

REGION IV TECHNICAL REPORT

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Team: Region IV 1992 Boys ODP

Event: Barcelona Tour

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Coaches: Joshua A. Kalkstein, Head Coach
Paul Holocher, Assistant Coach
Jim Cofer, Goalkeeper Coach

Head Administrator: Steve Bircsak

Team Administrator: Bela Bircsak

Team: Carlos Benavidez CS, Austin Bravo, CN, Eric Bryant CN, Jimmy Callinan CN, Dustin Corea OR, Anthony Gooch CN, Ricardo Gonzalez CS, Justin Hill ID, George Malki AZ, Jacob Nevarez NM, Moises Orozco CS, Nicholas Palodiichuk WA, Keon Parsa CS, Marco Pineda CS, Alberto Rosas CS, Alan Rovira CS, Dennis Sanchez NM, Andrew Tusaazmajja CS.

Cc: Ms. Jolene Woodhave, Director
Mr. Steve Bircsak, Region IV Boys ODP Administrator
Mr. Mike Haas, Region IV Boys Head Coach

INTRODUCTION:

Region IV provides the better players opportunities to be identified for our National Team as well as the opportunity for further development. Year after year our Region has placed large numbers into the Residency Program.

What was different from last year was that the Residency Players were not released to the Regional Teams for the trip. I felt this was the correct decision as it provided others with international experience that they otherwise would not have had.

Also different this year was the affect of the Academy League. When adding all the Residency kids, Academy kids, injuries, etc. we were without 21 of our top players from our pool. We also had 6 that had traveled to Florida for Inter-Regionals that were unable to travel to Barcelona due to Academy / Residency (four of our kids were called into Residency based on their performance at Inter-Regionals). This was not seen as a negative by any means. While we clearly were going to be competitively weaker than our pool would suggest and weaker than the squad we took to Florida it would prove to be a fantastic opportunity to further develop the players in our Region!

PHILOSOPHY:

For this event it was decided that every player would start two games and play the majority of said two games. The thought was that it would allow each player as well as the collective whole to develop a rhythm allowing for better play and thus a better experience.

PREPARATION:

Each day we had a training / regeneration session with the exception of our off day. All of our training sessions were fairly light but mentally were very intense as we wanted to be as organized as possible from a tactical standpoint. We felt that we were very organized during both our holdover week as well as inter-regionals and it was our hope that this event would be no different. Unfortunately, even though the equipment was brought, we could not make use of the video analyses, which we felt had been so instrumental in our success both at Camp and at Inter-Regionals, due to technical issues. In light of that we felt that the group had been prepared as much as possible and had made the most of our training sessions and tactical discussions.

SITE:

We played / trained at 4 different venues.

We shared a venue for training purposes with Region I. It was located five minutes from the hotel, which was extremely convenient. That said the field measured a small 100 x 52.

Our first match against FC Damm was played on our training field. The quality of the field was great however the size affected the game negatively. The game was played at break neck pace as a result and was extremely physical.

Our second match against FC Barcelona was played at FCB's training facility. Just to see the facility was worth the trip let alone be given the opportunity to play there. The game was played on one of their two field turf fields, which measured 115 x 74.

The third match against Cornella was played at Cornella's stadium (seating capacity of approximately 3,000). It too was field turf and measured roughly 115 by 74.

Our final match was initially scheduled to be played at a club in Barcelona but was changed to a little town 20 minutes from where we were staying. Again it was a smaller stadium with a similar seating capacity to that of Cornella. It too was roughly 115 x 74 though it was played on a beautifully maintained grass field.

EVENT:

The games that we were scheduled to play were set up as a series of friendlies. Due to our first place finish at the Inter-Regionals we were scheduled to play the top teams (the other three Regions played lesser opposition).

Overall the week was a fantastic experience. The quality of soccer that the boys were exposed to was of the highest level. With the exception of the first match the facilities that hosted our games were extremely impressive. The hotel that we stayed in was also great (though it should be noted that the other three Region's were staying in hotels that were not nearly as nice – ah the spoils of victory). We were located right on the Mediterranean, which everyone appreciated. The quality of the food was also very, very good. Lastly, providing the boys the opportunity to see a FC Barcelona La Liga match was unique in itself and a memory that the boys will cherish for the rest of their lives.

