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Caledon Soccer Club in Ontario Cup semifinals

By Robert Belardi

Caledon Soccer Club will have two teams make an appearance in the Ontario Cup semifinals next weekend.

The U17 girls' side and the U15 boys' team have been quite impressive throughout the year and it's no surprise they are one game away from fighting for a trophy.

It's been quite the year and one that both clubs won't forget. The U15 boys, have had months of training over zoom calls and when the time came around to play there was barely any time to practice.

?Essentially we went from nothing over a year to an overloaded schedule. Many of the past four to five weeks, we've had three games a week. Professional players don't even play three times a week, let-alone youth athletes,? said Simon Burns, head coach of the U15 boys.

?We've barely had any time to practice because players need recovery time. So, playing so many games really limits the amount of practice time. It's been a double-edged sword.?

Burns admitted his players have been technically practicing while playing games at 110 per cent. It's been challenging for all teams and, of course, managing a competitive match and a practice are two different things.

He commended the effort from his players season for how strong his team has been mentally. The boys support each other and are very positive while on the pitch. The team is supported by excellent parents who are loving every minute of it.

?All the kids are leaders in their own way. That really helps maintain a positive attitude and they drive each other. As a coach, there's only so much motivating you can do at some point it has to come internally. They are a motivated group,? Burns said.

His club will be taking on Juventus Academy in the semi-final, who are playing through Glen Shields FC.

In the other quarterfinals, the U17 girls' side defeated Bolton 7-0 en-route to the semis.

Goals came from Bella Mazzaferro (3), Angelina Kristin (2), Sarah Lopez and Jessica Tavares. Goalkeeper Katie Furlong saved a penalty throughout the match as well.

The girls, who are currently playing up a year and are all 16 years of age, will be eligible to be contacted next year by the NCAA if they are scouted.

That opportunity is a testament to their competitive level and how hard they train.

?Apart from their training and what they do, their possession and their passing is far superior than most teams they play. Where they might struggle is the physicality part because of the year difference. Usually they are the team with the ball most of the time,? head coach Terry Madison said.

This week, Caledon will be taking on Dixie Soccer Club not just in the semifinals of the Ontario Cup, but also in the league. Taking this team on twice in the same week will be a mental challenge. The last time these two took each other on, Dixie Soccer Club won 3-1.

The Ontario Cup finals if both Caledon clubs emerge victorious, are set to take place at the Ontario Soccer Centre in Woodbridge in

mid-September.

The league will continue to run until the end of September and Madison said he hopes to partake in a tournament in October. Next spring, he also hopes to travel south of the border so the girls can be scouted by universities.

Stay tuned.