

Some teams competed seriously and some just for fun, but they all had a blast at the Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex Saturday.

It marked the first day of a two-day tournament called the Summer Blast, which attracted boys' and girls' soccer teams from South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota. The tournament, co-hosted by the Northern Blast Soccer Club and the Aberdeen Soccer Association, is the first big tournament played on the soccer complex fields since the high school state tournament in October.

One of the afternoon games pitted good friends against each other. In the Under 19 girls' division, the Aberdeen Dakota Storm played the Aberdeen Devas. The Storm is made up of members of the Aberdeen high school varsity or junior varsity teams. The Devas are a collection of Aberdeen recreation players along with a couple of Vermillion athletes. The Storm coaches, Bob Schuchardt and Mark Vaux, stressed being mentally prepared in the warmups and the pre-game coaches' talk. Although the Storm controlled the play in the first half, it held just a 2-0 lead over the Devas, who had a couple of scoring opportunities of their own.

The second half belonged to the Storm, who finished with an 8-0 win. Lindsey Gerdes, who led the Storm in scoring, thought her squad adjusted better in the second half. "It took us a while but we took it wider and played more as a team," said Gerdes, who will be a senior at Aberdeen Central this fall.

Gerdes, 17, played in the state soccer tournament with a team including a lot of the Devas' players. "They picked me up for the state tournament. They're all my friends. It was still a fun game," she said.

The Storm, with two wins in the tourney, plays the 007's from Bismarck, N.D., today at 8 a.m. but on its home turf. "Finally. It's 8 a.m. but we're coming out of our own beds and not in motels," Schuchardt said. "It feels good. The fields are in good shape and the tournament is running well."

The Storm plans to play in tournaments in Blaine, Minn., Bismarck, N.D., and Sioux City, Iowa, yet this summer.

This is a bittersweet summer for Schuchardt, who coached the high school girls' team since its inception four years ago. Schuchardt has been named the men's and women's soccer coach at Presentation College in Aberdeen and will be sporting the green and gold colors of the Saints this fall.

At the other end of the huge complex, an up-and-coming coach mentored his Under 10 boys' team, the Aberdeen Hornets.

Cody Becker, 16, played for an Aberdeen Under 19 boys' team, coached the Hornets and refereed during his off-time. He has coached for three years and played soccer since he was eight. The Hornets, a team quickly assembled this week from various recreation teams, played another Aberdeen team, the Hot Shots, in a noon game.

The less-experienced Hornets gave the Hot Shots a battle. The Hot Shots took a 2-1 lead at halftime but the Hornets tied it at 3-all in the second half. The Hot Shots eventually won 5-3.

Cody freely admitted that his mother Deb Becker, the tournament director, got him involved in coaching the Hornets. "Mom wanted me to coach a team," he said. "They played good when you consider they haven't played together. They did very, very well."

The Hornets versus the Hot Shots presented a dilemma for Tim and Mary Stadel of Aberdeen. Son Matt, 10, played for the Hot Shots and another son Tyler, 8, was a member of the Hornets. For a few minutes in the first half, Matt, who was resting on the bench, was forced to watch his brother Tyler push the offense for the Hornets. Matt, who scored a goal in the second half, said, "I was hoping he (Tyler) would mess up." The parents maintained a more even approach. "We cheer for whoever has the ball," said Mary, who sold tie-dyed tournament T-shirts in between her boys' games.

The tournament begins at 8 a.m. today at the soccer complex and finals are scheduled for noon, 2 and 4 p.m. Saturday's results are in Scoreboard on Page 2D.

Grant Goldade has grown up playing soccer in Aberdeen, and the soccer program in Aberdeen has grown up with him.

Goldade, 14, and his Aberdeen Shooting Star teammates played in the championship game of the Summer Blast Tournament in Aberdeen on Sunday. The Shooting Stars played the Sioux Falls Great Plains Tornadoes in the 14 and under boys' finals, and Goldade's team won 4-1.

The event is the first major summer soccer tournament hosted by Aberdeen at its expanded Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex. Last fall, the Aberdeen Soccer Association and the city opened its approximately \$550,000 addition to the complex by hosting the state varsity tournaments.

The expansion tripled the size of the complex from 15 acres to 46 acres. The city will host the 2001 and 2002 state varsity tournaments, and the Northern Blast Soccer Club, co-host of this weekend's tourney along with the soccer association, plan to make the Summer Blast an annual tourney.

Being able to host big soccer events such as the Summer Blast and the state varsity tournaments are exactly what expansion organizers had envisioned for Aberdeen soccer when the additions and improvements for the complex were on the drawing board.

This weekend's two-day tournament was another step forward for Aberdeen soccer, and Goldade appreciated the opportunity.

"I like this tournament because it gives me something to do in the summer," said Goldade, a seven-year Aberdeen soccer veteran who will be a freshman at Central High School in the fall. "Basically, soccer is the only sport that I play. I am a lot more interested in soccer than any other sport."

The Summer Blast drew 37 teams from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota and was run by about 75 club volunteers. Sixty-five games were played over the two days.

All those numbers meant a busy weekend for tournament director Deb Becker of Groton. Becker added to her busy schedule by coaching an under 16 girls' team in the tournament, the Aberdeen Northern Blast X-plosion.

"So far, so good," said tournament director Becker on Sunday afternoon after coaching her team to victory. "We have heard a lot of positive comments and it is great to bring something like this to Aberdeen . . . and to see the high level of play some of these traveling teams have. A lot of teams have already told me to let them know when next year's tournament will be and that they will be there."

Another of the coaches this weekend was Steve Kehm, who is also coach of the 4-year-old Northern State women's soccer program. He, too, is happy to see the growth of soccer in Aberdeen.

"It is a good thing," Kehm said. "I have been going to tournaments like this for 20-plus years, ever since I was a kid. So it is about time that Aberdeen finally got one. And they have done a nice job with the first one. It is well organized, and it is being run well. It's also nice to see all the teams here, and hopefully, they will be able to expand it a little next year."