Our first match against FC Damm was played on our "home" field in Santa Sussana. The field was measured off at a tiny 100 x 52. The field itself was a field turf field. Needless to say the game was played at break neck pace with little time and space. We encountered an extremely competitive side in FC Damm. Of the three Spanish opponents that we played that week FC Damm was the most competitive. The match itself was an extremely physical game. There was a huge gulf in class between FC Damm and us. Athletically we found that we could compete but technically and tactically we were clearly second best, a theme that by the third game would become all too familiar.

Our second game saw us play FC Barcelona, which was played at their training center in Barcelona. The game itself was played on one of their two field turf fields. It was a fantastic experience. The facility was unbelievably impressive. Our initial concern was that the boys were going to be overawed by the occasion and be defeated before the first whistle. Fortunately the boys were able to focus and started well. That said, the game proved to be a tale of two halves. The first half saw us play an athletically weaker Barcelona (we believe that the first half FCB fielded their '94's). Even then Barcelona had the better of possession and chances. We were fortunate to be up 1-0 at halftime. In the second half a completely different Barcelona took the field (FCB fielded their '93's for the 2nd half). That second half was the most impressive youth

soccer that any of us had ever witnessed before. They were athletically, technically and tactically miles ahead of us. The final score, 2-1 to Barcelona, flattered us to the extreme. It was clear that to them the game was nothing more than a training session. Our boys, conversely, played with their hearts on their sleeves and were tireless in their defending (which we did for the majority of that second half).

The third and final game against Spanish opposition saw us play Cornella, which was played at their facility located in Barcelona. It was an impressive, albeit smaller stadium, which hosted a few thousand and was once again played on field turf. At this point the boys had grown tactically quite a bit. Due to better organization and an opponent that was not quite at the standard of the previous two opponents, we performed much better. Once again, we were second best on the technical and tactical side. We were out-possessed again however we enjoyed more possession than we had in the previous two matches. The true highlight of the contest actually came after the game itself. As we lingered around disheartened from our third consecutive defeat, 100 kids with ages ranging from 4 to 7, took the field for training. It was an impressive sight to say the least. Several of our boys made comments that "had they been born in Spain" or "if we had that back home" – it was clear that these kids were further along due to better training starting at younger age.

Our fourth and final game was a big disappointment. We had been scheduled to play yet another top club from Barcelona. We were told that one of their players had been involved in a motorcycle accident and therefore our opponent had to beg out. We then switched venues (we had been scheduled to play in Barcelona again). We played in a mini stadium on a pristine grass field located only 20 minutes away from where we were staying. We were told that we would be playing Cornella once again but this time we would be playing against an older side. When we arrived we saw Cornella playing against Region II's '93 team. Cornella was scheduled to play a double header against both the Region II side and then us. Unfortunately, the Cornella side was not their '91's, it appeared to be their '93's. The difference between the team we had played the night before and this one was massive. Needless to say the Region II '93's were ahead 5-0 at the half! It was decided that we could not play this Cornella side, as it would have been an absolutely useless exercise. Since there were very few options we came to the conclusion that we were better off playing the Region II '93's. The game itself was a very one-sided affair. We were athletically, technically and tactically superior to the '93 side. We missed several, clear cut opportunities but did pull out a 2-0 result.

Throughout the week our staff emphasized the importance of collective play on both sides of the ball. Most of our players put too much value on their individual ability to beat players. We, the coaches, dedicated ourselves to trying to change the way our players viewed the game. Over the course of the week we had seen three fantastic Spanish sides, all of which focused their game on passing and movement off the ball. Their positional play and their ability to create and see spaces proved to be far superior to ours. As the week wore on our players improved in this respect but it was clear that we were merely trying to play catch up.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Three of our four games were to be played in Barcelona yet we were staying in a hotel an hour outside of Barcelona. This was less than ideal as it gave the players less time to recover from game to game.
2. The hotel that we stayed at did not provide us with a meeting room, which made tactical sessions and video sessions very difficult. After the tactical success we had in Florida, which I largely attribute to our use of video, it was extremely disappointing that we did not have a room in which we could make use of video.
3. Our tour leader, Paula, was an Italian girl who lives in Venice. While her Spanish was good we actually had several players that spoke much better Spanish. It should also be noted that Paula didn't know Barcelona any better than any of us. Preferably we should have a native of the city providing us with a better experience.
4. We had three fantastic matches. It must be said that from what we understand the other three Regions did not have the same experience. I mention this because had we not

