

Team: U12 Boys

Location: Kingdom Sports Center | Franklin

Result: 5-1 L

Players: Sean S. Sean C. Daniel, Andrew, Tyler, Asher, Elias, Joseph, Christian

Hope Springs Player of the game: Sean C.

Defensively, the Dutch Lions Boys had started positively in getting rid of the ball during dangerous situations and finding a midfielder with a pass. However, gradually dropped in play creating a "kick and run" style against a team who was able to easily shut down our long runs due to their height and speed advantage. Our defense became disorganized and started panicking when we had the ball in our defensive third. This led to several breakdowns and eventually their goals.

Offensively, we started on a high note. Lots of communicating between the attackers was evident and we saw several great runs and combinations early on. The communication and organization up top deteriorated after around 12-15 minutes. As soon as we started using "kick and run" soccer, our attackers were very limited with their options. This style of soccer does not bode well for our team especially against an older and more physical team. We were left with very few scoring opportunities due to no supporting runs and no communication helping the ball carrier with his decision making.

"When we drop to a level of play that's below our opponent, we can instantly tell that this is not a good sign for the game. We practice with certain philosophies in mind, such as building from the back and possessing the ball very well and we need to maintain this style of play during a game. We practice a certain way for a reason. The methods work as long as they are carried out effectively and accepted by everyone on the team. Now it's our job to work harder on these principles, and our ability to carry this out on the field will greatly impact our results as a team," shared Coach Liam.

Sean C. was selected as the Hope Springs player of the game: "Sean really showed me he was confident in wherever I put him on the field. He did a great job assisting on defense when he was center mid, and I think it says a lot about his personality that when his teammates were struggling, he worked even harder to compensate and help them."

Team: U13 Boys

Location: SportsPlex | Fairborn

Result: 5-0 W

Players: Braxton, Connor B., Aaron, Noah, RJ, Ben, Max, Connor C. Josiah, Dominic, Alex

Hope Springs Player of the game: Max

The boys were slightly handicapped at the start of the match as Club Director, Ric Campbell, was filling in for Coach Bruno. Most of the boys did not have a clue who he was or how he would be placing them in positions. The team played a 3-1-2 formation and were provided

with the charge to constantly communicate and to move and support each other regardless of the position they played.

The opponent was bigger and faster than the Lions, but over time as the team gained confidence that became a non-issue.

The boys were a bit tentative in the opening five minutes, getting used to the bigger pitch and faster pace than the futsal they have been playing the past month. But it did not take them long to get comfortable, execute their short passing game, maintain possession and take control of the match.

Defensively, Connor B., RJ and Max controlled the middle and provided much instruction and cover for their wing backs. Aaron, Alex, Ben, Noah and Braxton provided strong one-on-one marking and supported the weak side wonderfully. They limited the number of shots, pressured the ball and really pushed up into offensive support the majority of the night. The entire backline also did a good job of playing back to the keeper to relieve pressure. Both keepers, Braxton and Connor B., did very well playing the ball with their feet and in shot blocking. They did not have to make any super saves, but they handled themselves well.

Offensively, the group was solid the entire evening in two areas. They attacked the wings and they switched the point of attack often. This led to multiple scoring opportunities the entire game. The Lions did score 4 goals (one a 2 pointer), but left at least 5 quality chances begging to be finished.

The first goal was scored by Alex off of a direct kick which he put up in the top corner from beyond the two point line. Josiah bundled in the second goal by running through the ball off a missed save by the keeper. Braxton scored the third goal with a nice shot far post and Alex got his brace with the final goal of the night.

Coach Ric shared, "What a great start to the indoor season for these young lads. They did what we spoke about at the onset of the match and they played with confidence in the style of the Dayton Dutch Lions.....be strong on the ball, pressure at all times, short-passing/possession and attack with numbers. Each of the boys had some highlight moments in the game and also some areas to improve....that is what makes this game great. A good result, but much work to reach our potential. We did have about 10 minutes in the second half when we decided to play kick-ball, but the majority of the match we did well to work with our teammates. I know that I played several boys in new positions, but they all responded well. It was a pleasure to be on the sidelines with these guys."

Coach Ric selected "Mad" Max as the Hope Springs player of the Game for his overall aggressiveness, his ability to find the open man and his ability to play well in multiple positions. "He gave us such a strong outing.....well done, Max!"