Kehm said his players at NSU will report to camp on Aug. 12. "It won't be long," he said with a smile.

On Sunday, Kehm and his 16 and under boys' team, the Aberdeen Northern Blast Fire, made it to the championship game. Yankton Rage won the title, however, nipping the Fire 1-0.

Other Summer Blast champions included the Northern Blast Legacy, as the Aberdeen team beat Sioux Falls Dakota Gold Rush 9-1 for the under 13 girls' championship. The Aberdeen Dakota Storm also advanced to a title game, but the Bismarck 007's won the under 19 girls' championship 5-2. Other champs were the Sioux Falls Dakota Gold Crush (under 12 boys), the Brookings Rebels (under 19 boys) and the Bismarck X-treme (under 16 girls).

Even though the second annual three-day, 30-hour Summer Blast Soccer Tournament had barely kicked off, event director Deb Becker was already thinking about the 2003 tourney. "If I can find the rooms, we'll have more teams next year," said Becker, whose family has helped Groton and Aberdeen develop vibrant soccer programs. "The Grand Forks club is talking about coming, and that would easily give us another 20 teams. But I have to make sure we have rooms for everyone." Becker said adding those teams next year would be a healthy step in the right direction. "We already doubled the size of the tourney from our first year with about 70 teams this year." The tourney started Friday night and will conclude today with championship games in eight divisions at either 2 or 4 p.m. The action is taking place at the Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex in Aberdeen. Becker said not only are the Aberdeen lodging rooms full this weekend, but so are those in area towns. "Ellendale and Redfield are full, and so is Webster, I think. But I know there are also baseball and softball tournaments in town along with some reunions."

Lemonade sale, A young business mind is booming in Aberdeen. Teen-ager Alaina Schmeiser took the recent wind and heat, added lots of sweaty and thirsty soccer players and fans, and came up with a mixture of ice-cold pink lemonade. Schmeiser was happy with the results of her 50-cent a cup, self-serve lemonade stand. "Business has been pretty good; the hot weather has helped" she said around noon Saturday from her home near the soccer complex. "I just came up with the idea. I did it once last year too. It is just a fun thing to do." Schmeiser, 13, is creative too, as she and her mom turned the family mailbox near the street into a billboard to promote sales. The soon-to-be eighth-grader at Simmons Middle School in Aberdeen also has a sign on a stick she can wave to passers-by from her card table/lemonade stand in the middle of her driveway. "People stop who are walking by, or driving by," she said. "My customers are a little bit of both."

Minot goalie Even though it was just minutes before game time, 10-year-old goalie Matthew Bluhm of the Minot Sparks was relaxed and enjoying himself. "I just like to have fun with soccer," said Bluhm, who will be a fifth-grader in the fall. "I also like to travel. We go to a lot of tournaments in the summer, about five or six." Bluhm also likes the competition one finds at a tournament. "You get to play different teams than you normally do when you are at home." It takes focus to be a goalie. "You have to really watch the ball," said Bluhm. "You have to stay in front of the ball all the time when you're the goalie. And it is kind of fun to jump around from side-to-side in the net. And you always have to be thinking where the other team might shoot the ball from and if your defense will be able to block them or not."

Aberdeen player, fan Even though her Northern Blast All-Stars team played Friday night and didn't play again until Saturday afternoon, forward Bryanne Bald Eagle was at the soccer complex early yesterday morning. "I am here to watch and support my friend," said Bald Eagle, pointing out her friend who was on the field getting some last minute instructions from her coach. "She is No. 5, Cassie LaRoche. Bald Eagle is 11, and will be a sixth-grader at Simmons Middle School in Aberdeen this fall. She has been playing soccer since she was 5. "I like to run, so I like to play soccer because there is a lot of running involved," said Bald Eagle. "It makes me feel energetic. Besides soccer, I am not really doing much of anything this summer."

Drink that water On a hot Saturday in Aberdeen, the person staffing the Avera-St. Luke's Mobile Sports Medicine vehicle was handing out good advice about the heat. "Stay away from the soda because caffeine dehydrates you," said certified athletic trainer Jessica Lawrence of Avera-St. Luke's. "Drink a lot of fluids --- water is the best for you --- in small increments throughout the day. Don't gorge on fluids every half hour, just keep drinking consistently throughout the day. When the kids aren't playing, they should stay out of the direct sun. Maybe even get in an air-conditioned vehicle." Also, don't avoid warning signs. "If you feel faint or sick, that is a sign that you should tell someone." Lawrence, who moved to Aberdeen in September, enjoys working with the athletes. "And I like to be outside --- although today's heat might prevent that --- and networking with the people from the soccer association. We are all working together to create a network of support for the kids who are playing in this tournament."

Brother act: Five sets of brothers play on two Aberdeen boys' soccer teams, the under 19 Fire and the under 15 Arsenal. The teams are playing in the three-day Northern Blast Soccer Tournament that continues today and Sunday (8 a.m. both days) at the Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex in Aberdeen. Under 19 Fire players: Dustin Kono, Shane Kono, Jordan Heupel, Clark Bonn, Brandon Wolf and Brandon Fischbach; Under 15 Arsenal players: Collin Heupel, Dustin Bonn, Jared Fischbach and Matt Wolf.

Soccer siblings compete with, against each other

Oh, brother, things could get interesting at this weekend's Northern Blast Soccer Tournament at the Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex.

Five sets of brothers will be participating on two Aberdeen squads. Dustin Kono and his brother Shane are both members of the Fire team. Jordan Heupel plays for the Fire while his brother Collin Heupel is on the Arsenal. Clark Bonn is also a Fire member and his sibling Dustin Bonn plays for the Arsenal. Brandon Wolf competes for the Fire while his brother Matt Wolf is on the Arsenal. Brandon Fischbach participates for the Fire and his brother Jared Fischbach is a member of the Arsenal.

