



Contact: Troy Letherman, Technical Director
907.982.3459; t.letherman@coervercoachingnw.com

Krista Hepler, AKFC 98 United Team Manager
907.346.1328; hepler4ak@gci.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World Youth Cup First on the 2010 Docket for 98 United Boys

Palmer, AK – February 12, 2010 – Having competed in four tournaments outside Alaska in just over a year's time, the AKFC 98 United boys are ready for the next stage in their development and are heading to Sweden to prove it.

The Gothia Cup, hosted in the port city of Gothenburg, is the world's largest and most international youth soccer tournament, with over 1,500 teams from approximately 60 different nations taking part each year. In 2010 that number will include the AKFC 98 boys as the American representative in the Under-13 division.

Featuring players from four premier clubs in Alaska—Matanuska Soccer Club, Full Force Soccer Club, the Alaska Rush and Cook Inlet Soccer Club—as well as a couple of augmentations from the Seattle-based Coerver® Coaching NW Center of Excellence programs, the international version of AKFC 98 United departs July 15 for their adventure and will take in a number of assorted activities in addition to tournament play, including training, friendlies and tours with their Coerver® Europe counterparts.

“This is a huge step for the boys’ development,” explained Coerver® Coaching NW Director TR Stoneback. “They’ll not only get to see and play teams from all over the world, but they’re going to compete in an environment where soccer is an incredibly important part of the social and cultural fabric of life. It’s vital at this stage that they see where soccer can take them, and that they know anything’s possible with hard work and a real commitment to getting better.”

At the Gothia Cup, over 80% of the boys games are international contests, and the AKFC 98 squad can expect to face a team from a different nation each time they set foot on the pitch. Echoing Stoneback’s comments, the team’s head coach and AKFC Technical Director Troy Letherman says that with a tour like this, the whole experience is important, not just results on the field.

“We’re going to see some pretty incredible young boys’ teams,” he continued, “playing all kinds of different styles, and while that sort of competition will make a player better in the long run, the exposure these kids will get to such varied cultures is at least as compelling a reason to go. From staying in schools with teams from all over the planet to an Olympic-style opening ceremony attended by over 50,000 spectators, this will be a trip they’ll remember forever.”

Currently, in addition to their regular club commitments, the players are training weekly in the Coerver® AK Center of Excellence-Elite at the Menard Sports Complex in Wasilla, as well as ramping up their fundraising efforts ahead of the trip. “Unlike the kids from other countries, where high-level sponsorship is so prevalent, our parents bear a significant financial burden when it comes to a team like this,” Letherman explained. “When it comes to AKFC, our Coerver® coaches and trainers work for free. We get some big breaks on the players’ game, training and travel kits from adidas and Eurosport, so we can provide them at no cost to the players, but in Alaska, it can be quite expensive just to get the field space to train, and we’ve a pretty aggressive program lined up to get these boys ready. Because this is an elite team with players identified based on their ability and commitment, selection can’t be about whether or not someone has the resources to make the trip, but in the end, it’s always a struggle.”

The Gothia Cup runs from July 18-24, 2010, and more information can be found at www.gothiacup.se.

About AKFC

Formed in 2008, AKFC was created to offer an additional competitive outlet for the Alaskan premier soccer player, by providing innovative, advanced training opportunities in a professional atmosphere, stressing our core belief in the development of the individual player, and by promoting tournament match play in the most challenging environments. A member of US Club Soccer, AKFC is operated by the directors of Matanuska Soccer Club but accepts and encourages cooperation between all of Alaska’s premier soccer clubs. Our teams are intended to both further develop and showcase the talents of the state’s best young soccer players by placing them in an environment of consistent competition, where the highest standards of commitment and performance are expected.

About Coerver® Coaching AK

Coerver® Coaching concludes that any system of play is ultimately only as good as the players involved. It therefore focuses on individual development both alone and in the context of small-group team play. This curriculum is delivered through the Pyramid of Player Development and remains consistent with the core mission of all Coerver® development programs: to develop skilled, confident and creative players.

For more information about Coerver® Soccer Schools and Academies, to include the Coerver® Coaching AK Center of Excellence, or for details on AKFC teams and player opportunities, please contact Assistant Director Troy Letherman at 907.982.3459 (t.letherman@coervercoachingnw.com) or Director TR Stoneback at 206.478.3670 (trstoneback@coervercoachingnw.com), or visit AKFC on the web at www.coervercoachingnw.com/akfc/index.asp.

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