

U10 Girls Finish Second at Reno Sagebrush

Celebrate their Potential

RENO, SAGEBRUSH TOURNAMENT, March 16-17: In what first looked like an inevitable march to another first place finish, our U10 Girls took second to a gritty, seasoned opponent at Sagebrush.

On the tournament's first day, playing on a tidy pitch, beneath the cottony Sierra Mountains, our girls clobbered their first two opponents by a dizzying – 6-0, 10-2.

And with each goal scored came another NSA roooll!

That night, the girls were giddy from the day's wins. They partied at the restaurant with cake and autographed soccer balls for birthday girls Grace, Sunaiya and Alex. Later, they took the celebration to the bowling lanes – girls, parents, brothers, sisters and U11 boys too, all knocking down pins and leaving soccer on the field for the night.

Day 2 began with a pregame cheer encircled by our U11 Boys, and another victory (8-0). Later the girls would cheer on the boys from behind their "bench," and then lead the boys in their own NSA rooolls for scored-goals. When asked if he was accustomed to all that winning, Coach Fred answered, "We often win, but the game results are tertiary to the girls learning." (*Hmmm*)

Three hours later, the girls faced the Belmont Gryphons in the championship game. The Gryphons were big. Really big! And fast. And urged on by the jarring voice of their coach, the Gryphons narrowly beat our girls 2-1. After the game was over, the girls trekked slowly, shoulder-to-shoulder across the field to meet parents for sympathetic words and hugs to mask the disappointment.

What did Coach Fred do? He just smiled and called for ice cream.



Second place finish



“Now let’s go get some ice cream!”
– **Coach Fred**

He saw the game differently. He saw the kids take baby steps together toward playing a possession-with-a-purpose kind of game. “In Game 2, the girls worked together to set up a 1v1 for Ally Tomasetti against the opposing keeper,” he explained. “AND at the beginning of Game 3, against a very determined team, they kept composure and possession for almost 10 minutes around the mid and front third of the field.”

And that’s what earned them ice cream.

In other words, the focus is on the long term growth of the girls. Individual game outcomes *really don’t* matter, when compared to the potential inside each of our children. The real “goal” (:o) is to unleash that potential by enabling them to develop their strengths and face their weaknesses, without becoming overwhelmed by the game. It’s their game, after all.

“If young kids I worked with still love the game when they are 80,” Fred told me recently, “I would have done something good.”