To make matters more interesting, the two teams practice against each other each week. That pits brother against brother. "I think it's an unsaid rivalry," Jordan Heupel said of competing against his brother. "We give each other a lot of grief." Even though Jordan plays defense and Collin is a midfielder, the two still find something to argue about. "We still do, even though we don't play the same position, just to get each other going," Jordan said.

Make no mistake, though, there is a mutual respect between the brothers. "We usually just help each other out," Collin said. "He tells me what to do some times and I tell him what to do in my situations." Jordan is looking forward to playing with Collin this fall on the varsity squad. "I'd love to play with my brother," Jordan said. "He's a good player and we'll probably need him at the varsity level."

Shane Kono usually defers to his older brother Dustin when it comes to soccer advice. "He tells me what to do because he has more experience than I do," Shane said. "He helps me out a lot." Dustin, who has a year of college experience under his belt, said playing alongside his sibling should be beneficial this weekend. "We know each other pretty well," Dustin said. "We know how each other plays. We know what each other's abilities are."

Still, if Shane is messing up, Dustin will be the first on the scene. "If he's doing something wrong, of course I'll tell him what to do if it helps the team out," Dustin said. "It doesn't matter whether or not he's my brother." Shane admits that Dustin is the better Kono when it comes to soccer. But Dustin is quick to point out, "He has the ability to be better than me, though, if he wants to." Both the Fire and the Arsenal should benefit from a home-field advantage this weekend.

"This won't be the highlight of (the summer) because there will be bigger tournaments, but it will still be fun playing on your home field," Collin Heupel said. "I think we have the best field in the whole state."

The Fire is definitely motivated to win the event. "Three years in a row we've had great teams and we've never won it," Jordan Heupel said. "This year I think it's going to take 100 percent all the games." The Fire lost in the title game in the final minute two years ago.

Maybe this year will be the breakthrough summer.

"I think it will help us play better and play harder," Dustin Kono said of the home-field edge. "I think we'll play better in front of the fans."

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK Aberdeen American News (SD) - July 3, 2003  
Author: Dave Vilhauer, American News Sports Writer

It started out as an experiment and turned into an obsession.

Tab Daschle of Aberdeen remembers getting into the sport of soccer at age 5 because a neighborhood boy thought the sport was too rough for girls. She was the only female on the team.

"He thought girls were so wimpy," she recalled. "I had to do it."

Now 14, Daschle has become a top performer in a sport that she cannot get enough of.

Daschle scored 13 goals this past weekend in helping lead her team to the Girls' Under 16 championship in the Northern Blast Soccer Tournament in Aberdeen. For her effort, Daschle is this week's American News Athlete of the Week.

"I don't know even know what happened," Daschle said of her scoring outburst. "I don't even think about scoring, actually. I just think about playing. You just think that the game is 0-0 at all times."

Daschle had scored three goals in a game before, but found the net four times in a game twice last weekend.

"The four goal games were just kind of like a shock to me," she said. "I didn't really realize how many goals I scored. I was just a teammate."

Daschle said teamwork was the reason her team had success last weekend.

"It was teamwork. If it wasn't for the defense or the midfield, I would have never got the ball. Every one had to work together."

Daschle was especially pleased that her team, which is mainly comprised of players ages 13 and 14, was able to take on teams full of older players.

"We were pretty happy just showing them who we are," Daschle said. "It was pretty fun."

Daschle said she benefits from kicking with her left foot.

"I'm right-handed, but I'm left-footed. You don't find very many lefties. There's not many at all," she said. "It is actually an advantage. Not many teams think there's going to be a lefty out there."

Daschle also plays basketball, but it is soccer that has won her heart.

"I would never be able to live without soccer," she said. "I love soccer to death. I would quit any sport for soccer. It's a little more aggressive and I'm that kind of a person."

Sometimes parents do know best.

Erin Deibert, a member of the Northern Blast Dakota Storm girls' under 19 soccer team, doesn't remember asking her parents, Gary and Susan Deibert, to sign her up for soccer when she was six years old.

"My parents just put me in it," she said. "I liked it and I've played it ever since."

Deibert, 16, and her Storm teammates will play in the third annual Northern Blast Soccer Tournament Friday through Sunday at the Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex.

The Dakota Storm team has added incentive to play well at the Blast tournament. The Storm struggled at a tournament in Sioux Falls last weekend.

"Hopefully we'll do better. In Sioux Falls, it was a round robin tournament and we lost a lot of games. We need to work harder and pass better," said Deibert, who will be a junior at Aberdeen Central in the fall.

Deibert, who played on the state champion Hurricanes in the girls' 12-and-under division four years ago, is a midfielder, a position usually played by a team's leading scorers.

"As a midfielder you run a lot," she said. "You need speed and strength and a strong foot. I've played every position there is."

Deibert also participates in basketball and the two sports keep her in top running condition. In soccer, players run sprints to build endurance much like basketball and movement is required in a majority of the soccer drills.

The two sports overlap this week as Deibert plays in a basketball camp at Presentation College in Aberdeen and prepares for the Blast tournament.

Members of the Dakota Storm have some familiarity with each other. Deibert and several Dakota Storm teammates for example, Bri Barber, Sarah Gillies, Amber Kitto and Kristen Kitto, played together on the high school varsity team last fall. Plus, the varsity squad is coached by Mark Vaux, who also coaches the Storm.

Erin won't be the only member of the Deibert family playing in the soccer tourney. Her sister Elizabeth, 13, will play for the Aberdeen Kicks. Erin doesn't take credit for Elizabeth's interest in the sport, but the sisters occasionally work out together in the back yard.

"We have a net in the back yard to kick at and sometimes we'll pass a soccer ball around," Erin said.

Club soccer teams spend a lot of time traveling across South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota so it's a rare treat for the athletes to play at home in front of their fans.

"It's awesome," Deibert said. "All our local fans can watch us. It's fun for everyone from Aberdeen. I've convinced a lot of friends to come. It gives us home field advantage."

