee and Assistant Coach John Westgate.

# Season Wrap-up

## Post Season Tournament Winners and Finalists

### U15 BOYS VENOM

The Venom boys were the champions of the U15 Boys Elite Silver Division in the Raleigh Shootout. The Venom won their first game 1-0 against the Cincinnati Classics. In the second game against FC America Omni, a physically aggressive team from Florida, the Venom was trailing 2 - 0 at the half but came back to win the game 3 - 2. On Sunday, the Venom worked hard at saving their energy securing a 0 - 0 tie which was all they needed to proceed to the finals. The final was against a tough North Atlantic NASA from Atlanta. The Venom scored the first goal well into the second half. NASA managed to even the score with less than 3 minutes in the game. After a scoreless 10 minutes of overtime the game was decided by PKs. The Venom won the game by scoring 4 penalty kicks to NASA's 3. Congratulations to the Venom players and coaches.

### U11 GIRLS AJAX

The Ajax won the Elite division at the NVSC Fall Classic held November 17-18. The Ajax won in the final 2-1 over a strong Reston Comets team. Earlier this month Ajax finished second in the Elite division at the CASL Shootout in Raleigh, NC. Congratulation to the Ajax players: Abby, Alexis, Audrey, AVA, Cori, Danica, Emily, Karen, Kayla, Mary and Sydney.

### U11 GIRLS DYNAMO

The Dynamo finished second in the blue division at the NVSC Fall Classic held November 17-18. They played a very tough GU-10 team from Fairfax and lost in the Championship game 4-1. Congratulations to all the Dynamo players.

### U11 GIRLS JUVENTUS

The Juventus were Finalist at Capital Fall Classic (Richmond, VA) -and- Champion at NVSC Fall Classic - Blue Division. The Juventus advanced from their group with a convincing 5-2 win over SASA Fusion White and a 1-1 tie with SYC Thunder White. The the semifinals Juventus defeated NVSC Jr. Majestics 96 Blue 8-0. In the final Juventus scored the first two goals against SYC Washington Freedom. But the Freedom came back and tied the game. Juventus scored a late goal to win 3-2. Well done girls!

### U10 BOYS IMPACT WHITE

The boys U10 ATSC Impact White had a terrific outing at the prestigious Bethesda Thanksgiving Tournament on November 17-18, 2007, winning an exciting game in overtime against the SSA Dragons to clinch the Green Group and advance to the Chesapeake Division championship game. In the final, the Impact White faced a tough Loudoun team, losing 3-2 in a game that went down to the wire. The Impact White team players are Cullen George Ben, Christophe, Sam, Nolan, Noah, Cameron, Ben, Sam, Aidan and Brandon.

### U10 GIRLS ROWDIES RED

The Rowdies Red won the Hunt County Classic in the Premier Division on November 17-18

2007. The Rowdies defeated Merion FC, WV (5-0), Great Falls Wildfire (1-0), SYA Velocity (5-0) and tied league rival SYC Pride White (0-0). Congratulations Rowdies: Katie, Haley, Ariana, Kate M., Kristin, Alicia, Sarah D., Kate R., Sarah B., Fiona, Jessica.

### U10 ROWDIES WHITE

The Rowdies White were finalists at the NVSC Fall Classic. After losing a tough first game the Rowdies fought their way back to win the next three games to take second place in their bracket. The Rowdies have come a long way together since the beginning of the season together. Congratulations on a strong finish in their first tournament.

