

BATTLE AT THE BRIDGE PRE-ACADEMY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

BERARDI IS A BEAST IN WEEK 1 OF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PLAY!

Timid 12 year olds, tired players, and rusty finishing were a common site in week 1 of champions play this year. It was clear that many of the players were having trouble getting used to the high pace of play required to be successful in the champions league. This league is about quick transitioning and playing well on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. After this week 1 introduction, we're hoping to see players become much more comfortable with transitioning into the attack and with the ball at their feet near goal. We're also hoping to see a more aggressive and tenacious defensive approach from all players in week 2.

While many of their teammates struggled in week1, Anthony Berardi and Connor Mote shined with 5 and 4 goals respectively. With their impressive goal scoring performances, Anthony and Connor have catapulted themselves to the top of the leaderboard for the league's "Golden Boot Award." A new category this year to the Champions league is the "Helping Hand Award." Jake Fernandez leads this new category after a match full of unselfish and spot on ball distribution. Quality performances from Berardi, Mote, and Fernandez caught the attention of the captains as they casted their post-match votes for "league difference maker." Finally, Conner Lovely demonstrated a solid performance in the goal during his first match of the day and he finds himself heading into week 2 near the top of the league's assist category after some nice distribution into attacking players.

Week 2 has some interesting matches lined up as the winners from week 1 take on the losers from week 1. Barcelona will square off against Man United in the first game. Austin Collier will be looking to lead Barcelona to the top of the league while Jacob Graiber hopes to keep Man Utd from slipping to far down the leaderboard. In match 2, Jake Fernandez, Sean Lynch, and their Munich teammates will need to find a recipe for stopping Anthony Berardi if they hope to secure their second win. There's a lot at stake in week 2 of the champions league as all the teams battle for position. We're looking forward to more intensity, more goal scoring, and more excitement in week 2!

MUNICH AND MOTE ARE IMPRESSIVE IN WEEK 2 OF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PLAY!!

In week 2, Munich dominated Milan with tremendous passing from Jake Fernandez, ridiculous defending from Sean Lynch, a beastly four goal performance by Connor Mote, and excellent contributions from the twelve year old trio of Bann, Jake Perakis, and Bonilla. Simply put, Munich propelled itself into first place and clearly identified themselves as the team to beat in the 2011 Champions league. Munich will look to add further distance from themselves and the rest of the league in week 3 as the square off against Barcelona. Barcelona will be looking to bounce back after their week 2 defeat at the hands of Man United. Jacob Graiber, Richie Michalik, and Man United were able to outlast Barcelona with 3 goals in the last five minutes of play to break a 1-1 deadlock.

MVP votes for Mote, Fernandez, and Budicin created a four way tie for first place in the "league difference maker" category. Connor Mote also catapulted himself into top position for the "Golden Boot" award with his four goals in week 2. The "helping hand" award has a solid front runner with Jake Fernandez's five assists. Finally, Jamie Yoder completed his first week of league play with only 6 goals allowed in two matches. This performance currently has Yoder leading the "Brick Wall" award category.

Week 3 at Seven Bridges promises to be critical for all four teams. Wins by both Barcelona and Man United would create a 3 way tie for first place and likely eliminate Milan's chances of playing for a league championship. Wins by Munich and Milan would place Munich in the drivers seat and get Milan back into the race. Whether it's keeping pace in the league standings or the individual award categories, there's a lot at stake in week 3 of Champions play. Stay tuned in.....the action is starting to heat up!

ANYBODY CAN BEAT ANYONE ON ANY DAY IN THE PRE-ACADEMY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE!!

Anthony Berardi was only 30 seconds away from leading his Milan teammates to their first point in Champions League play, but Josh Perakis creatively split the Milan defense and patiently found the back of the net to give Man United their second win of the season. In the first match of week 3, Austin Collier and Barcelona used 40 minutes of impressive attacking and tough defending to knock off league leader Munich. The wins by Barcelona and Man United created a three way tie for first place as we head into week 4.

In the individual award categories, Jake Fernandez added two more assists this week and continues to run away with the "Helping Hand" category. Another two goals from Connor Mote propelled him into the lead for the "Golden Boot" award. The "League Difference Maker" award is still anyone's to capture as Berardi, Fernandez, and Budicin have all collected three votes thus far. Finally, the race for our league's top goalkeeper is a toss up with Jamie Yoder leading the GA/AVG and Conner Lovely collecting more wins.

Week 3 presented us with the most competitive and entertaining matches of the season thus far. We're all looking forward to seeing more tough defending and creative goal-scoring in week 4. With just three matches left to earn a spot in the league championship, the stakes are getting higher! See you at the Bridge on January 29th~

MUNICH IS DOMINATE AND MILAN FIGHTS SUCCESSFULLY FOR THEIR FIRST POINT IN WEEK 4!!

Players from Milan and Barcelona were greeted with cheers and high fives as they left the field in week 4. Barcelona got off to a great start with precision passing and ridiculous shooting from Austin Collier, but late heroics from Mikey Bennet brought Milan back from three goals down to earn their first point in Champions League play. The first match of week 4 showcased impressive defending and six different goal scorers for Munich as they dominated Manchester United. With only one goal from Richie Michalik, Manchester United simply had no answer for 1st place Munich.

In the individual categories, not much changed in week 4 as the week 3 leaders put in solid performances. Anthony Berardi earned another vote for man of the match in week 4 and still leads the race for league MVP. Jake Fernandez quietly collected three more assists in week 4 and still heads the "Helping Hand" category. Connor Mote only scored 1 goal in week 4, but still has two more goals than Anthony Berardi in the race for the "Golden Boot." Finally, Conner Lovely's 1 goal against performance in week 4 helped him to overtake Jamie Yoder as the league's top goalkeeper.

