

Coach's Corner by Roger Mendes

Junior Pioneers U14 Boys – Fall 2009 Review

February 20, 2010: The U14 Boys had a season of ups and downs in the second half of 2009. With seven players departing and six new players joining, there was some serious team building that needed to be done early on in the 2009 Fall season. I thought two tournaments rather than one would be vital in getting what was practically a new team to be able to better blend together. The team has definitely added much more talent, adding 3 to 4 players to the starting line-up. This has its benefits but it also can hurt the team chemistry that has long been established since its make-up.

The players added to the 2009/2010 season were (in alphabetical order): Alex Davidson, Andrew Berthiaume and Brian Jumpp, all of Springfield. Jason St. Jacques of Chicopee, Joshua Evans of Springfield, and Kyle Mutti of Feeding Hills. My thoughts on these players: "Alex has added some much needed depth to our offense. He is a very dedicated and talented player with great one on one ability and has a great shot and cross. Andrew is a very dedicated young man and can play in various positions in midfield and also on offense. He has a great cross and is also a pretty good finisher. Joshua, like Andrew, can also play various positions in the midfield and on offense and is a player with great athletic ability. Jason has added speed to our team. He is a great dribbler but is also a very good defender. He plays both left and right back very well. Brian and Kyle are very similar players and have both really added to the talent pool of this team. They are both big, strong and fast players and can play all over the field. Kyle has made our defense much stronger by coming into central back. Brian has added depth in both the attacking midfield and the striker positions."

The tournaments were vital in getting the new players on board with our tactics.

In the first tournament, Delta FC Cup, we were placed in a group with lower division teams. This was actually a good thing because it allowed us to have more possession and be able to build fluidity with the team on offense. The final, however, really served to show our weaknesses. We had some trouble connecting tight passes and because the opponent was quicker to press than the first three opponents we lost some confidence and made some mistakes. Kyle Mutti was also not able to make this tournament and missing him really took away from our defensive strength. It would have been nice to win this tournament but overall, my primary objective was complete: to get games under our belts.

The FSC tournament was a lot of the same: first games against lower division teams and then the final game against a solid division 1 team. The final game, however, was in the third group phase match. The team played much better in this game (then in the Delta Cup Final) and was able to overcome the pressure the opponent put on us. This was a sign of overall team improvement. The only thing that was negative in this game was the refereeing which caused the result to be tainted.

The MAPLE Season went so and so. We beat some good teams (i.e. Greater Boston, Shalrie Joseph SC) but also lost to some good teams. Nevertheless, these are teams that I think we should be able to win against as our team chemistry becomes stronger. We finished middle of the pack which I feel we may have been a bit of and underachievement but I also know that this Spring Season will be a bright one for

us. The team as of late has been really molding together to become one. We will start off 2010 with a friendly against Oakwood, the Connecticut State Champion, and we will then be going down to Arlington, Virginia for what is one of the best tournaments in the east coast. MAPLE will follow and help prepare us for the 2010 State Cup. See you in the Spring!

Fall 2009 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	Delta FC Tournament	Group	Neutral	Abbey Villa S.C. U14B (MA)	Win	8-0
8/29/09	Delta FC Tournament	Group	Neutral	Nor'Easter Stingers U14B (MA)	Win	4-0
8/30/09	Delta FC Tournament	Group	Neutral	Explosion FC U14B (MA)	Win	2-0
8/30/09	Delta FC Tournament	Final	Neutral	Western United U14B (MA)	Loss	0-2
9/5/09	FSB Labor Day Tournament	Group	Neutral	FSA United WHP 2 U14B (CT)	Win	5-0
9/5/09	FSB Labor Day Tournament	Group	Neutral	CFC Wolves U14B (CT)	Win	2-0
9/6/09	FSB Labor Day Tournament	Group	Neutral	Newtown Samba U14B (CT)	Loss	0-1
9/13/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Fuller Hamlets U14B (MA)	Win	4-2
9/20/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Western United U14B (MA)	Tie	1-1
9/27/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	Shalrie Joseph SC U14B (MA)	Win	1-0
10/4/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	Benfica USA U14B (MA)	Loss	0-3
10/25/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	Stars of Mass U14B (MA)	Win	2-1
11/1/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	Crusaders United U14B (MA)	Win	3-2
11/7/09	MAPLE D1 (make-up)	League	Home	North Shore United U14B (MA)	Loss	0-3
11/8/09	MAPLE D1	League	Away	Blackwatch U14B (RI)	Loss	2-3
11/15/09	MAPLE D1	League	Home	Greater Boston Bolts U14B (MA)	Win	4-3

10 Wins / 5 Losses / 1 Tie

38 Goals For / 21 Goals Against