

What Youth Soccer Has Meant To Me

Through thick and thin—through all those hard times that so often accompany growing up and adolescence—youth soccer has remained a firm pillar upon which I can steady my life. Since the very beginning, first grade for me, soccer has been the activity that brightens my day. I would look forward to those Tuesday and Thursday practices, but even more so, I couldn't wait to release all my pent-up energy in the games on Saturday and Sunday. The goals, the friends, the parents, and even the snacks after each game, will be something I will always look back on favorably. As I progressed through the many years of school, stress became an increasing problem, as the homework load grew in a seemingly exponential fashion. This simply caused soccer to become even more important in my life, as it provided an outlet for all the day's stress and frustration. As I joined club soccer in 6th grade, I was introduced to the thrill of traveling to play in tournaments. Suddenly, I had something more to look forward to on weekends; not only did I get to play soccer, but I got to go on a road trip to play at least three games in one weekend! Finally, when I joined the high school soccer world four years ago, the stress in my life continued to mount, but now I wasn't just practicing two or three days a week, but *every single* day. I quickly acknowledged 7th hour as the highlight of my day, because it was when I got to escape the brain-racking environment of school, in order to participate in the greatest enjoyment of my life. Now in my senior year, I still play for both my high school *and* club team, meaning that I sometimes have more than one practice a day. However, I obviously don't mind these conditions due to my uncontested and endless love for the game of soccer, and I never would have gotten to experience any of it had it not been for the youth soccer program here in Norman. Thank you!