The Northern Blast tournament has continued to grow. In its inaugural season in 2001 the tournament included about 35 teams. Last year that number ballooned to around 70. This year the tourney has 78 teams.

#### NORTHERN BLAST SOCCER TOURNEY

Number of Teams: 78.

Number of Divisions: 16 (8 boys and 8 girls).

Number of Players: 1,144.

When: Friday-Sunday.

Where: Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex.

Times: Friday from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Sunday starts at 8 a.m.

Number of Volunteers: 140 on Saturday and 120 on Sunday.

Number of Northern Blast Teams: 15.

Years for the Tournament: Third.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK                      Aberdeen American News (SD) - July 1, 2004  
Author: Deb Smith, American News Sports Writer

The Northern Blast Attack soccer team held its opponents scoreless in four games last weekend at the Summer Blast Soccer Tournament in Aberdeen.

The Attack defeated the Capital City Fusion 1-0 in the championship game for under 14 boys. The Aberdeen soccer team finished the tournament with three wins and one tie (0-0). The Attack outscored its opponents 16-0 during the tournament.

Andrew Farrand was the starting goal keeper in all four games as the Attack did not allow a goal in 280 minutes of play.

For his efforts, Farrand was named the American News Athlete of the Week.

"Our offense has been clicking but our defense has been awesome in winning games for us," said Farrand, 14. "I try not to allow any goals. If we allow none, then we're not going to lose."

In the other two games of the tournament, the Attack beat the Capital City Titaniums 10-0 and Dakota Gold Revolution 5-0.

Some of the Attack players have been together for the last four years.

"The biggest tournament we've ever won would probably be this one. We've never been in the finals of our own tournament. It's such a great accomplishment," said Farrand, a freshman at Aberdeen Central High School next fall.

Farrand withstood two penalty kicks where the goal keeper tries to stop an opponent from scoring a goal from close range. The goalie is usually at a disadvantage.

"Usually they make them," Farrand said. "This year I'm 50-50. I skip around and try to think which way they're going to kick. I try to read their eyes. At this age, they kick so fast and so accurate you can't watch the ball and then go after it. I lean to one side and right before they kick it, I move over."

Farrand received some lessons and advice right in the neighborhood. One of Andrew's best friends is Taylor Ormand, whose older brother Evan Ormand was a goalie for the Aberdeen high school soccer team and will play at Presentation College in the fall.

"One of the best goalies I've watched that came out of Aberdeen was Evan Ormand," Farrand said. "Sometimes, when I played with Taylor, I was able to watch Evan play. He told me to stay light on my toes and move around a bit."

Farrand has played goalie since he was young.

"I like the excitement of them coming at me," he said. "I like going out for the ball. No one else wanted to play there and I thought it would be a fun position. I like it."

## SOCCER

Aberdeen American News (SD) - July 1, 2004

Author: Deb Smith, American News Sports Writer

Members of the Northern Blast All Star soccer team might have gained an edge and also a new understanding of what female athletes can achieve.

The under 13 girls' team from Aberdeen received instructions from Mia Hamm and other top professional female soccer players in the United States. The All Stars were in Blaine, Minn., on June 18-20 to play in the All-American Girls' Premier Tournament and on the same weekend the Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA) put on the first of two festivals this year. The other one will be in California.

The All Stars not only watched a professional women's game, but were one of just a few teams to participate in a clinic put on by the pro players. In the WUSA games, the New York Power and Atlanta Beat played to a 2-all tie, and the Boston Breakers and Washington Freedom tied at 3-all.

Hamm, the most well known female soccer player in the United States, scored two goals for the Freedom.

A midfielder, Aimee Cornelius, 13, of Aberdeen was one of the players who got Hamm's autograph.

"She (Hamm) was pretty quiet," said Cornelius, who will be an eighth-grader at Holgate Middle School in the fall. "I went up to her and she said, 'Hi.' I went up to other players and they were more out-going. She's only five-five so I'm two inches shorter than she is."

Cornelius had Hamm autograph a little soccer ball and some cards.

"I took in what they (pros) said. I still couldn't really believe that it happened. I want to try to go professional. It inspires me to try harder and maybe some day I can be a professional soccer player," Cornelius said.

Another All Star player, Nikki Finnesand, 12, spent 45 minutes with Siri Mullunix, one of the top two or three goalies in the world.

"She (Mullunix) was teaching me how to dive for the soccer ball," said Finnesand, a seventh-grader at Simmons Middle School next fall. "She showed me how to receive the ball more carefully and accurately, and taught me some basic throws."

Most young soccer players don't start out wanting to play goalie.

"I was never planning on being a keeper," Finnesand said. "Our team needed a keeper and I volunteered. I started to discover I was a good keeper. I think soccer is one of the sports that I'm going to stick with. I'll go as far as I can with it and do the best I can. I could become the new Siri."

The young All Stars lost all three matches at the premier tournament by scores of 1-0, 2-0 and 2-1, but they weren't discouraged.

"Our team did really good since we're from South Dakota and we don't have premier teams," said Cornelius. "We wanted to play against harder teams. We wanted to see if we could go up to the next level."

Last weekend at the Summer Blast Soccer Tournament in Aberdeen the All Stars finished second. Some of the lessons learned by the pros might pay dividends.

"It was really neat to see them play and how they all pass to each other," Finnesand said. "To see them communicating as well as they did."

The professional players also communicated lessons in soccer and life to the aspiring athletes.

## SOCCER

Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 30, 2004

Author: Dave Vilhauer, American News Sports Writer

When the Great Plains Rapids soccer squad from South Dakota makes an impact on the national scene, roots can be traced back to the local community.

Aberdonians Jeff Salwei and Shane Kono are both members of the standout team based out of Sioux Falls. Heading into a tournament in Illinois last weekend, GPR was undefeated in 15 outings with one tie.

Salwei has been with the team for several years and recently talked Kono into giving it a try.