won Inter-Regionals we would have been playing much weaker opposition, which would have made for a disappointing trip.

WORD OF THANKS:

- ✚ Jolene Woodhave for her support of the Olympic Development Program. Jolene also proved to be a wonderful photographer / videographer!
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- ✚ Mike Haas for the quality staff he put together and for the opportunity to work for the Region and with these young players.
- ✚ To Paul Holocher and Jim Cofer. Both were fantastic with the boys. I especially want to thank Paul for the lack of sleep throughout the week!

GAME NOTES:

Match Day 1

Opponent: FC Damm

System: 4-1-2-3

Score: 2-4

Goal scorers: Bravo (Tusaazmajja) 29m, Gonzalez (unassisted) 41m.

Lineup:

GK: Sanchez; Backs: Callinan; Gooch; Rosas; Pineda; MF: Nevarez (Benavidez, 62m); Gonzalez; Malki; FWD: Tusaazmajja (Orozco, 62m); W: Bravo; Corea.

80 Minute Match

Game:

It's too bad we weren't able to play FC Damm on a standard sized field. They were a very impressive side. They were well organized, athletic, technical and tactically very astute. What was also very clear was that they were very competitive. The game was extremely physical though not dirty by any means. Damm played at a speed that was much higher than what our boys were accustomed to. They were comfortable technically moving the ball at speed and they were comfortable making decisions at speed. Conversely, our boys clearly lacked the composure necessary to cope with the small confines of the field. Damm was well organized and very rarely got caught out of position. They defended well collectively as well which are boys were not used to seeing. Damm was able to create several chances however it should be noted that we made some individual mistakes, which resulted in two of their goals. Damm did extremely well to consistently pull our players out of position, which allowed them to find huge gaps in both our midfield as well as our back line.

Damm both out possessed us and enjoyed territorial advantage. The one positive for us was that we were able to catch them on the counter on our first goal. The second goal came just on the other side of half time – we came out of the break with good intensity which we used to positive effect as Damm came out a bit slow. Our goal came from a spill from their keeper, which provided us with a simple tap in.

Unfortunately, the game will be remembered for the horrific broken leg, which Jimmy Callinan suffered with 7 minutes left in regulation. Jimmy went into a tackle leading with the outside of his foot while the Damm player went into with his studs raised. Jimmy was caught three inches below his knee, which resulted in a break of his tibia and fibula. At that point the game was ended as Jimmy was taken to the hospital. It was a horrible way to start our trip as the boys were all clearly affected by the incident. It should be noted that Sam Johnson, our trainer, was fantastic throughout the whole ordeal. Jimmy's parents were notified and his mother flew out the next morning. They both then flew back home the next day.

Match Day 2

Opponent: FC Barcelona

System: 4-1-2-3

Score: 1-2

Goal scorers: Orozco (Malki) 14m.

Lineup:

GK: Parsa; Backs: Pindea; Gooch; Rosas; Pineda; MF: Palodiichuck; Benavidez (Gonzalez, 66m); Malki; FWD: Orozco (Bravo, 66m); W: Hill; Correa.

80 Minute Match

Game:

The big concern going into this game was that our boys were going to be overawed by the occasion. It was clearly going to be one of the biggest days in their lives and they all knew it. Walking into FC Barcelona's training facility was clearly impressive, inspiring, daunting and intimidating all at the same time. Our pre-game consisted of reminding the boys that they were not here to be tourists and that there was no point in playing the game if we weren't there to compete.

