

Background information provided by Coach Jose Smith:

Illinois President Cup Champion - 2023 (Qualifies for Midwest President Cup Regionals in Sioux Falls, South Dakota June 14-18 2024)

Midwest President Cup Champion - 2024 (Qualifies for President Cup Nationals in Wichita, Kansas July 12-16)

Illinois Presidents Cup offers a championship tournament that earns advancement into the US Youth Regional event which then earns advancement into the US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup. Our team won the Illinois President cup earning them a spot at the Midwest Presidents Regional President Cup. With us winning the Regional event we now earn our spot at the USYS National President Cup.

Any large tournament spanning over multiple months, weekends, and days is a task in itself. You have to have the player depth to finish the events. We as a team experienced players being injured and unable to play along with players pushing through not being 100%. These events are difficult to win as they are not just a one day event, they are played over time. We lost a starting player to an ACL tear back in February and did not have her for the Regional event. At the Regional event we had a starting Center Back unable to play the championship match due to injury. These situations are hard to deal with but it allows opportunities for our players to step up and fill in those roles.

Our team has been a good defensive team historically. We tend to not give up many goals throughout the season. We are blessed with 2 quality GK that can split time and always have one ready if there was ever an injury. Our back line is very cohesive and communicates well when playing. Even our midfielders are the workhorses that help with defending but also help join the attack with our forwards.

Our player Ella Langellier who suffered the ACL tear is still very much part of our team. She joined us at regionals and supported the girls throughout the whole event. The girls really bond with each other on and off the field. These events help us come together as a soccer family while we are traveling. The players and families offer rides and help one another out to make sure we can get everyone to the events. While at the events the parents help out with the team laundry, dinners, goodie bags, and team bonding events.

Most of the players I have been coaching over the years and they have bought into the coaching style and believe in the way we play. They have a drive to succeed and support each other but also myself as their coach. Its difficult to fully prepare for these events as the girls at this age have jobs and play multiple sports and balance school work. The best preparation is them playing together over the years. They have won and lost together and we can make adjustments based on those experiences. The girls are able to take instruction on game day and adjust based on the opponent we are playing and that is a huge advantage for us.