"Jeff has been wanting me to play on this team for a couple of years," Kono said.

Salwei and Kono still live in Aberdeen and travel back and forth for practices and matches.

"It's a lot of fun," Salwei said. "It works out so well when you're playing with people at your caliber or even higher than you."

It is that quality of soccer that makes it worthwhile for Kono.

"It's definitely worth it," Kono said of all the travel involved. "I'm playing with most of the best kids in South Dakota."

Kono is a striker and plays midfield. Salwei is a defensive center midfield or the stopper. Both are key team members, according to GPR coach Mike Grossman.

"Jeff just absolutely, positively loves soccer. He can't get enough of it," Grossman said. "I don't think Shane realized how good he can be until recently. He kind of matured and got to that next level. Kono is a great all-around player and so is Jeff. They're both really good players. What they've done is they've added depth to my team."

While the squad is comprised of players from across the state, continuity was not a problem.

"A lot of these kids I'm playing with know each other," Kono said.

Shane is not the first member of his family to hit the Sioux Falls soccer scene. His brother, Dustin, played for the Spitfire (a semi-professional team) before he fractured his foot this summer.

While Dustin is done for the summer, Shane and Salwei are planning for trips to Kansas City, the Twin Cities and other venues in hopes of racking up more victories for South Dakota.

"Just traveling is great," Salwei said. "You get to see and play so many different teams from so many different states."

Not only that, but traveling alone adds to the soccer environment.

"Just the drive there, you're just feeling really tense, anxious and excited all at once," Salwei said. "Right when the whistle blows for the first game, it all goes away and you just play like yourself."

Both Kono and Salwei hope to play soccer in college some day, but they have more immediate concerns. They will return to Aberdeen Central this fall. Last year they helped the Golden Eagles win the state high school championship.

"It would be nice to have another one," Kono said.

## SPORTS

Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 25, 2004 Author: Deb Smith, American News Sports Writer

Competing against athletes up to four years older doesn't frighten soccer player Kendra Titze at all.

In fact she's excited about the prospect and sees it as a chance to improve her skills.

Titze, 15, is a member of a Northern Blast club soccer team, the Legacy, which will begin play today in the Summer Blast Soccer Tournament in Aberdeen. The Legacy is entered in the girls' 19-and-under division.

"This is a different level of soccer," Titze said. "We'll get more competition and compete at a different level. Half of our team is 15- and 16-year-olds and the division is 19-and-under. We're a really young team. I think it's going to be great fun."

Titze, who will be a sophomore at Aberdeen Roncalli this fall, has played on winning teams throughout her soccer career. She began playing when she was five years old. Although she's a young player, Titze has 10 years of experience on her side.

That and the support of her family, which includes her parents, Kendell and Pam Titze, and brother Shane, 18, a senior at Roncalli in the fall.

Currently, the Legacy team is coached by Kendall Titze, John Shishnia and Mark Vaux, the high school girls' soccer coach. Kendall, who was inducted into the Northern State Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000, was an All-Northern Intercollegiate Conference linebacker in college.

The father and daughter have formed a bond on the soccer field.

"My dad and I get along really well," Kendra said. "He's been coaching me most of my life. He was going to quit coaching but I made him keep going. Everybody on the team loves him. My mom is the organizer. They make a good team."

If her father/coach occasionally yells instructions at her, Kendra takes it in stride.

"Dad supports me and makes me work harder to do the best that I can. My parents support me and they're there for me," she said.

A striker/forward Titze has played in the recreational state soccer tournament six times and has been a part of three or four second-place finishes and one state championship.

Tournaments like the Summer Blast are for club teams that put together many of the top players from a city and travel to play other club teams.

"On club teams, players are more experienced and work well with each other. I've been on teams that have won this Blast tournament quite a few times," Kendra said. "Our goal is to get first this weekend. It's exciting. It's our hometown tournament. There's more competition and more friends can come and watch. We can show how good we are and how we work together as a team."

Titze also participates in track and field and basketball to stay in shape all year round.

Soccer has allowed her to make friends at two high schools. The Blast team is made up of mostly Aberdeen Central players and just a couple Roncalli students.

"We've been playing together since we were young. I got to know them through the years and we hang out with each other. I have some really good friends at Central and I have some really good friends at Roncalli," Titze said.

She hopes to continue her soccer career beyond high school.

"I love the sport and would love to play it in college," she said.

## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 30, 2005

Author: Deb Smith, American News Sports Writer

It took more than 110 minutes to determine the champion in the under 16 girls' division of the Northern Blast Soccer Tournament on Sunday.

After two 40-minute halves and two 15-minute overtimes, the score was knotted at 1-all in the championship game between the Kicks Northern Blast Soccer Club and the Capital City Xplosion from Bismarck, N.D.

The championship game was determined by a shoot-out with players from each team getting to kick at the goal with just the goal keeper defending.

Goalie Rachel Scott, 15, defended the Kicks goal.

"I was hoping that I could stop all of them and that didn't work," said Scott, who only let two shots get past her. "I really wanted to win so that pushed me to stop them."

The Kicks scored three times to win the shoot-out 3-2 and pick up a 4-3 win in the game. Coach Jim Brink noted that Scott gave up just five goals in four games at the tournament.

"She blocked three shots during the shoot-out and one hit the top bar," he said. "It allowed our players to pick their shots and allowed us to win the tournament."

For her efforts, Scott was named the American News Athlete of the Week.

Leading up to the championship game, the Kicks beat the Northern Blast Bombers 3-1 and the Moorhead (Minn.) Rovers 4-1 before playing to a 2-2 tie in the first game against the Xplosion.

It wasn't until after the last kick attempt that Scott realized she had Kicks won.

"At first I didn't really realize what had happened. We just won. We were in a huddle and jumping up and down and were really happy. I like it when people are cheering for me and how the team kind of like depends on me," she said.

Scott's career as a goal keeper started at a young age.

