



Aliso Niguel High School Soccer Program
WOLVERINES



February 16, 2010

Boys Varsity
Aliso Niguel 2 vs. Claremont 0

After a season where they played well defensively, only giving up more than 1 goal once in the preseason and once in the regular season, Aliso Niguel was able to draw a wildcard berth and face Claremont High School at home in the CIF-SS Playoffs.

The game started at 3PM, on a warm and sunny afternoon for a change! Claremont kicked off and right from the start, Aliso Niguel was on them. Early pressure forced the Claremont keeper to have to scramble and clear into touch- he was going to have a busy afternoon.

For the first 5 minutes Aliso Niguel kept Claremont penned in their own end but, as is often the case where one team has a ton of early pressure that they are not able to capitalize on, Claremont almost scored on their first counter attack. A moment later Aliso Niguel recovered and Ho-Jae Jang, playing as if this might be the last game for the seniors - and he was right, from now on every game could be - took an opportunistic shot from 60 yards that went wide.

Claremont had their best chance right on 7 minutes when a throw-in from the left took a nasty bounce and was finger-tipped over by a fully stretched Alex Figueroa. It would not be the last time that Aliso Niguel would be reluctant to challenge in the air in its own penalty area. A great throw by Eric Hunter beat the Claremont keeper, but no Aliso Niguel forward challenged for it. A moment later, a volley was misplayed by the charging CHS keeper WELL outside his area, but the rolling ball eluded Greg Devlin who had momentarily lost sight of it and it was volleyed out for a corner by a very relieved Claremont defender. Aliso Niguel continued the attack with some great hustle by Ashanti Rand resulting in him crossing a beautiful ball from the left that was just headed wide.

Ho-Jae played like a rock as usual, constantly seeking out the play and making sure the tackled players STAYED tackled! He seemed to cruise the midfield like some sort of predatory shark, pouncing on loose balls and opponents with equal ferocity. The game settled down largely to a battle between the boxes, as each team searched for a way to break the other down. Claremont were content for the most part to try and carry the ball in, while Aliso Niguel continued to throw long balls forward, but they were for the most part too hard or too deep for the forwards to get to...

A great through-ball sent Ramin Amidari in on goal for a lovely tap in, but the linesman seemed to think it was offside...

With 8 minutes to go in the half, another long throw from Eric Hunter was flicked on for a great chance for Adam Tedder, but his volley was deflected behind for a corner. The resulting corner was headed wide.

A rampaging run and low cross by Alec Petit saw Ramin Amidari turn the pass back to Eric Hunter for a low shot that just eluded the outstretched boot of a sliding Tyler Troup. Almost immediately after, Tyler headed Alec Petit clear, who broke in on the left, crossed to Wehan who sent a great ball into the path of an onrushing Adam Tedder. Adam had come in behind the play from the right and he buried the ball in the back of the old onion bag! 1-0 Aliso!!

A last minute throw from the right to end the half had Coach Dodge yelling 'At Troup! At Troup!' This time, Tyler's flick-on header did not find its intended target, but the boys headed off with a crucial lead...

The second half started with an Aliso Niguel kickoff that almost broke down and resulted in Claremont getting through on goal. A long ball from Ho-Jae on the counter send Devlin in, but his attempted chip of the keeper was WAY too high and drifted out before it could do any damage. Claremont came right back and although the Claremont player was called offside just outside the 6 yard box, it would not have mattered, since Figgie came up big in goal again, as he has all season. Having a keeper like that backstopping the team, gave the lads the confidence they needed to press their advantage- his experience will be missed next season that is for sure.

A quick free kick saw Greg Devlin through into the box, but the defender hurled himself across Greg's path, bringing him down. However the only call was for a corner kick for Aliso Niguel.

The corner flew across the face of goal to Ramin Chitsaz, who hammered the header home for Aliso Niguel's second of the afternoon! 2-0 Aliso!!

For really the first time this season, the boys started to put some nice passing plays together with some consistency, which made for some very enjoyable football for the spectators. Aliso Niguel really had the bit between their teeth, while Claremont seemed to get more and more discouraged, with some elbows beginning to come up in frustration.

Devlin and Tedder seemed to range behind the defense at will, only being denied scoring chances by the slightest of margins, or the strangest of official calls...

Ryan Perez had a great chance in a break down the left wing, but elected to shoot straight at the keeper instead of passing back to a COMPLETELY unseen Adam Tedder for the easiest of tap-ins. Adam had let the play run forward and drifted into space in front of the collapsing defense, much like Cristiano Ronaldo liked to do for Manchester United!

With 14 minutes remaining, Devlin had another chance to break down the right side, but thinking he was all alone, decided to try and bull his way through. The ball pinged around a forest of legs and fell again at his feet, but was just played wide to the left. Almost something from nothing!

Sean MacWilliams got his first taste of the game and made a great run down the right, but his cross was not quiet deep enough. Claremont continued with the late hits and physical play as they were unable to make any meaningful penetration. Tyler was subbed back on after Devlin was 'submarined' by a cynical Claremont player, crashing to the pitch and landing flat on his back.

Tyler almost stole one when a slow back pass to their keeper presented him with a golden opportunity. He pounced on the ball and just got his shot off, but the keeper blocked it! With only a few minutes left, a handball inside the penalty area saw Figgie come up to take the penalty- a nice touch by the team to give the keeper a chance to bag one for a change and see how the other half lives... However the keeper guess right and the resulting save saw Figgie have to leg it back to his goal 'post haste'! Fortunately for Aliso Niguel and unfortunately for Claremont, the keeper's rushed kick curved into touch...

3 minutes to go and a gritty series of tackles by Sean saw Ryan Perez set free on the right for a nice cross that just eluded Ramin Amidari...one last searching free kick almost saw Devlin snatch a third for Aliso Niguel, but the keeper bravely threw himself onto the loose ball and the

game ended with Aliso Niguel moving on, looking like they are coming together at JUST the right time!

Thursday they play JSerra at JSHS, so come out and cheer on the team and give the seniors in particular the support they have earned through 4 years of hard work and commitment to Aliso Niguel High School Soccer!