It's a short turn around to week six as the players will do battle again at Seven Bridges tomorrow with a lot at stake. Only one point currently separates 2nd place Barcelona and 3rd place Manchester United. A win for Barcelona will virtually eliminate Manchester United from the league championship in week 7. Also in week five, Munich squares off against Milan. Milan will be looking for their first win and Munich is looking to clinch a spot in the league championship match. Only two weeks left to earn a chance to win a Champion's League title. It's still cold outside, but the action is heating up. See everyone at the bridge!

Tough defending, close games, and Milan's first win are the story in week 5!

If you only watched the first twenty minutes of match 1 during week 5, you would have thought Munich was well on their way to dominating their opponent for the second straight night and taking control of 1st place in the Champions league. Milan had other ideas, though. Organized leadership from Berardi, shorts splitting dribbling by Helf, and late goals by Barangan, Petrovic, and Moser shocked Munich to earn Milan their first win in Champions league play. The loss for Munich made the second match of week 5 even more important as the winner between Barcelona and Manchester United would gain at least a share of first place. The pressure wasn't too much for Rohan Menon and Austin Collier as they connected for the most impressive goal of the season. It was a close match with quality defensive effort throughout, but Barcelona was able to outlast Manchester United and snatch sole ownership of 1st place.

The week five drama sets up meaningful matches in week 6 as teams have one final opportunity to jockey for position. Here's the breakdown of what everyone is playing for in week 6:

1. Munich will play Barcelona and the winner will automatically qualify for the league championship. A draw will also earn both teams a spot in the final. A winner in the match will earn the top goalkeeper for their re-match for the league championship in week 7. A tie in the match will earn Barcelona the top goalkeeper for the league championship match.
2. The win for Barcelona in week 5 eliminated both Manchester United and Milan from the league championship. A win for Milan against Man United will actually catapult them into 3rd place and earn them the top goalkeeper for their re-match in the week 7 consolation match. A win or a tie for Manchester United will earn them 3rd place and get them the top goalkeeper for the consolation match.

On a final note, Conner Lovely still commands the lead in the category for league's top goalkeeper. If he can give up fewer goals than Jamie Yoder in week 6, Conner will be in the goal for the 1st and 3rd place teams in the final week of the 2011 Champions League.

MATCHUPS ARE SET FOR CHAMPIONSHIP WEEK IN THE PRE-ACADEMY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE!

Here's the lineup for the final week of action on February 26th:

4:40 pm Match

3rd Place Milan will take on 4th Place Manchester United in the 3rd Place Match.
Conner Lovely will be in the goal for Milan and Jamie Yoder will cover the net for Manchester United.

5:20 pm Match

1st Place Munich will take on 2nd Place Barcelona in the League Championship Match.
Conner Lovely will be in the goal for Munich and Jamie Yoder will cover the net for Barcelona.

Other things to look for in the final week of action:

- Berardi, Fernandez, and Graiber are all in the running for league MVP.
- Berardi and Mote appear to be the final two standing in the race for the league's top goal scorer.
- Fernandez still has a 4 assist lead in the helping hand category, but Petrovic and Mote have each had 4 assist games in the past two weeks.
- Jamie Yoder has a lot of work to do in the last week. He trails Conner Lovely by about .6 GA per game. Lovely also leads the tie breaker with 6 more wins than Yoder. To win this category, Yoder will have to win by a large differential in both games of week 7.

We have two weekends off with a trip to Fort Wayne and President's Day Weekend. Looking forward to the exciting conclusion of the 2011 Pre-Academy Champions League in three weeks! See Everyone at the Bridge.

2011 PRE-ACADEMY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL RESULTS

Barcelona is our well deserving team champion. Barcelona was led by their captain, Austin Collier, whose play became more and more impressive with each passing week. You'll notice the rest of the Barcelona roster all over the season stat sheet. Consistent and tremendous play from Ryan Budicin, Rohan Menon, Daniel Morefield, Nick Huerter, and Spencer Moriarity helped Barcelona overcome all obstacles in their way and earn them a Champions League title!

Anthony Berardi was challenged by many, but he is our well-deserving winner for both the "League MVP" and "Golden Boot" awards. Week after week, Berardi steadily added goals to his season total and was voted "Man of the Match" by his opposition. Berardi had stiff competition in both categories with Jake Fernandez, Jacob Graiber, and Austin Collier only finishing one vote away from Berardi for "League MVP." In the "Golden Boot Category," Berardi had to overcome Conner Mote and Austin Collier in the final week to earn this honor.

Jake Fernandez had the most assists in the first and last week of league play. He is our 2011 "Helping Hand" award winner with 10 total assists. Jarod Petrovic, Daniel Morefield, and Conner Mote came on strong in the later weeks of league play, but their solid play wasn't enough to overtake Fernandez for this award.

In a shocking turn of events, Jamie Yoder earned the title of Champion's League top goalkeeper. Conner Lovely led this category the entire season, but became the victim of the unstoppable Barcelona in the last week of league play.

Congratulations to all of the winners and everyone else! It was truly a competitive and exciting indoor season. Now it's time to go outside!

BARCELONA DOMINATE AND WIN LEAGUE TITLE!



Top Row, Left to Right: Rohan Menon, Jamie Yoder, Austin Collier, Ryan Budicin
Bottom Row, Left to Right: Daniel Morefield, Spencer Moriarty, Nick Huerter