

Coach's Corner by Roger Mendes

### **Junior Pioneers U14 Boys – MAPLE Spring 2010 Review**

*Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.*

*~Thomas Edison~*

June 5, 2010: After coming off a big tournament win in Arlington, it was important early spring that we come back down from the clouds fast and get back to work. However, training was a bit "off" when we got back from Virginia and it showed in our first game of MAPLE. The game was against Abby Villa SC, a team promoted to the first division after a successful Fall 2009 season. Abby was much stronger than expected, but even so, if we had brought the same mentality and team effort that we played with in Virginia, the game would not have been as close as it was. The final was a 2-0 win with goals coming from Alex Davidson and Jeff Danek. Player of the Match was Daniel Matias who anchored the defense in a close battle for the shut out. Good game also to Jordan Martins, Nick Forni and Ben Murphy in goal.

Game 2 was away against the defending State Champion, North Shore, and in tough conditions. The field was small and almost too flooded to play. Training had improved after the Abby Villa game and we were almost back to Arlington form. The messy conditions however, did not allow either team to show what they were really made of. Nevertheless, the game was being well managed by our team until an injury came to Jordan Martins on top of a very undeserving goal for North Shore still in the first half. The final ended in a 0-2 loss.

Game 3 brought us back to Ana Dias Fields against a very tough opponent in Fuller Hamlets. Training was still good and North Shore did not affect our drive. This game was very well played by our side and goes down for me as one of the best in 2009/2010. We were fluid in possession and in movement without the ball. We were also tight tactically and so it was difficult for the Hamlets to create any real opportunity. Offensively we were strong and it was largely due to a stellar game at striker by Dave Serafino. Final was a 3-1 win with goals coming from Kyle Mutti and two from Jeff Danek. Player of the Match goes to Dave Serafino with a close second going to everyone else on the squad.

Game 4 against Benfica USA was very much like the North Shore game because of the long drive and poor field and game conditions; Instead of rain however, there was heat and humidity. Also like North Shore, Benfica USA are one of the top three teams in the state so it was always going to be difficult. It would have been nice to play these guys at home for once. As for the game, we were able to hold up well against Benfica's tremendous speed of play through the means of the offside traps. A lead for us was also in sight but we were not able to finalize on the opportunities we had. Benfica finally was able to slip an attacker by the trap and

went up 1-0. They eventually scored their second when we pushed players forward in efforts to even things out. 0-2 loss was the final.

Game 5 against Eastern Mass was a bitter pill to swallow as this was a must win game. The 75% possession and the 10+ shots to their 2 was just not enough and we ended up actually losing the match 0-1 from a very late and unfortunate goal. This result could have really hurt the team mentally but thankfully our next match was against our neighboring rival, Western United. We would be ready.

Game 6 was a very well disputed match against the two best teams in Western Mass and also two of the top five teams in the State. The Junior Pioneers played their game of possessing the ball with direction going forward while pressing Western to make quick decisions. Western also stuck to their guns of playing a tight defense and a more direct style of attack to their very talented and dangerous forward. Neither team was rewarded in their efforts with a goal in this game. The Junior Pioneers did hit the back of the net in a great finish from Alex Davidson but it was called back in a very, very doubtful offside call. 0-0 was the final result with Player of the Match going to Brian Jumpp. Brian was solid in both the back and in midfield. David Rupacz, Daniel Matias, Nick Forni and Jason St. Jacques also were great in helping to shut down their "go to" forward.

Game 7 versus Shalrie Joseph was important for us to win not only for extra morale heading into the state cup but also because Shalrie is one of the strongest contenders competing in the state cup. We prepared really well for this game in the week's practice and it showed as we came out with a 3-0 lead within the first 20 minutes. The first two goals were attributed to Alex Davidson and the third to Jeff Danek. Our opponent being the top contender that they are did not throw in the towel. They got their first goal from a very clear non-called offside and with the momentum from that they were able to reduce our lead by just one. Ben Murphy still made some clutch saves to take our lead right into halftime. The break allowed us to collect ourselves and we were able to manage the rest of the game fairly well. Player of this match was Ben Murphy. Other notables from this game were Alex Davidson, Andrew Berthiaume and Beraa Ibas.

We finished with a respectable 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in Division 1. This was fair considering some lapses and also some unfortunate results. It should be noted that in the history of this team, this is the highest finished position in a MAPLE Season and Division. I look forward to 2011.

**Spring 2010 MAPLE Schedule and Results:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Phase</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>W-L-T</u>	<u>Result</u>
8/29/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Abbey Villa S.C. U14B (MA)	Win	2-0
8/29/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	North Shore United U14B (MA)	Loss	0-2
8/30/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Fuller Hamlets U14B (MA)	Win	3-1
8/30/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	Benfica USA U14B (MA)	Loss	0-2
9/5/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Eastern Mass U14B (MA)	Loss	0-1
9/5/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Western United U14B (MA)	Tie	0-0
9/6/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Shalrie Joseph U14B (MA)	Win	3-2

3 Wins / 3 Losses / 1 Tie

8 Goals For / 8 Goals Against