The first half began with us sitting back and offering Barca too much respect. By the time we decided to go at them much of the first half had passed. The squad that Barca fielded for the first half was physically much smaller than us. That said, their movement, their technical ability and their ability to read the game was unbelievably impressive. Barca, even though they were physically smaller and did not have as much pace, had no problem in out possessing us. Once again, as we had seen on the previous night against Damm, we were able to catch them on the break with all the space they left in behind their defense as they pressed forward into our half. We quickly countered on the left as Alan Rovira provided a deft little flick to George Malki who was able to slip in Moises Orozco in who then was able to finish from a poor angle with his weaker left foot. It was a very impressive goal to be sure. At that point we had scored three goals in our two games and we probably hadn't taken more than five shots! Aside from this one opportunity we were not able to create any further chances in the first half. At the break there was a general sense of optimism as we all felt we could compete – we were just respecting them too much. If we pressed them and showed a bit more composure in our build up play we felt as if we could not only hold onto our lead but that we could also create more chances.

Unfortunately our optimism was dealt a devastating blow as we took the field in the second half. The team FCB put out in the second half was unbelievable. Athletically Barca was far and away superior to our team. Not only were they bigger, faster and stronger, they were technically even better than the team we had played in the first half. One thing that became clear throughout the second half was that for Barcelona, this game was merely a training exercise. The one thing we had going for us was our intensity and work rate. While Barca did manage to score two goals they seemed uninterested in scoring goals. They were absolutely content to keep the ball, changing the point of attack, making us work and trying to isolate us on the wings. The two wingers they had in the second half were phenomenal as they kept taking turns absolutely terrorizing our outside backs. Aside from the wing players the rest of the Barca team moved the ball at speed and only dribbled to keep possession. Their movement off the ball was impressive as they constantly played off our players' shoulders making it extremely difficult for our boys to track them. In possession they played one and two touch and typically kept the ball on the floor. However they were quite capable of driving the ball over 50 and 60 yards, which was far beyond what any of our players could do.

When the game was over it was great to see that our boys were upbeat. They could have been easily down about having been on the losing end of our second game but it was clear that our boys recognized that they were clearly outclassed. In fact, I think that it would be fair to say that our boys felt privileged to have played against such a fantastic side made up of such brilliant young players. Our staff also felt as if we had just witnessed one of the best youth sides we are likely to ever see. In the end, the 1-2 score line flattered us to no end. The gulf between the two sides was enormous. The experience, however, was fantastic and will certainly prove to be a point of reference for our boys as they finally came to recognize what it means to be a world class player. In that one game our boys' values shifted as they came to appreciate the ability to defend

as a collective unit, to play simple, move the ball at speed and value intelligent movement and spacing off the ball.

Match Day 3

Opponent: Cornella

System: 4-1-2-3

Score: 1-2

Goal scorers: Andrew Tusaazmajja (Bravo) 32m.

Lineup:

GK: Sanchez; Backs: Pineda; Gooch; Rosas; Bryant; MF: Nevarez (Palodiichuck, 51); Gonzalez ; Benavidez; FWD: Bravo; W: Tusaazmajja (Hill, 51m); Corea.

70 Minute Match

Game:

At this point we may have be 0-2 but the boys were excited to play. We were set to play in Cornella's stadium, which sat a few thousand creating a professional environment. That coupled with the article which greeted us at the front gate regarding a player that Cornella had just sold to Arsenal Football Club just the previous week, had the boys buzzing.

Of the three sides that we had played, Cornella was the weakest. That said, they were still clearly more intelligent footballers than we were. They didn't defend as well as our two previous opponents and provided us with more time and space but we still weren't quite able to use the space quite as effectively as they were. Our front three of Corea, Bravo and Tusaazmajja were unable to get in behind either on the dribble or on the run. Nor we they able to provide us with the necessary width which made it much easier for Cornella to defend us. The one goal we did get, however, was from a moment of individual brilliance from Tusaazmajja as he ran onto to a flicked header from Bravo and brushed off three challenges before slotting from the top of the box. Aside from that one moment we found it very difficult to break Cornella down even though we were afforded more space in the midfield than in our previous two encounters. We were just too ineffective with our movement overall and our front three lacked the necessary technique. At this point, our third game, we had absolutely improved our defending since we had too as we were out-posessed by such a large percentage. Our holding mid and back four were much improved tactically which held firm and kept the game close.