"Nobody else wanted to play goalie when I was little. I was the only one that wouldn't cry. I played keeper my whole career. That's my spot," said Scott, who stands 5 feet, 9 inches tall.

Goalies not only need physical tools, but mental toughness as well.

"I get frustrated sometimes when the other team scores," said Scott. "I realize it's not all my fault. If I think about it too much, it will take me out of my game. A good keeper can't get nervous and can't be afraid of the ball. You can't take everything out on yourself. The ball has to get through the whole team before it gets to the goalie."

## SOCCER PLAYERS SHOW SUPPORT

Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 26, 2005

Author: Deb Smith

For this year's Northern Blast soccer tournament, Char Cornelius has a completely different list of responsibilities.

After several years of helping to organize and run the big annual Aberdeen tournament, Cornelius plans to lend her support from the sidelines by cheering for the Aberdeen Northern Blast All Stars under 14 girls' team.

The Aberdeen woman was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia two years ago, and is currently undergoing chemotherapy under the direction of Dr. Kelly McCaul of Sioux Falls and Dr. Richard Conklin of Aberdeen. Cornelius will need one week of chemotherapy per month for six months. She is currently in the second month of treatment.

"Other than the general discomfort of chemo, I didn't know what to expect," Cornelius said. "I usually do a whole lot of stuff for the Northern Blast Tournament, but knowing I was going through with this meant I had to back off. I just get to go watch games."

Char's attachment to the All Stars team comes through family. Her husband Ron Cornelius coaches the team and her daughter Aimee Cornelius, 14, is a player.

"We've been with a lot of these girls for several years," Char said. "We got to know them by traveling together as a club team and hanging out in motel rooms. We feel like a big family."

In return, the All Stars decided to show their support for Char and her fight for health by wearing purple shoelaces on their soccer cleats and purple tie-dyed shirts for the Blast tournament.

"The idea started when we were at a tournament in Moorhead," said Chelsea VanDyke, one of the All Star players. "A team from Brainerd (Minn.) had pink shoelaces because one of the moms was going through breast cancer."

The team didn't stop with just the shoelaces.

"We weren't sure that was enough so me and Aimee went to Wal-Mart to get some shirts," VanDyke said. "We tie-dyed them and put Char's name on the sleeve. We're going to sign them and wear them to the games. We chose purple for cancer. We want to show our support."

The number of teams playing in the annual Northern Blast tournament is down about 20 this year, but tournament officials expected a decrease due to conflicting tournaments in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

"It's very good considering the fact that regionals are in Sioux Falls this weekend," said one of the Blast tournament directors Pam Titze. "We knew it was a conflict. We're very pleased with the number of teams."

One of the first games of the Northern Blast Tournament on Friday featured the present and the future in Aberdeen area soccer. A team made up of under 19 boys played a team of under 17 athletes. The game turned out to be more friendly than intense. "It's hard to get too motivated to play intense against guys that you've played against in high school," said Arsenal soccer coach Merle Aske. "We hope both teams meet again in the finals." In a high-scoring game the Northern Blast Arsenal (under 17) defeated the under 19 Northern Blast Soccer Club 7-4.

Many of the Northern Blast teams are combinations of Aberdeen Central and Aberdeen Roncalli students along with soccer players from surrounding towns like Groton and Ipswich.

In the girls' 15-16 division two Northern Blast teams, the Kicks and the Bombers, squared off in a Friday afternoon game.

The Bombers looked to the west to fill their roster and picked up 13-year-old Haley Luond to play goal keeper. The Bombers regular keeper was on vacation.

"I called around Ipswich because I knew they had a keeper," said coach Monica Toth. "They gave me names of a lot of players but we were mainly looking for a keeper. Haley had never played with us before."

The young goalie played well although the Bombers lost 3-1 to the Kicks. The Bombers also have even more cities represented on their roster with a player from Redfield. "Their first practice was their first game," said Toth about Friday's game. "I've always said that a game is the best teacher."

Last year's Northern Blast champions were White Bear, Minn., Ajax in under 19 boys, Red River Arsenal in under 16 boys, Capital City Clash in under 15 boys, Northern Blast Attack in under 14 boys, Northern Blast Blizzards in under 13 boys, Red River United in under 12 boys and Yankton Heat in under 11 boys.

The girls' champions were Capital City Blaze in under 19, Dakota Gold Integra in under 17, Capital City Blast in under 16, Dakota Gold United in under 14, Capital City Chill in under 13, Pierre All Stars in under 12 and Northern Blast Twisters in under 11.

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Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 23, 2005 Author: Deb Smith, American News Sports Writer

Although Samantha "Sam" Bunke participates in five sports throughout the year, she definitely has a favorite one.

"I fell in love with soccer when I was 5," said Bunke, 16. "It's the best sport in the world. I play basketball and volleyball pretty much so I can stay active and it's fun to hang out with all the girls. In college I expect to play soccer . Hopefully."

Her remaining sports are softball and track and field.

Bunke will play center midfielder for the Northern Blast Legacy under 19 girls' team in this week's 65-team Northern Blast Soccer Tournament in Aberdeen.

A junior at Groton High School this fall, Bunke has played in four Northern Blast tournaments and is a member of Groton's State B high school state champion squads. Bunke played forward for the Groton team but moved to defense for the Legacy team, which is coached by Bob Schuchardt and Kendall Titze.

"I've played about three years with this team. In my position I'm not supposed to let the ball get back to the defense. I would like to score more and I would if I played up front more, but Kendall and Bob put me back there. On the Groton team I play forward. Either defense or offense, it doesn't matter," Bunke said.

Playing defense in soccer is similar to a zone defense in basketball, but the court is much larger.

"With soccer you have to read where the ball is going," said Bunke, who is 5 feet 3 inches tall. "You have to cover the person you think it's going to. In soccer I kind of like it that some short girls are faster and have quicker reactions to the ball. That's why I like it so much. I love having a competitive drive. I love it in any sport."

