MIFC Maroon G01 Wins State Title

*2nd WYS Championship for the Girls in the past 4 years*

On Sunday, May 13, MIFC Maroon G01, coached by Tom Hill and assisted by Steve Gest, won the WYS Presidents Cup (GU17 Div 2), defeating a Washington Premier FC team 4-2 in the tournament finals.

Maroon struggled during bracket play but managed to advance to the elimination round as the second placed team in its bracket. In the quarterfinal match, Maroon beat a very good Crossfire team 2-1 after a tense match that included 30 minutes of extra time. Despite the unseasonably hot day that took its toll on both teams, Maroon came out during extra time with a more offensive set, which paid off early in the second overtime with a well-played ball from a holding mid to the feet of a sprinting forward, who beat the last defender with a nice first touch and then slid the ball under the charging keeper. The team then held on for a great win after two full hours of soccer.

In the semifinals against a Federal Way FC team, the opponent came out with a very high tempo, and it took Maroon a few minutes to adjust to the fast physical pressure; the result was a FWFC goal off a corner kick only three minutes into the game. Despite the rough start, Maroon remained unphased, and this seemed to wake the team up. From this point forward, Maroon carried play. Maroon scored once in the first half to tie the game and then continued dominating the second half, scoring four more times to secure a spot in the finals with a 5-1 win.

Coach Hill missed the semi-finals for his daughter’s college graduation in Texas, so Assistant Coach Steve Gest coached the girls in this game. Coach Gest noted the keys to the win:

-A strong bench with no weak rotations, and players are so versatile.

-Superior speed in the back line which never allowed anyone behind them.

-Our stopper who marked the opponents #1 goal scorer and held her to one shot on goal in 90 minutes.

-Center mids controlled the game after the first 5 minutes and never relinquished it.

-Outside defensive backs made numerous offensive crosses and overwhelmed the opponent’s defense.

-Our striker, attacking center mid and outside attackers 1 v 1 skills and speed could not be stopped.

- Maroon’s shear determination and work rate really wore down opponent, as evidenced by winning most of the 50/50 balls.

In the final, Maroon faced a WPFC team that had won 5 straight games with a combined goal total of 28 for and only 1 against. Maroon opened the scoring when its lone forward won a 1v1 dual against the central defender and finished her shot low and under the keeper. WFPC equalized a few minutes later on a nice header off a corner. The first half ended tied 1-1.

Just before the second half started one of Maroon’s team leaders spoke up: “The team that comes out strong in the first 15 minutes and wants it more will win this game. Let’s go out there and beat this team!” The team responded and scored in the first two minutes on a screamer of a shot by the center attacking mid (with her off foot) from the top of the box that hit the bottom of the crossbar and bounced just behind the line. WPFC equalized 15 minutes later making it 2-2. Maroon went ahead for good when its left attacking mid sent a long, driven arching ball directly towards the goal. The keeper was in position and able to tip it just enough to have it rebound off the crossbar. Fortunately, Maroon’s central attacking mid had followed the shot and was in perfect position to put the ball into the goal before the keeper could recover.

A few minutes later Maroon’s striker once again beat a defender on the left side, drove to goal, and slid her shot inside the far post to take a 4-2 lead with 10 minutes left in the game. Maroon held WPFC for the last few minutes, barely missing goal number five when a shot rebounded hard off the right post.

Coach Hill, who caught an early morning flight from Texas to be there for the final, summed up the team’s effort: “It was a solid 4-2 win against a quality team to take the well-deserved top honors. Maroon continues to be a cohesive team. Ten of Maroon’s 18 players have been on the team since U12 and thirteen were on the team at U14. They have grown as both individual players and as a team. They know their teammate’s tendencies and rely on each other. I’m so proud of how these girls have developed over the years, both as individual players and as a team.”