At half time we discussed the necessity for our front three to be more active, more demanding and to use the space more wisely. We also reminded our center backs to keep their nerve and not get caught getting forward. Our concern was that we would lose discipline, lose shape and get countered. Sure enough, two minutes into the second half, one of our center backs went on a run and lost possession. Cornella immediately countered through the middle and scored. It was a massive disappointment for the team as a whole and unfair on our backline as they clearly had been keeping the games competitive for us up to that point. The immaturity and naivety was obvious and hopefully a lesson was learned. The game finished without either team creating any other real chances. While this was our third loss it was the only loss that the boys had a difficulty in dealing with. Cornella was still clearly a better side than us but this was a game we felt we could get something from and unfortunately, we still proved to be ineffective in the final third and one moment of poor decision making cost us.

At that point the staff made sure that the boys were reminded that we were in Spain for the experience and that these are games we need to learn from. Our constant theme for the week was "do what you should do and not what you can do." All too often our better players develop bad habits because of the disparity between themselves and the average club player and they therefore tend to do what they can instead of what they should. In Spain they saw first hand that the better players simplify the game whereas we tend to complicate it.

Match Day 4

Opponent: Region II '93's

System: 4-1-2-3

Score: 2-0

Goal scorers: Hill (Palodiichuck) 31m, Rosas (Malki) 59m.

Lineup:

GK: Parsa; Backs: Pineda; Gooch; Rosas; Bryant; MF: Palodiichuck; Benavidez; Malki; F:

Orozco; W: Hill;

65 Minute Match

The final match was an important one for us as we all wanted to end our trip on a high. That said, due to reasons out of our control, we were rescheduled to play Cornella's '91's instead of the side we were originally slated to play. We knew we were in for another tough game as we had been beaten the previous day by Cornella's '92's so the thought of playing their '91's was a bit worrying. When we arrived to the changed venue (we were scheduled to have played in Barcelona but due to the change we now were playing 20 minutes away from our hotel) we saw a Cornella side playing against Region II's '93's. The score at half time was 5-0 in favor of Region II. When we were informed that we were going to play this very Cornella side (they appeared to be a combination of '93's and '94's instead of '91's) action had to be taken. While we were there to play Spanish opposition this match would have been a farce. The decision was taken to shorten their game and that we would play Region II's '93's as we were faced with only three choices – no game, play against the Cornella side or play against Region II's '93's. Since we still had 3 players that had only played one game it was deemed absolutely imperative that we get a game in.

As the game began it was clear that the boys lacked the motivation that they had had in our previous three matches as they found it tough to deal with the disappointment of having to play a younger Regional Team. As a result, our play was none to impressive. Sure, we out possessed them, had territorial advantage, created more chances, etc., but the effort and general sense of purpose was not there. Defensively the space between the lines was too great, many of the players were holding on to the ball too long and one or two players were trying to be too cute on the ball. At half time we reminded the boys that they were still being evaluated and more importantly, that we were still first and foremost concerned with our performance and that the result would be a by-product of right play. We were very critical of our lack of movement off the ball and our unwillingness to defend collectively and made our disappointment extremely clear to them.

What a turn around! We couldn't have been happier about our performance in the second half. While we managed to only score one goal (we did score one in the first half though we also squandered several other opportunities) our performance was much better. We moved the ball at speed, our movement off the ball was very impressive and we played with a general sense of purpose and urgency that had been clearly lacking in the first half. It was great to see that the boys, in that second half, were able to put in a performance that underlined all that they had learned and experienced up to that point on the trip. The spacing and movement off the ball was very impressive – much more impressive than it had been not only on that trip but also compared to our movement off the ball in Camp or in Florida. It was very rewarding for our staff as we felt that the main mission of the trip was to come away from the trip better for the experience. After the game we impressed upon the boys how important it was that they remember this experience and that it was their responsibility to keep the bar raised high and further, that it was their responsibility to make their teammates at club and their opponents better by maintaining that standard and maintaining the same values.