Bunke, who will play in about five soccer tournaments and two basketball camps this summer, acknowledges her mother, Lorrie Weber, for developing an interest in sports in her young child.

"I give a lot of credit to my mom," Bunke said. "She's the one that put me in sports and made me try harder and played with me when I was little. She introduced me to sports."

Bunke is not afraid to let her feelings show on the soccer field. "I would describe myself as having knowledge of the game. I'm very competitive. Very competitive. You can tell I love the game when I'm out there playing," she said.

ABERDEEN BOY HAS A BLAST ON SOCCER FIELD  
Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 23, 2006

Author: Dave Vilhauer, American News Sports Writer

Some of Tim Haiar's fondest memories can be traced back to Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex and he would like to add one more this weekend during his final action at the facility.

Haiar, who will take his game to the north side of town when he joins the Presentation College Saints this fall, helped Aberdeen capture the State A championship in 2003 at Moccasin Creek complex.

Haiar is a member of the Northern Blast Arsenal and will be competing in his third and final Northern Blast Soccer Tournament today through Sunday at Moccasin Creek. "It's my one last run at it before college soccer," Haiar said.

The club squad played in Grand Forks, N.D., recently and has a tournament approaching in Burnsville, Minn. Next up though is one in Haiar's own backyard.

"I think it's a lot different because it's more of a home atmosphere. You're not staying in a hotel every night. You know what everything is like around town," Haiar said. "You're more energized too, because a lot of your friends are there watching. You just want to put on a good show for them."

Haiar said while the Arsenal would love to win a title this weekend, the mood is much different in the summer than it is during the regular season. "It's not as serious," Haiar said. "High school is more like practicing hard every day." Of course, that lack of conditioning does take its toll eventually, especially on the hot and humid days.

"I've played in games where it's 100 degrees outside," Haiar said. "We're not in the best of shape like we are during the regular season. The heat can get to you, especially when you haven't been running sprints in practice."

Haiar, a central defender, has been spending a good share of his time this summer watching the World Cup on television. "I try to catch a little bit of every game," he said. "I like to watch it because I love the game so much, but I also try to watch what they're doing out there and soak it all in and learn how they play and try to incorporate it into my game a little bit."

Haiar will continue to operate on a local soccer field as he will join numerous former high school teammates on the Presentation squad this fall. The three-year varsity starter is looking forward to taking his game to the next level.

"I've watched a couple of games at PC. It's similar to high school," Haiar said. The biggest differences will be a faster pace and more physical play, according to Haiar. "You know all the players are going to be skilled," he said. "It's just going to be better soccer."

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK: JORDAN WILKIE  
Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 15, 2006  
Aberdeen Soccer

Author: Ryan Deal, American News Sports Writer

Good defense led to great things for the Northern Blast Attack soccer team of Aberdeen last weekend. The team took first place in the 19th annual Dakota Gold Soccer Invitational in Sioux Falls. The Attack won the Under 16 boys' red division. The three-day tourney featured 120 teams from four states, 400 games and 23 divisions.

Leading the way for the Attack's defense was goalkeeper Jordan Wilkie. For his effort and his team's success, Wilkie is the American News Athlete of the Week.

Like any good goalie, Wilkie blocked the praise coming his way and passed it to his teammates. "I have to give credit to the whole defense," said the 15-year-old. "Everyone played well." Wilkie has been playing soccer for about 10 years. "I like soccer because it is a fast-paced game," he said.

A family member got Wilkie hooked on soccer. "Because he is the coach, my dad (Chad) got me started playing soccer."

The Northern Blast Attack swept the Sioux Falls tournament by winning its first three games convincingly. In the first two games, Wilkie and his teammates posted shutouts. In the first game, they beat a team from Minnesota 8-0, and followed that up with a 3-0 win over the Dakota Gold Revolution of Sioux Falls. In the third game, they beat a team from Brookings 4-2.

In the championship game, the Attack again defeated Dakota Gold Revolution, 3-2. For the tournament, Wilkie allowed only the four goals. "He did a nice job for us," said Jordan's father Chad.

This was the team's first tournament of the season. The Northern Blast Attack will be in action again this weekend as it will travel to North Dakota for a tournament in Grand Forks.

Wilkie will be a junior at Aberdeen Central this fall. Wilkie also plays hockey but prefers soccer. He especially likes playing his position in front of the net. "I like soccer better, because I get to keep the ball out of the net," Wilkie said.

## BLAST OF HEAT, BLAST OF FUN

Aberdeen American News (SD) - June 24, 2007

Author: Dave Vilhauer American News Sports Writer

### NORTHERN BLAST SOCCER TOURNAMENT:

It is called the Northern Blast Soccer Tournament and on Saturday the term blast featured multiple meanings.

Players, including one who was out of his usual position, were having a blast, and athletes and spectators were battling a blast of summer heat at the Moccasin Creek Soccer Complex. "It's a little bit tough on some of the players, but our blast tournament I guess is kind of for the heat blast that we get," said tournament co-director Lon Bahr. "It's more like an oven blast out here. The kids are working with it. If you came prepared, and you have players and you've got water, and you can rotate out, it helps a lot."

One of those players who didn't mind rotating out was Tyler Lutz. The soon to be 19-year-old, found himself playing striker instead of minding the goal like his normally does. The result was a hot and worn out Aberdeen athlete. "It's fun --- a lot of running and I'm not used to that," Lutz said. "I couldn't have got subbed any sooner, probably. I was getting way too tired and it's hot out." Lutz, who will be a member of the Presentation College squad this fall, enjoys playing both positions, but said there is a major difference. "A lot of times striker is a lot more action, fast-paced," he said. "Goalie, you're just kind of standing back there. Maybe once or twice a game you'll get a lot of action for a couple of minutes. A lot of goalie is just standing around." As soon as Lutz finished his game, he was already making plans to cool off and take a break. "I'm going to go get some air conditioning, sit down and take a nap, probably," he said.

