

DREAMS COME TRUE!

1985 KANSAS BOYS SELECT TEAM WINS REGION II ODP TOURNAMENT!



These 1985 Boys, members of the Kansas State Select team, traveled to DeKalb, Illinois the weekend of June 26-29 to participate in the Region II Olympic Development Program tournament: Oran Andrews (Olathe), Matt Blouin (Leawood), Erik Broxterman (Overland Park), Seth Fallik (Overland Park), Keith Gorczyca (Overland Park), Steve Grow (Olathe), Richie Harris (Shawnee Mission), Matt Havens (Overland Park), Peter Huhnerkoch (Lenexa), William John (Overland Park), Caleb Mitchell (Ottawa), Ryan Oblak (Wichita), Andrew Quigley (Lenexa), Daniel Rundle (Shawnee), Bill Steinke (Leawood), Josh Weir (Olathe), and Josh White (Olathe). Coaches: Fred Schlichting, head coach (UMKC assistant Men's Coach) and Matt Pritchett, assistant (Pembroke Hill School head coach). Parents Jerry Blouin and Scott Weir traveled with the team as chaperons.

The ODP tournament consists of the State Select (top 18 players in each state) Teams from the 14 states that make up the Midwestern Region (II) of the United States Youth Soccer Association. 1985 age group teams include top players who were high school juniors or seniors this year. Kansas had 5 seniors on the team: Ryan Oblak, who will attend Stanford University; Will John, who has a soccer scholarship to St. Louis University; Matt Blouin and Richie Harris, who will both attend Marquette University on soccer scholarships, and Dan Rundle who will play at Avila next fall.

The Kansas team out-shot their opponents 87 to 20 in 5 games. Kansas had 50 shots on goal versus 12 for the opposition. Kansas had 27 corner kicks, their

opposition had 8. But, what all those statistics don't adequately show: the Kansas team had confidence, courage, maturity, "heart", and a desire to make a strong statement to the other state teams in the Region.

The team faced Indiana in the opener. Kansas dominated the game, yet the final score was 1-1. Huhnerkoch scored, off a set piece, with about 15 seconds left in the game, to get the tie.

The second game was versus Illinois, who won the tournament last year. Blouin opened the game up with two great goals, one of them a snap header off a corner kick. (Will) John added two of his own, including a free kick from 25 yards out, before the end of the first half. John assisted on the first four goals and set the tone for the rest of the weekend. With a 4-0 lead at the half, the coach gave some starters a rest. Fallik had a great first half with pinpoint crosses and great hustle. Huhnerkoch scored the fifth Kansas goal of the game. The final score was 5-2.

Minnesota was up next, and while Kansas had to win to advance, Minnesota only had to tie to proceed. This was another rout. The passing, teamwork, and intensity displayed by the Kansas boys began to attract attention from referees and Regional coaches. Kansas dominated, with Blouin getting the hat trick and then resting for a large chunk of the second half. Gorczyca and Weir owned the midfield, and defenders Oblak, White, Havens and Broxterman held Minnesota to one shot on goal. Will John, who has represented Kansas at the Regional and National level, played with intensity and had four assists. He and Blouin just could not be contained. Oran Andrews, who had played brilliantly throughout the tournament, dislocated his shoulder and was out for the rest of the games. Rundle, Steinke, and Quigley stepped it up on the outside mid and Mitchell showed blazing speed and wore out the defenders with his hustle. The team continually burned the Minnesota defense with their speed and skills. Goals in the game were scored by Blouin (3), Steinke and Rundle. Final score: Kansas 5, Minnesota 1.

The Semi-Final against Wisconsin let everyone know Kansas was for real. Coaches had praised a Wisconsin forward prior to the game, and Kansas' central defense, Oblak and White, bottled him up. Kansas scored a minute and a half into the game and never looked back. Gorczyca was tireless in the middle of the field, and Quigley had a strong performance. The tandem of John and Blouin up top couldn't be handled. Goal scoring was by John (2), Quigley, Mitchell, Weir, and Steinke. The score was quickly 6-0, and the starters were able to rest up for the final game, which would be just 2 ½ hours later. Every team member had a big game and the game was almost totally error free. Kansas moved the ball at will and executed with precision. Kansas made it look easy!

The final was against Michigan, a very big, powerful, and skilled team. Michigan was favored to win, and no one seemed to believe in Kansas... except the Kansas boys and their coaches. Kansas took the game to Michigan, controlled

the ball and created numerous chances. Michigan tried their best to counter but they had no answer for Kansas' attack. The game was even for the first 20 minutes until Oblak pushed the ball past the keeper, finishing a rebound from a Will John free kick, Grow hadn't been tested much in the first four games, but was fired at three times from point blank range in this one. He made three pro-type saves and preserved the shutout against a very good team. Rundle iced it with a classy right-footed 25-yard rocket to the right upper 90 that left the Michigan goalkeeper stunned. Final score: 2-0.

While most teams chant "1,2,3, Team" or "Let's Go!" or "Go Kansas" before a game, during this tournament, the Kansas team adopted the chant: "DREAMS COME TRUE". At first, the chant was something of a lighthearted statement. Kansas had never won the Region II ODP tournament. But, as the team won more and more games, the chant became more of a mantra. At the final whistle of the final game, a yell came from a Kansas player, "See, dreams DO come true!" And so they do...

-submitted by Donna Kaminsky, Kansas ODP Chairperson.