PLAYER EVALUATIONS:

Introductory statement: On the whole we were way over our head. Every team we played was as athletic, technically much more proficient and certainly more tactically astute. While our boys tried their best to compete tactically, we were proved to be incapable of reading the game in real time. Our speed of play and thought was nowhere close to the level of our competition (save our last game against Region II's '93's). As a staff we all felt that the only kids worth recommending to our National Staff are the following three kids - Nick Palodiichuk, George Malki and Dustin Corea. That said it's important to note that we already have approximately 13 kids from our Region in Residency.

All in all, the trip proved to be a fantastic experience for all 18 boys. Without question, every player improved immensely for the experience. One final thought for the group as a whole is that there was little to no personality / presence in this group. Our team was astonishingly quiet compared to every one of our opponents (including the Region II '93's).

Keon Parsa (GK): Keon is extremely consistent – he is technically sound, has good footwork and good distribution. His greatest strength, by a distance, is his presence and his ability to organize. That all said he is a good athlete though not great and does not possess great size. While he is solid in all areas without any major flaws Keon is not outstanding in an area other than organization.

Dennis Sanchez (GK): Dennis has a great frame and is a good athlete but lacks personality. He has no presence, does not organize and does not appear to be competitive. The biggest concern we have for Dennis is his indecisiveness, particularly on high balls as well as balls in behind the back four. Dennis was definitely in way over his head on this event.

Alberto Rosas (CB): Alberto “Biggie” is a true warrior. Without question one of our strongest leaders. In Camp he outperformed Emilio Orozco (now in Residency). However, his level of play in Spain was not as good as it was in Camp over the summer. While his 1 v. 1 defending is extremely good, as his ability to win balls in the air, his positioning and the way he shapes his body to the field gets him into trouble at times. He also failed to organize which he had done so well both at Camp and at Inter-Regionals. He’s a very good athlete though he lacks a bit of size (for a center back) and the pace to make up for it.

Anthony Gooch (CB): Gooch improved dramatically during his week in Spain. He has great size though lacks pace. His positional play, his 1 v. 1 defending and poor decision making on the ball improved from his first game to his last (he played in all four games). By the end of the week he justified his inclusion though still has a ton of room for development.

Jimmy Callinan (RB): We planned on using Jimmy as an outside back throughout the week as that is where we needed the most cover. It should be noted that he also is capable of playing as a holding mid or center back. Unfortunately for Jimmy and for the team, he suffered a bad break to his tibia and fibula towards the end of the first game. Jimmy is a good athlete but has a weak personality with little to no presence. He is technically sound though not great and makes decent decisions. His timing or his runs out of the back and the shape of his runs needs to be addressed. Lastly, his technique in tackling is abysmal which contributed to his injury.

Eric Bryant (RB): One of the few personalities in the team. Eric is a great kid who works hard for the team. Timing in the tackle is exceptional. Decent athlete though he lacks power and strength. Defensively his positional play is pretty good. A little late in stepping but provides great balance when on the weak side of play. Technically Eric is very, very rough. Makes good decisions on the ball but is often unable to execute. Loves to get forward off the ball but often killed his own space with his run and was never able to maximize the width for us which was a massive problem as we struggled to build out of the back.

Marco Pineda (LB): He doesn’t look the part but the reality is that Marco is a pretty good athlete. Lacks height but is much quicker and fitter than he looks. He is, without question, our best 1 v. 1 defender. He also understands shape both from a defensive perspective as well as when we are in possession. Marco is also technically our best outside back by a stretch. Unfortunately, Marco has a penchant for forcing the ball, which made us all too predictable and too easy to defend against. While Marco is one of our best players and is a better athlete than he looks it will be his lack of athleticism that will keep him from making the next level.