**Beating the heat** Like the players and coaches, spectators were also searching for ways to stay cool. One of those fans found a spot of shade behind one of the few trees available at the soccer complex and also brought an umbrella. Darlene Atkinson of Aberdeen travels from city to city watching her grandsons, Lance and Dustin Bonn play the sport. She said she never travels without an umbrella, "Because you never know if it's going to rain or the sun (will shine). You use it for either." Atkinson had already spent seven straight hours watching her grandsons participate and showed no signs of slowing down late Saturday afternoon. "We've been painting the outside of our house, so it's kind of nice to sit," Atkinson said. "We don't mind it at all." The tournament not only offered a break from the painting, but another chance to watch the grandchildren. "I'm glad to be here," Atkinson said. "It's a nice family sport."

**Wanting to stand out** The girls from the Groton Dairy Queen U12 squad made a statement during their games. All of the players put red tint in their hair to match their red uniform tops. "There were three girls --- me, Camille (Sippel) and Courtney (Kurtz) --- and we just happened to think it was pretty cool," said Erica Schuster. "It just kind of added to our outfits because we are Dairy Queen. We wanted to stand out from the crowd." Schuster said the coloring is not permanent, but it does stay in for a few days. The players are planning to put their initials on top of their heads for today's action, which starts at 8 a.m. with the last matches scheduled for 2 p.m. When asked if the girls were contemplating something unique for their graduation photos when the time comes, Schuster said, "Yes." When asked if their parents knew about that plan, she replied, "No."

**Pulling double duty** The Northern Blast Tournament proved to be a busy weekend for one Aberdeen girl. Elizabeth Goltz, 14, was serving two roles. She played for the Vibes U15 squad and also worked as a referee. "Refing is just a lot of work with helping the kids learn when they're doing and controlling the game," Goltz said. "Playing is just having fun." Goltz said she feels more pressure when she officiates than when she plays. "I'm more nervous refing than playing because you're in control of the game. It's all up to you," she said. Not only that, but she has to deal with parents who sometimes disagree with calls. "I've had quite a few on me," Goltz said. "I normally just tell them to be quiet or I'll avoid them." Goltz said being a referee has helped her as a player, "Because you know what (refs are) going through and how to respect them and how they want to be respected."

**Tourney work never done** Organizing a tournament like the Northern Blast is no small accomplishment. According to co-directors John Borchard and Lon Bahr, the tournament utilizes at least 50 volunteers who help with concessions, as field marshals, distributing water, and setting up and tearing down. The process for next year's tourney starts as soon as current one ends. "Our time line starts as soon as this one's over," Borchard said. "We need to get the Web site updated with dates. We need to contact basically all our volunteers, make sure the tournament paperwork is in. There's lot of things to prepare for." Those volunteers are invaluable because both Borchard and Bahr also coach in the tourney. "With all the volunteers that we have and the people helping out, they know when we're off doing our thing that we're kind of busy with that," Bahr said. "People just step up and take care of it. And then when we're done we go check and see if there's any pieces that need to be filled back in and check that overlap." This is the first year that Borchard and Bahr have taken on the responsibility of co-directors. Bahr said it seems like the right thing to do. "It's a good opportunity for those girls (we coach) to see us step up. We're asking them to step up and go play hard," he said. "We'll go step up and do what we can do outside of the field, also." The two men have gained a wide array of knowledge from traveling to other tournaments. When they're not coaching, Borchard and Bahr are asking questions and taking notes. "We always look around, check headquarters, watch the field, ask questions of their people," Borchard said. "They're a valuable source of information." Bahr pointed out that the Northern Blast Tournament not only benefits the soccer programs but the entire community of Aberdeen. "We get the cooperation of the hotels and those people working with us and the community," Bahr said. "This is a big bump for the city. It's not six or seven teams, it's 50 teams and families. It's not just the players. So it's good for the economy of the city, too."

She earned the job at the age of 5 because she was the only player who didn't cry. Now, as Rachel Scott enters her final high school season, it is her opponents who probably feel like crying. Scott is the goal keeper for the Aberdeen Central soccer team. She and her teammates will compete in the Northern Blast Tournament this weekend, playing for a team named the Kicks.

"I've been with the same team basically my whole life," Scott said. "It's a good time. We've been friends for so long."

Scott inherited the job of goalie when she was just starting out in the sport.

"My mom always tells me, I was the only one who didn't cry," Scott said of playing in goal.

It is a position she has grown to love, despite the pressure of having to stop the opposing team from scoring.

"There's a lot of pressure. You can't be afraid of the ball," Scott said. "Right before the game I'm still nervous, then I start to settle down a little bit."

There are numerous times when Scott feels a bit removed from the action, especially when her team is dominating the opponent.

"There's some games where there's no competition, where the ball is always on the other end. It gets boring," she said. "It's better to be bored than to lose a game."

While Scott said things like footwork and positioning play a key role in minding the net, a big factor is the mental part of the game. If Scott surrenders a goal, she must bounce back quickly and get it out of her mind.

"You have to know that it's not just your fault that they scored," she said. "There's a whole team that they had to come through."

Scott said her team plays solid defense and when the other team does manage to score, she tries to refocus her effort.

"It's really disappointing when the other team scores," Scott said, "but you realize if you don't want them to score again, you're going to have to try a little harder."

Scott became Central's starting goalie as a sophomore. While she felt a bit of anxiety, the older members on the squad soon realized the quality of teammate that was defending their goal.

"At first I was so nervous, but the older girls told me they were so happy I was their goalie, so that made me feel a lot better," Scott said.

And don't think for one minute that Scott gets any special favors in practice just because she is a goalie.

"You don't have to do a lot of running during the games, but in practices I do the same things everybody else does," Scott assured. "We all run the same thing."

Scott has experimented at other positions, but at the end of the day, she always returns to her comfort zone in front of the net.

"I'm always in the goal no matter what," she said. "Goalie is my spot. That's what I do best."

And no one on her team is shedding any tears about that.