

TEAM OF THE MONTH

For “Team of the Month” we hope to talk to one of our teams each month. To be featured here, your team doesn’t necessarily have to win every game it plays. We want to feature those teams, as well as teams that represent the club well with how they play and train, support the community, improve from game to game and practice to practice, support each other and the club. If you know an FFC team that would be good to recognize here, email tleiss@fredericksburgfc.org.

FFC U19 BOYS BLACK

FREDERICKSBURG, Va.
(Tuesday, April 9)—The FFC U19 boys finished the month of March unbeaten (5-0-1) with first-place finishes in both the Loudoun Soccer College Showcase on March 1-3 and Jefferson Cup on March 29-31.

The team was led by strong defensive efforts in both tournaments allowing just two goals against over the six games.

Many of these players will be continuing their soccer careers on the college level come this fall.

As of the end of March, the team has an over record on 8-1-1 in tournament and league play.

“The Pitch” spoke with their head coach Marcello Alves to see what has made them such a strong squad in March and 2019 as a whole.

TP: What has made this team so strong in 2019?

MA: *I believe that it took a couple months for the boys to fully understand the way we wanted them to play. Once they were completely engaged and committed to the idea we had for them, then they were able to perform at the highest level possible. The positive results came as a consequence of their performance and tactical discipline. Lastly, we had several players going through the final stages of their recruitment process with college coaches, therefore they were very motivated to play their very best.*



TP: Before 2019 started, were you expecting them to have a good year? What made you think they'd be playing how they are?

MA: *I did believe they were going to hit their best performance level in 2019. As I said previously, sometimes you get a team and it takes time for the coach to be able to put all his ideas in practice. I knew it would take me a couple of months and they were going to hit their best in the Spring.*

TP: What do you think helped them be successful at the two tournaments they played in March?

MA: *Both the training and the recruitment process, but beyond that, I believe that a huge part of it was our trip to Orlando late December. The team matured a lot during the Disney Showcase. During those days at the hotel, we were able to work a lot on team bonding and that is showing now in 2019.*

TP: Do you have any standout/key moments from each tournament that helped earn the championships in each?

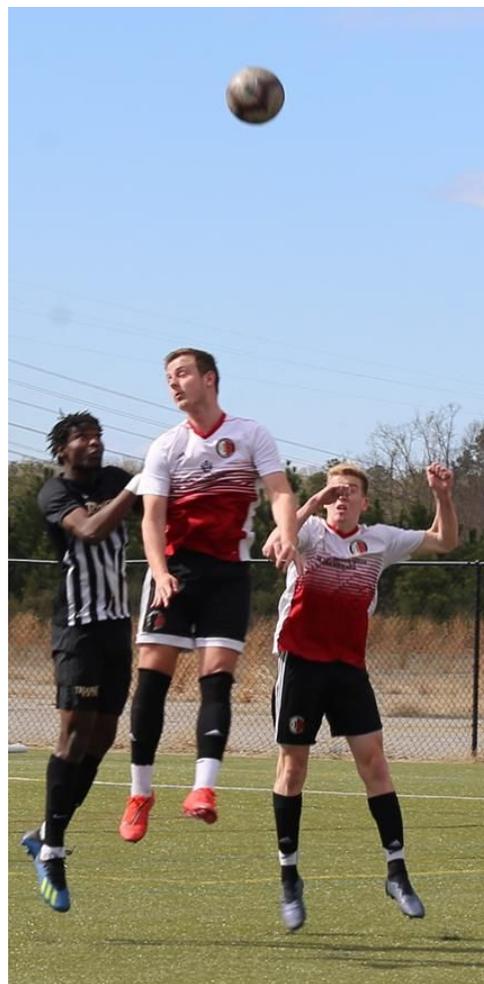
MA: *In all games of the three showcases we've had in 2019, I always boosted their confidence and the key moments every time were that very moment they would realize how good they were individually and collectively as a team. At those moments, they would be almost unstoppable . . . defensively and offensively.*

TP: Any fun little stories that stick out from your time with these guys, from training or games or otherwise?

MA: *There are lots of fun stories and memories from these boys in training and games. However, I believe the most fun we had together as a team were during some of the team bonding activities we did at the hotel in Orlando during the Disney Showcase.*

TP: Is there anything else you'd like to share about the team?

MA: *I am super proud of them for having an amazing last season at the club. The team had only three juniors on the team, and 17 seniors and most of them are going into the next level to play soccer in college. We have 10 out of 17 already signed to play college soccer, one going pro and another four players at the end of their process into signing with colleges. We have reached the highest ranking of the team's history being No. 3 in Virginia and No. 54 in the nation. This was a very strong group of players, and as I coach I couldn't be more proud of them.*



—Photos courtesy of Lisa Iden