

Clubs Partner to Score for Breast Cancer Cause at Athena Invitational



Girls' Indoor Soccer Invitational Raises Funds to benefit Athena Partners and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

U-12 girls' soccer clubs from King and Pierce Co., including the South Hill Revolution (Puyallup), Dosveedanya (Kent), FC Marauders (Maple Valley), and Washington Premier Football Club (Puyallup/Tacoma), scored in more ways than one at the inaugural *Athena Indoor "Kickin' It For a Cure" Soccer Invitational*, raising \$6430 to help find a cure for breast cancer. Held the weekend of January 5-6 at the Mt. Rainier Sports and Fitness Club in Enumclaw, the funds were earned through over \$100 in per goal pledges from tournament sponsors, which quickly added up as the teams tallied a combined 55 goals over the weekend. Team participation fees and individual contributions raised additional funds for the cause.

Athena in mythology, is the goddess of warfare, wisdom, and resourcefulness. Not hard to figure out what Athena Partners founder, and breast cancer survivor Trish May had in mind when she formed her non-profit and committed to battling for a cure. It would have been hard for her to imagine, however, 60 U-12 Athena warriors battling it out, and taking the fight to the soccer pitch. Not surprisingly, it turns out Athena's traits are alive and well in our young athletes. Or, as Miki McKinnon, a player from Washington Premier put it, "I want to be an Athena Warrior!" Also from WPF, Madison Adams was reminded of a saying Trish uses, "Winners never quit, and quitters never win." Madison added, "Trish showed me that by never giving up, good things can happen."

Local foodservice businesses,



including Sysco Foodservices of Seattle and Taco del Mar, led the charge in underwriting the event and pledging the per goal sponsorships. The monies raised will benefit Athena Partners, Trish's Seattle-based non-profit that raises funds and awareness for the women's' cancer cause, primarily through sales of the popular Athena bottled water. Athena has earmarked the total funds raised for donation to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center on behalf of the soccer clubs involved.

"The invitational was a warm-up for upcoming State Cup play, but we also saw it as an opportunity to take the unusual step of turning it into a charitable event to help teach our young players the importance of giving back and working together to make a difference," said Kevin Sloan, tournament organizer and manager of the U-12 FC Marauder team. "The more goals scored, the more money we donated to the cause, so everyone was a winner! We were very pleased with the results, which surpassed our \$5000 goal, and look forward to growing the *Athena Invitational* in years to

come through a collaboration with these great soccer clubs."

Ramsay Moore, player for Club Dosveedanya, also seemed to like the idea of contributing one goal at a time. "My favorite part of the Athena Invitational was scoring a goal and making \$102 for women's cancer. It was cool to see so much money raised by all the teams... over \$6,400. I was happy that Dos made so many goals! I hope we can play again next year, and raise even more money for Athena." Rachel Stoecker from the Marauders seemed to agree. "The Athena Invitational meant so much to me because each time the ball landed in the back of the net, I knew I was saving lives doing the thing I love... soccer."

The coach of the U-12 Marauder squad, Liz Rennick, commented on the collaborative effort. "I loved that my players were able to unite with other soccer players from different clubs, connect, and support a great cause. It was not just about winning, it's bigger than that. It was about making a difference in another person's life." Alyssa Hurt, Liz's counterpart, and leader

of Washington Premier's U-12's, echoed her remarks. "I thought it was a positive experience for the girls. Not only were they able to play and have fun, but the focus was on something other than winning. The girls were able to experience giving and helping others." Walt Antoniuk, while leading the on-field effort of the Dosveedanya U-12's, commented on the big picture. "It was great to be part of a community event that contributes to raising awareness of the importance of breast cancer prevention and research. It was good for the girls to be able to use their soccer skills to directly impact this women's health issue."

The players... excuse me, warriors... shared the same sentiments. Marauder player Lauren Maulden commented, "It feels good to help other people, but it makes it more worthwhile when you are having fun at the same time!" On a more personal level, her teammate, Kelsey Orseth said, "This experience has meant a lot to me, because a very close friend of our family passed away from breast cancer last year. By doing something I love, playing soccer, I was able to give to a cause that is close to my heart."

Beyond the appreciation we all seem to share in an event like this as a result of the personal tragedies many of us have experienced or witnessed, lies the willingness and desire to partner up to make our world a better place to live. It was in this spirit that Jenna Sloan, player for FC Marauders, reflected back on the battle cry of the event. "We made a difference, one goal at a time!" ■