

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.

DECEMBER 2018

FFC SIESS REC

FFC Siess Rec took part in the Richmond Kickers MegaBlast tournament in the Coed U14 Galaxy Division and reached the final to cap off a quality fall 2018 season for the clubs Recreation Program. It was the best result for a Fredericksburg FC rec team at the tournament in recent memory and helped set the programs sights high for the upcoming Spring 2019 season as well as future tournaments. The strong finish earned the group FFC’s Team of the Month honor for the month of December.



“The Pitch” talked with coach Eric Siess about the team’s performance during the fall season and the tournament.

What can you say about this team's play at the MegaBlast tournament itself?

If I say only one thing about the team's tournament play, it is that they played hard throughout each and every game, even when tired. . . All the other teams had many more subs. They showed great resilience after quickly giving up a two-goal lead late in the first game, and came back to score the game winner with less than two minutes left in the game [[Click Here to watch one of the goals](#)]. Another thing that impressed me was how well everyone got along and played together as a team, especially considering that we had four guest players, a third of our team, who had not played with us during the regular season. In three of the four games we played, I felt like we played better as a team, even if the other team might have had more overall talent. I think this is a testament to the club's Rec Program.

What made them successful during the fall season?

During our fall rec season, a big part of our success was how well our team got along and played together. From the start of the season, everyone seemed to enjoy being out there at

both training and games, and knew how to have fun and then be serious when it was time to. ALL players on the team were inclusive of everyone else, getting everyone involved in game regardless of differences in talents or abilities. For example, two-thirds of the players on the team scored at least one goal during the season. This willingness to share the ball and get everyone involved really helped them be a team, and not just a group of players on the field. And probably most importantly, they were out there having fun! They just enjoyed playing soccer, and we consistently had players sticking around to play other games when the other U14 and high school [age group] teams were short players.

How did you see them improve during the season?

With only four players on team returning from [the spring] season, the biggest improvement I saw this season was how they learned each others' strengths/weaknesses and how to complement each other as the season went on. Every player was willing to go outside their comfort zone and try playing different positions, and then was able to use that new experience to make them better overall. Overall, I feel like the team acquired a better overall vision of the field, and it was awesome watching them work together to achieve what they did during the tournament.

What makes this team special?

Attitude! From the first week of practice, EVERYONE had a great attitude and got along with each other very well. Everyone respected each others' varying abilities, and it was great to see players working to help each other out. No one complained about being subbed out, even though all of them wanted to be on the field the entire game. Their support of each other, and the fun they had with each other during the season, truly made this an enjoyable and special group to work with during the season.

What is this team like off the field?... Do they hang out and do stuff together that you know of?

While I don't know if any of them hang out during the off-season, they definitely got along and enjoyed each others company between games, both during the season and at the tournament. The camaraderie mentioned above definitely showed during those times. They definitely had fun hanging out with each other before/after games—sometimes a little too much fun!

Do you have any fun little stories you could tell us about the team?

When we entered the second day of the tournament, we had to play the strongest team in our group and needed to win and help to have any chance of advancing. I explained the plethora of scenarios to the team, and essentially said without a win nothing else matters. After they pulled off the upset in our game, everyone chose to stick around and watch the final game in our group—the one that would decide which team advanced. It was exciting to see the entire team get so caught up in watching a game they weren't playing in. At one point, a couple of them figured out we would advance with a tie, at which point the excitement level shot up and spread through the team like wildfire! They were getting so excited, I had to actually calm them down a couple times so as to not be too obnoxious rooting for one team over the other. The excitement and joy associated with upsetting the better team, and then finally getting confirmation that we won the group is something I'll never forget.

Anything else you'd like to add about the team?

One thing that sometimes gets lost is that we were essentially a Coed team playing in a boys' group, and won that group. One-third of our team was girls, while I think the other

three teams in our group only had two girls combined. My point is that some of the other teams appeared to think they would have an easier time playing against a team with girls, while our team knew that, boy or girl, everyone on our team could play and treated each other as equals. Several other coaches commented to us on how well they played together, and how seamlessly our team played together. Again, I think this is a testament to our Rec Program and the opportunities the players have gotten to grow and play against a range of abilities, such that none of our players were intimidated by anyone's size, ability or physicality.