

US Youth Soccer ODP Girls National Training Camp: Jan. 29 – Feb. 3, 2013

By Abby Hess

Abby Hess (1998) Rochester and Chloe Sagmoe (1998) Lakeville participated in the 2013 US Youth Soccer ODP Girls National Training Camp, that took place January 31-February 2 at Reach 11 Sports Complex in Phoenix, Ariz. Girls from the 1997, 1998, and 1999 age groups will represent all four regions. Here is a journal about the trip from Abby Hess.

John Curtis

MYSA Director of Coaching and Player Development

January 29: Travel Day

Today started off with an early drive to the airport. I was nervous, but now I am just excited and ready to play. This trip is an honor, and I am going to try my best to make the most of it.

January 30: Training Day 1

Today I woke up at 6:33 a.m. to be ready for breakfast at 7:00. We left for our first training session at around 8:15. At the first session, all of the regions were mixed up and divided into scramble teams. It was so cool to meet people from all over the United States. There are two coaches per scramble team, and each of the coaches is someone that has a very large amount of experience in soccer. They are all amazing, and I am honored to have an opportunity to play for them.

After our two hour session, we were driven back to the hotel for lunch. It was some delish pasta. Very shortly after lunch, we headed back to the fields for functional training. During this time, we had the chance to go to a certain location with a few random coaches that were going to teach us about our primary position. The positional training was spectacular! I got to learn a lot from my coaches. Eventually, the training session ended and we came back to the hotel for some tacos.

Later, we went to a meeting with our age group. The leader of the meeting was Coach Hickey. She really opened my eyes up to how blessed I am to be in the situation I am in and also how if I work my butt off, it will pay off. My dreams of being on the U.S. Women's National Team are in my hands. I have to take care of myself and prove that I deserve a spot on the team. This will not be easy, but it is possible. This camp is one of many steps forward towards that goal. Today was great, and I am really looking forward to tomorrow!



January 31: Training Day 2

Today went great! This morning at our first training, we worked on gaining the ability to pick our head up and play a penetrating ball to a target's feet. I felt that personally, I took a lot out of that session. I became very aware of all of my options. Playing at this level is so amazing, everybody is here to compete and prove themselves.

After the first session and lunch, we went back to the fields for another functional/positional training. I went with the forwards again, and I can honestly say that these past two positional trainings have transformed my mental game and brought it to another level. I have learned the importance of having a quick shot and that not all goals come from a powerful shot, but sometimes a soft little tap is a game winning goal!

After working on positions, the whole group of '98 girls was broken up into eight teams of six girls. We then went into a small six v. six tournament. The games were short and competitive. It was so much fun to play with girls I didn't even know. My team was on a winning streak until the semi-finals, we lost 0-1. We then all gathered around a small field to watch the remaining 12 girls compete for the first place spot. The little tournament was so fun and a great way to show my skills and meet a lot of other great players. After the winners were crowned, we headed back to the hotel for some dinner. After dinner, we had a

meeting and got to hear about what we could expect for the next day. The coaches said we'd learn some defensive technique skills.

February 1: Training Day 3

When I woke up today, I was real sore! This was a good sign to me though because then I know I'm working hard. It's just a good feeling! I was really looking forward to a defensive-focused session because I know that's something I could improve on. Going into the session, I just wanted to have an open mind and absorb everything the coaches told me. During the session, the coaches were very supportive and helpful. They gave a lot of pointers and were also very supportive of my teammates and I. Even when we were doing two v. two or six v. six, they never once congratulated anyone for scoring and they said it was because the session was about preventing goals, not scoring them.

In the afternoon, instead of positional training, we mixed with the '97 age group and played 11 v. 11 games. It was a great experience to play with older girls and to be coached by coaches I've never had before! My team ended up winning 3-2, but it was a very well-matched game. The pace of the game was great; I felt very comfortable even though the teams were random and none of us knew each other. It gives all of us players a better outlook on the game because we were forced to adjust to an unknown team and coach. Today was another great day!

February 2: Training Day 4

Today things got changed up a bit and we had functional training in the morning followed by an 11 v. 11 game with our scramble teams. I went with the forwards again and we did technical training, things like perfecting our turns and looking over our shoulder to be able to know what type of touch we should take. We then played our last scramble game and my team got first place throughout the week. This camp helped me gain another level of competitiveness as well.

After the morning session, our coaches began one-on-one evaluations. Here, our coaches sat with each player alone and gave them compliments and critiques about their playing. My evaluation went very well and made me gain confidence in myself as a player. After lunch, and hanging around for a little bit, we went back to the fields for our final session. We split into six v. six and played in a small-sided tournament. This was different than anything I've ever done before because the games were set up for us to have to adjust. For example, one was a very long and narrow field and another field was very short and fat. Another was a small field with four goals. This experience was very great because every time I play, I'm going to have to adjust.

Overall, this camp has been so amazing and I am very proud of my performance. The coaching and the level of play was so amazing to be in the presence of. I loved this camp and I am going to do everything I can to create an opportunity to be able to come back next year. I have developed and learned so much!