

Troy teams take early exits

Livonia sides stun Midwest foes

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

For two powerhouse soccer teams from St. Louis, Mo., their trip to Livonia last weekend was not a happy one.

And that overjoyed a pair of local teams. Two boys' squads, the 16-and-under Arsenal and the 12-and-under Livonia Cardinals, topped the highly touted St. Louis teams, sponsored by Anheuser-Busch, enroute to capturing their age group titles in the Midwest Regional Soccer Championship at Schoolcraft College.

In all, six champions were crowned but the title meant advancement only to the Arsenal, a team coached by John Starcevich of Northville with players from Northville, Plymouth, Livonia and Dearborn Heights.

The Arsenal's 3-0 victory over the Wisconsin Falcon Kickers in the 16-and-under division qualified them for the North American championships starting Aug. 20 in Victoria, B.C. The four regional winners from Canada, together with the four U.S. regional champs, will vie for the title of North American champs.

The 16-and-under boys is the only division that has such a championship, and the Arsenal is the first Michigan team to qualify for the tournament.

THE REGIONAL CROWNS won by the Arsenal and 12-and-under Cardinals topped the accomplishments of the six local teams. In girls' play, the Troy Rockies won their 12-and-under first-round contest, 2-1 over the Minnesota Burnsville Bandits before losing to the Ohio South Cincinnati Cardinals in the quarterfinals, 6-0.

The Livonia Hawks advanced to the 14-and-under semifinals, besting Wisconsin Bee Waves, 2-1, in the quarters. The Minnesota Burnsville Stars topped the Hawks in the semis, 4-0, and the Livonia squad lost in the consolations, 1-0, to Illinois Naperville Blue Stars.

The Troy Eagles won their first-round contest, 3-1 over Wisconsin Dynamite, but lost in an overtime shootout, 4-3, in the quarters to Nebraska West Omaha Seniors.

The boys' 14-and-under Livonia Cardinals blasted Iowa Tim O'Neill Chevrolet, 7-0, in the opening round but lost to Indiana's Indianapolis North Side Saints, 3-2.

TEAMWORK ACCENTED the two titles won by local teams. "The boys were playing together and complementing each other," said Starcevich.

John Cluett, coach of the victorious Cardinals,

soccer

compared his team's win with an American classic in sports history.

"To me, it was like the American hockey team in the (1976) Olympics," Cluett said. "I guess they jelled. All their biorhythms must have been in order, or whatever. They just got it together."

The Arsenal's 3-0 win over the Wisconsin squad in the finals was not the key game of the tournament, according to Starcevich. Two goals by Pete Stoyanovich and one by Jeff Metz, assisted by Stoyanovich, gave the Arsenal the championship.

But the 2-1 overtime win over the St. Louis team in the semis was the key victory for the local squad.

"THE SEMIFINAL will be more memorable," Starcevich said. "There's probably no better team than the Anheuser-Busch squad. It (St. Louis) is a power place for soccer."

Stoyanovich pounded in a goal 32 minutes into the opening half to give the Arsenal the early advantage, but St. Louis knotted it at 1-1 with nine minutes gone in the second half. The game was still tied after regulation time had elapsed, and there was no change in the score after one 15-minute overtime.

Stoyanovich finally got the game-winner midway through the second overtime on an assist from Metz. The two teams battled 92-degree heat for 110 playing minutes before a winner emerged.

The Arsenal, unbeaten in seven Borussia Express Soccer League (BESL) games, got strong offensive performances from Steve Starcevich, Jeff Wright, Metz and Stoyanovich and solid goalkeeping from Terry Harshfield, who allowed just two goals in the tournament.

Other team members include Chris Banyai, Bob Bowling, Matt Crook, Scott Gaia, Ken Israel, Mike

Kolacz, Kevin Paterson, Eric Pence and Mike Rehehan.

FOR THE CARDINALS, the route to the championship was arduous. The 12-and-under Cardinals were a modest 5-5 in BESL play and had a "Sunday jinx" to overcome.

All the boys were individual stars in the Livonia YMCA league," Cluett said. "So the first thing we had to do was get them to play as a team. We had to teach them to work together as a team — that was the challenge."

But it wasn't the only obstacle the Cards had to overcome. At the Robbie Tournament in Toronto June 28-27 and at the Wolverine III tourney at Schoolcraft July 3-5, the Livonia team lost to eventual finalists. On Memorial Day weekend, the Cards lost in the Buckeye Tournament in Cincinnati to an eventual semifinalist.

All the losses came on Sundays, leaving Cluett to ponder how to overcome the apparent jinx.

Fortunately, the state cup game against the WSSL Kicks was at Schoolcraft on a Wednesday (June 16), and the Cards prevailed, 2-0.

IF THERE WAS a jinx, it didn't hold up in the Midwest tourney finals against St. Louis, a team undefeated in 73 previous games. Trailing 1-0 at the half, Billy Adam tied it for the Cards three minutes into the second half with the assist given to Darin DeRock.

Brian Daniel then converted the game-winner, on assists from Adam and Rob Orsucci, with 11 minutes left to play. With sweepback Jeff Hilden providing steady defense and Jeff Benick playing tough in the goal, the Cards hung on for the title.

Cluett gave credit to winger Chris Speen, a team leader and sparkplug, and praised the team's ability to come together in the tournament. Other members of the champion Cards are Jim Chondes, Terry Forrester, Ted Lukiewski, Chris Oxyley, Tim Pulice, Chris Sproull, Brian Thomas, Chris Volpe and Jeff Zawislak.



Denise Mallory of the Troy side kicks a ball up field during action in the Midwest Regional Soccer Championships over the weekend at Schoolcraft College.

Playgrounds suffer

Continued from Page 1

newcomer to the program, held its eighth fitness olympics last Tuesday at Harrison High School. Around 100 youngsters were involved.

"It gives the kids a sense of team camaraderie," said Jeff Farland of the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, explaining why he likes the meets. "And when they go on to the Metro Meet it gives them a sense of belonging to their community."

"We try to teach the physical-fitness aspect of it," Farland continued. "We try to teach the kids that you just don't go out there and do it. There's a procedure of practicing, warming up and being physically fit."

West Bloomfield is a community where the number of participants in the local meet seems to remain constant. Some 55 youngsters turned out for the meet last week, and Community

Coordinator Craig Monahan hopes to take a 36 of them to the Metro Meet.

"It seems to be the same kids every year," Monahan said. "We seem to have a hard-core, track-oriented group. The Metro Meet is great. It gives the kids a basis for pride in their community."

Bill Sherman, the park superintendent of Metropolitan Beach and the chairman of next year's Metro Meet, came up with a good reason why the fitness meets should continue.

"This program is for the non-varsity athlete," Sherman said. "This is the typical kid from the typical playground."

"There are a lot of good programs around — Little League, Babe Ruth, the AAU stuff. But they're for the serious athlete. This (the fitness meets) are for the rest of them."

Hopefully, they'll be a bunch of "the rest of them" cavorting around his Metropolitan Beach next July at the 26th annual Metro Meet.

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