

TEAM OF THE MONTH

For “Team of the Month” we hope to talk to one of our teams each month. To be featured here, your teams doesn’t necessarily have to win every game it plays. We want to feature those teams, as well as teams that represent the club well with how they play and train, support the community, improve from game to game and practice to practice, support each other and the club. If you know an FFC team that would be good to recognize here, email tleiss@fredericksburgfc.org.

APRIL 2019

FFC 05 BOYS RED

April’s Team of the Month is FFC 05 Boys Red. The team is coached by Peter Armatis and started the Spring season with an unbeaten run in Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL) play in the U14 Division B1.

Some tough early season results turned into a huge motivating factor for the squad and helped them hit the ground running heading into league play.



Armatris and the team have also taken advantage of a new video analysis system that the coach came across while attending the most recent United Soccer Coaches Convention with several other FFC coaches.

Their off-the-field activities have also included being involved in the community, including volunteering as a team to help with the club’s TOPSoccer Program and paying tribute to Breast Cancer Awareness month by wearing pink socks.

RESULTS:

W, 5-2 - vs. Harrisburg City FC

W, 5-0 - vs. Loudoun

W, 2-1 - vs. Alexandria

W, 6-1 - vs. BRYC

T, 1-1 - vs. Northern Virginia

For more on the team and what has motivated them and kept them working hard in 2019, read the Q&A with coach Armatis that follows:

What do you think made the team successful on the field during April?

We had a bit of a challenging time in March at the FFC St. Patrick’s Day Invitational with some tough results and injuries. At the end of our final match, we gathered in a circle at midfield and talked about the weekend and how it was not going to define us. We found out who we were and

where we needed to work on the training grounds. After that, the boys really worked hard and we spent a lot of time focusing on area that we needed to and wanted to that supported our style of play. After the first league weekend in April, that validated that our results were a direct result of their effort and we have kept going from there.

What do you think makes the team good overall?

Team culture. We—players, families, coaches, manager—all have joined forces to create a very positive and engaging culture within our team and that makes overcoming adversity, putting in the necessary work and enjoying the effort and results a lot of fun for everyone involved. We



can't train effectively if our players don't make training sessions, our attendance has always been great. Our families help get our boys to those sessions, all matches and we all work together and communicate and jump in if any family needs transportation, extra uniform items, items for the matches or whatever it takes.

Secondly, it is all about the boys and how they interact with each other. We do not have one bad attitude on our team and it shows how they support each other in good

times and bad. We ask our captains—Luke Johnson, Nick Bates and Collin Louton—to address the team before, during and after our matches, lead the organization and effort in our training sessions and work to lead by example. They are a great group to work with because of this and as coaches, we will always support them.

What made the team decide to volunteer with the club's TOPSoccer Program?

In the Fall of 2018, we had a couple of fun team events to bring the boys closer together. Coming into the Spring we wanted to jump right into an event and happened to have a bye weekend the first day of TOPSoccer. I've known coach Toby for a few years and helped volunteer a few times, either directly or with my two boys. Corey Louton [our team manager] and I talked about it and through it would be a great opportunity to start the season as a team, but also provide some meaningful support to those who do not have the same opportunities and then the boys did the rest.

What was the highlight of that day?

It was a cold/rainy morning and as first it didn't look like there would be much of a turnout for the TOPSoccer players, but before you knew it every one of our boys was paired up with someone and they were off and running. As we walked the fields it was so heartening to see our boys engaged, smiling and just playing whatever kind of soccer their partner wanted to and truly having a great time. At one point, we looked across the field and there was one of our boys—Garrett Carrigan—walking hand-in-hand with one of the



players along the fence line because that is what the player said he wanted to do. Seeing 13-14-year-old boys supporting these players without being told how to do it shows what kind of boys they really are and it made us really happy to see.

Do you have any funny/fun little moments about the team you'd like to share?

I think bowling night for our first away tournament together was a fun event. We discovered that some of the boys had creative nicknames for themselves and that most of them are better soccer players than bowlers. After our second tournament in Manassas, we had a pizza party and there was some type of mystery drink on the table filled with a variety of ingredients from the table that cause some type of dare as to who would actually drink it. Let's just say the coaches and parents passed on that chance, but there was one brave soul...

Do the guys hang out together off the field at all? If so, how?

Most of the team is divided up amongst many middle schools, so in most cases we work to create those opportunities for the entire team. After the team came together in the Fall and we went to our first tournament in Charlottesville, the boys created a players-only group text after we all went out for ice cream. I've heard rumors of the conversations, spamming of texts and who knows what topics, but we were glad to see that they started that on their own, use it for what

they want and seem to really enjoy it together. Lastly, we have had a variety of events to get our boys together that have been team building—bowling, pizza parties, swimming, ice cream, TOPSoccer, etc.—as well as soccer-related activities where we met at the FFC office conference room to watch and break down video of one of our matches we had professionally recorded in the Fall. Seeing themselves on a TV playing soccer and having the opportunity to review how/why we were successful and areas in which we need to work on was a great experience for the boys and can really help aid in their understanding and development going forward.

