



February 23, 2009

U18 Girls Win IAS Showcase Tournament

Ludlow, Ma: The U18 Girls team coached by Keith Saltmarsh and Ed Meyer participated in the IAS College Showcase Sunday February 22 in Deerfield Mass. The team played two games early Sunday morning winning both through quality possession and speed through their attack. Leanne Rivard of Chicopee, Jordan Grande and Brie Butcher of East Longmeadow along with Amanda Grant and Lauren Salem of Westfield scored for the Jr. Pioneers. The offense was supported by the defensive play of Nicole Faircloth celebrating her 18th birthday, Leah Jacobs of Northampton, Tia Novak of Southampton and Britt McDonald of Belchertown while Kayla Prout of Holyoke was in goal recording the first win. The second match of the tournament tested the patience of the team. Brie Butcher was between the pipes recording the shut out, while the offense took its time to break down the defense of the opposing team. The morning results, 2 wins and going into the afternoon session with a solid chance to make the playoffs.

The afternoon session proved more difficult for the team. A slow start to the 3rd game vs. Maine, the girls dropped the game giving up two goals. An adjustment made by the coaching staff in the 4th game resulted in a single point moving the team forward. The 0-0 tie gave the Pioneers a birth as the 3rd place seed. The playoff format was designed around the idea of 12 min games and a golden goal situation. Taking each game of the playoff's to overtime through solid goal tending by Emerson Pullman of Northampton, the Pioneers through their patient build up of possession soccer were able to eventually break down each team and score the game winner.

The U18 Girls over the past 10 weeks of indoor training were finally able to put to the test their development. Attending the Winter Classic at FSA in Farmington Connecticut and going 2 and 2 as well as the IAS tournament; the team and coaching staff feel they have taken a solid step in the right direction to prepare for the spring season. This spring carry's high hopes for the team and coaching staff. After the agreement to merge the two U17 teams from last year, the players and coaches feel they are better prepared for the spring season having greater depth in each aspect of the game.