Jacob Nevarez (HM): Jacob definitely improved from his first game to his second (he played in two matches – vs. FC Damm and against Cornellà). He was definitely at a disadvantage as he did not travel to Florida with us, which is where we were able to spend a lot of time doing video, which made a massive difference in our play. As a result, Jacob was out of sorts in the first game vs. FC Damm. His positional play was clearly a problem for us and he certainly played a large part in two of the goals we gave up that night (not to mention that he conceded a penalty which they missed). His positional play in possession was also a constant problem for us as he was unable to change the point of attack as he continued to show for the ball at poor angles making it easier for the opponent to either dispossess him or force him back from where he got it. While a good athlete (Jacob has size, power and strength though he does not have much pace), Jake

technically is far from being clean. While he improved markedly in the second game it was clear that Jacob was having a tough time playing at that level.

Nick Palodiichuk (HM): Nick benefited as a result of us losing 6 players that we had at Inter-Regionals. He is the perfect example of how important a trip like this can be for our players even when we lose so many kids to Residency and the Academy Program. If we had had those 6 players Nick would not have been invited. We didn't, he was, and he was phenomenal. Nick is one of two kids that I would highly recommend to our National Staff. His growth and development in the one week alone was incredible. Looking back on the pool that we had in Camp I would now say that Nick, based on his performance in Spain, would be our strongest holding mid. He is extremely athletic – he possesses size, power, strength, stamina, quickness and mobility. He's a left footed kid who is extremely technical and has phenomenal power when striking the ball. Nick proved to be extremely coachable and grew tremendously throughout the week. His understanding of the position and his reading of the game grew exponentially. My one knock on Nick is that he needs to have a bigger vocal presence. He tends to be a bit shy (though not in the tackle) and soft spoken. That said, he definitely warrants a look from our Residency Program.

Ricardo Gonzalez (HM / AM): "Richie" was another player that was not selected to attend Inter-Regionals. While not good enough to warrant a look for our Residency Program, Richie more than justified his inclusion on the Spain trip. He proved to be very dynamic as he seamlessly moved from a holding mid spot to an attacking mid spot. Athletically Richie possesses quickness, strength and stamina though he is not the biggest. Richie is technically very clean and a great passer of the ball. His positioning off the ball and his reading of the game are both very good. His number one attribute, without question, is his personality. He is a very good leader, great organizer and fierce competitor. Richie is very strong in the tackle and covers a ton of ground. Richie is another kid that clearly benefited from the opportunity presented to him to attend this trip.

Carlos Benavidez (AM): Carlos was one of our best two attacking mids in Florida and as a result, much was expected of him in Spain. Unfortunately he did not deliver. That said, Carlos is a good athlete, decent height and stamina though he lacks a bit of power. Has decent pace though no one would accuse him of being fast. Carlos is very, very smooth on the ball. Holds the ball well and is a good possession dribbler. He is also a great passer of the ball over shorter distances. Unfortunately, Carlos is very soft in the tackle, has no presence, does not get forward off the ball and is not capable of the final ball. In short – he is a very good holding / possessing attacking mid. He does read the game better than the majority of kids in this pool and knows how to find space for himself.

George Malki (AM): The most interesting player in the 18 by a distance. In camp Georgie was very much a luxury player with his Arizona team. He was only interested in playing when he had the ball. He would not defend and he'd rip into his teammates for their inability and worse, ripped into his teammates even when he made a mistake thus, placing the blame elsewhere. In Holdover week he proved to be very coachable and made a fantastic turn around. Unfortunately for Georgie there were other kids that just beat him out for the Florida Inter-Regional trip. Georgie was given the opportunity to travel to Spain due to others being unable to attend and he certainly made the most of his chance. It has to be said that he has physically grown a ton since the summer, which has hugely helped. He is very athletic. He is extremely quick, has decent size, covers a ton of ground (more than anyone else in the team by a distance), etc. He is also, without question, one of the most technical kids in the group and was comparable to the opposition in Spain. Two footed, comfortable running at people at speed and a great passer of the ball – Georgie is also our most creative passer and most capable of the final ball. He started the trip very much and individualist – he'd get caught in possession all too often. After the FC Barcelona game he changed his game night and day. He improved his movement off the ball, he improved his reading of the game and he simplified his game as well. He also has a great personality both on the field and off – he's very coachable and without question has presence on the field. I would strongly recommend that he be looked at for Residency. He compares favorably to the other two attacking mids that we've placed in Residency from this pool (Edson Lemus and Cristian Alvarez-Lopez).

