



Aliso Niguel High School Soccer Program
WOLVERINES



November 24, 2009

Boys Varsity
Aliso Niguel 1 vs Northwood 1

ALISO NIGUEL kicked off its 2009/2010 campaign with their first preseason game on Tuesday night, at home, against NORTHWOOD of Irvine. Having lost 8 seniors to graduation, the team will be looking to integrate several new players into the squad, so it looks to be an exciting and challenging season.

Kicking off at 7PM, the first chance for ALISO NIGUEL came early with a ball from Cole Brown that was just a little too deep, and from that point on, NORTHWOOD had to fend off wave after wave of ALISO NIGUEL players for the opening 10 minutes, intent on taking first blood. However against the run of play, in one of NORTHWOOD's few legitimate chances of the half, a turnover in ALISO NIGUEL's penalty area almost proved costly, but for a timely clearance from Ho Jae Jang!

Two of the new additions to the Aliso Niguel lineup, Brady Allen and Ivan Velez, made their presence felt early as they worked hard on the backline, shoring up the Aliso Niguel defense with very little sign that this was their first chance playing varsity soccer!

NORTHWOOD seemed content to try and carry the ball through the ALISO NIGUEL defense, with frankly minimal returns on their investment of time and ball possession. ALISO NIGUEL dominated the midfield to a large degree, spending most of the half in NORTHWOOD's end of the pitch at best or the neutral middle area at worst.

ALISO NIGUEL were constantly probing NORTHWOOD's defenses with searching crosses and deep passes from the midfielders- in fact, it was much like watching Brazil vs. England in some respects; Brazil with their ground game and possession versus England with their aerial attack...

ALISO NIGUEL did get a free kick just outside the NORTHWOOD penalty area, but blasted the ball into the wall. NORTHWOOD had the first two corners of the game, with the second corner calling for a brilliant reflexive save from keeper Alex Figueroa and another hurried clearance from the defense.

In the last 10 minutes of the half, NORTHWOOD had a free kick awarded in a similar position to that of AV earlier, but NORTHWOOD was able to make more out of it, blazing a shot JUST wide of the left post that would have frankly been difficult for any keeper, if it had been on target!

ALISO NIGUEL finished the half off in fine style with a blistering run down the right wing, with the resulting cross stranding the keeper but running completely across the face of the goal, begging for someone to get a boot on it for the easiest of tap ins!

The second half started with NORTHWOOD having another corner that was cleared without incident, but a few minutes later, a casual pass back put a NORTHWOOD attacker in on keeper Kevin Witkowski. The keeper smothered the ball, taking the attacker down in the process, but the referee fortunately saw nothing in the challenge...

ALISO NIGUEL kept pressing and was rewarded in one of those chaotic situations that almost *promises* a goal...after several shots, including one stopped point blank by the keeper, ricocheted around the NORTHWOOD penalty area, the ball careened out to AJ who put a lovely shot into the right of the net. GOAL!

Given that ALISO NIGUEL was frankly the better team on the night, a 1-0 victory would have been justice, but the soccer gods don't always see things that way. Right at the death, NORTHWOOD's diminutive right winger roared down the touch line and lifted an impossible cross across the face of goal and into the top left corner. The keeper made a mighty effort to tip it wide as the ball arched over him, but the ball merely rolled off his finger tips and into

the roof of the net. The NORTHWOOD winger could try that same shot from now to the end of time and have trouble repeating it, but that is football!

All in all, this was a fun game to watch and showed the potential of a team in transition that may well come together quickly. We shall see as the season progresses- the next home game is Monday the 30th at 5PM against Brea Olinda!