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Orinda Soccer Player Takes Game to National Stage

Submitted by Mary Staff



Photo Kelley Cox

Orinda soccer player, Samantha DeVecchi, was invited to compete in an elite soccer tournament with some of the top players in the country.

The Miramonte junior was one of 18 players selected to represent Region IV in the 2015 US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program (ODP) Girls Thanksgiving Interregional Tournament in Boca Raton, Fla. The Region IV team is made up of top players from the 15 Western States.

The weeklong tournament featured some of the best players in the country from each of the four US Youth Soccer Regions. Players worked alongside some of the nation's top coaches to enhance their problem solving skills within the game, and further their technical and tactical abilities.

DeVecchi talked about her experience at the camp. "This was a great opportunity for me. I played with, roomed with, and became friends with some of the best players in the country. The training was intense, fast, physical, and grueling, but fun at the same time. We trained in the classroom, as well as on the fields."

US Soccer's ODP Interregional Tournament is a system in which players are identified, evaluated, and developed for possible inclusion on US Olympic and National Teams. US Youth Soccer ODP claims members of Major League Soccer, the National Women's Soccer League, and the majority of current and past national and youth national team members, as alumni.

At the conclusion of the camp, the coaches gave each player a written evaluation of their overall skills. DeVecchi said her evaluation was

informative. "It showed me some things I do well and also gave me positive feedback on what I need to continue to work on."

"Playing against the Womens' National Team was awesome" DeVecchi said, when asked to summarize her experience. "They were so fast, so aggressive, and they were on you in a flash." She added, "When we had our chance to play against them, I felt like I played well and upped my game, but they were awesome."

Currently a member of the Danville Mustang ECNL U16 team, DeVecchi has been in the ODP Program for the past four years.

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