Moises Orozco (T): Moises is one of the best soccer players in the pool. He's great at holding the ball with his back to goal and bringing his teammates into play. He's also a very good

finisher, and very, very clean on the ball with either foot. Tactically very sound and can definitely lead the line. Moises also does a great job of defending from the front. Athletically he has good size and is pretty strong. Unfortunately, he does not possess the pace necessary to trouble any opposition at the next level. He's a fantastic kid, well liked and very coachable. That said he's another kid that lacks a ton of presence on the field.

Andrew Tusaazmajja (W / T): Andrew struggled and was out of place on this trip. He lacks tactically understanding, is technically pretty poor and lacks personality. While Andrew is a pretty small kid he is powerful and very, very quick. He did score one fantastic individual goal but it was due to effort rather than intelligence or skill. He doesn't read the game well at all either in possession or out of possession nor does he move off the ball well.

Austin Bravo (W / T): Austin possesses a ton of pace. One of the few kids that could actually pose a threat athletically to any of the opposition we faced on our trip. Other than his pace he has decent size but is not very powerful. Unfortunately, Austin is probably the weakest kid in the pool from a technical perspective. He is better at getting in behind off the ball than he is at running at people with the ball due to his poor technique. Oddly enough, he's a decent finisher even though he struggled to make the simplest of passes. Very competitive and has no problem throwing himself into the tackle. His off the ball movement is extremely inconsistent. At times he's completely uninvolved and at others he's fantastic. Not a ton of personality nor did he prove to be truly coachable.

Justin Hill (W): Justin is, without question, one of the best athletes in the pool. He possesses good size, strength, power and pace. Technically he's not a great passer or crosser of the ball but he is a decent finisher and he's very good at taking players on. The two biggest knocks against him are his lack of presence and personality as well as his deficiencies on the tactical side. He struggled to pick up simple concepts which others were able to grasp without difficulty. It was not for lack of effort on his part. He struggled to comprehend what we were trying to do defensively as a group and he struggled to get basic shape when we were in possession. He also was incapable, for all his pace, to get in behind at any point in time throughout the trip. Justin definitely needs his role to be simplified for him as he also proved that he has a hard time reading the game in real time. That all said, he does possess some fantastic qualities that set him apart from most of the kids in this age group.

Alan Rovira (W): Alan is technically our best at running at players. While he is not amazingly quick he does have fantastic close control and has great balance. Alan is also a very good passer of the ball. Other than his balance he does not have any athletic qualities that set him apart from anyone else in the pool. He does have great confidence and is a very good and creative passer of the ball. He's also capable of serving a great ball (and is left footed). That all said Alan's work rate is abysmal. He doesn't defend and I can't recall a time that he even attempted to get in behind the opponent off the ball at Camp, in Florida or in Spain. He also, like all the rest of our wingers, does not understand spacing or timing of runs. He consistently killed his own space. To make matters worse, he often killed his first touch and all too often he held the ball too long allowing the opponent to double. Alan could be a very good player but definitely has some personality issues to tackle.

Dustin Coreia (W): Technically Dustin is our best player. The things he can do with the ball are phenomenal. Dustin is also a good athlete – he has decent size, great balance and possesses decent strength. He also has some pace though not outstanding pace. He is still very naïve in the way he plays the game (which maybe isn't the worst thing in the world). He is less interested in competing and more interested in the artistic side of the game. His work rate is not great; he is tactically inept and makes poor decisions (gets caught on the ball or tries to be cute out of the back) all too often. His speed of play is too slow – his decision making is too slow and his thought process is too slow – both of which are probably due to playing at a level of play that allows him to hold on to the ball for long periods of time and get away with it. Dustin certainly has the potential to play at the next level but has a ton of room for growth. He would, without question, be a massive project. To his credit, he is a good kid with a great personality.