

## **2020 Season Wrap Up**

Much has been said about 2020. Indeed, it has been an opportunity to inspect how we respond, how we prioritize and how we place value. Indeed, it has been filled with growth opportunities, filled with understanding wants vs needs, filled with holding closer to our passions. Of course, the contrasting perspectives have also been present but it is important to find a way to make the best of every situation we encounter on life's journey.

The season we had was in the shadow of a global pandemic and for the most part we managed to find joy in each day. The interest level topped any previous year with the number of registrants and for the first time we were not able to provide the experience for everyone who wanted it. The changing guidelines, rule adaptations and restrictive procedures made for increased stress. Extra effort was put in to build schedules that aligned with guidelines yet still provided opportunity for student athletes. At times we had too many players, at times we could have used a few more.

Gratefulness dominates the reflection. Gratefulness for the student athlete who accepted the abnormal and worked with it. Gratefulness for staff who planned and planned again and adjusted the new plan to be acceptable. Gratefulness for having so many who practiced putting the student athletes first in the experience. Gratefulness for the willing folks who put their personal desires aside to try to fulfill the potential of a most unique season. Gratefulness for the mercy given amidst the chaos.

The success of the team on the field is almost overshadowed by all the work that made it happen. Grasping the concept that every day needs to be better, that every day deserves our best, was at the root of the success. Seeing that mindset become part of the team culture was more satisfying than individual game results. That is a life victory that will create success for all who practice it.

On the field, play was elevated to a level that brought attention from all over. Teams we didn't play were hearing about us. Teams we did play approached with trepidation. It was fun to have earned respect. It was fun to be complimented by the eventual Section Champs. It was fun to have earned success. It was fun to play soccer!

One constant theme was to be ready for change. For weeks we have been working to celebrate the season. Trying to plan and prepare an awards event. Each plan was "paused"! While other teams went forward and ignored directives, we made the difficult decision to continue the course of cautious concern. Doing so may have deprived us of some fun but it should in no way diminish the merit of our efforts this season.

Eighteen Participation awards.

Twenty six Varsity Letters earned.

Nine Academic All Conference awards.

Three All Conference Honorable Mentions.

Three All Conference winners.  
Two United Soccer Coaches National Excellence awards.

A season record with 11 wins including a berth in the Section Semifinals.  
A roster with 19 players potentially returning.  
A season of 46 goals for and 34 against.  
A season where no team beat us twice.

The 2020 season was like no other for many reasons. It may well be remembered as the season that raised the bar. The competitive level has definitely been raised. Veteran players can see that off season work will be required to earn a spot on the roster again. As players get stronger and skills are refined the level of success will continue to climb.

It is always bitter sweet when a season ends. Knowing that student athletes who showed up years ago as little girls are now leaving as young women makes the goodbyes a little easier. After all, it is the natural progression. Nevertheless, the class of 2021 will depart knowing that their roles were fulfilled, their marks forever made in Thunder Soccer. Each has been vital in creating the culture of the team as it now stands. On and off the field contributions have helped inspire and encourage others. Connections have been made and value has been added. Thanks for all you are leaving with us; laughter, smiles, blood, sweat and tears. Especially, thanks for the memories! Best wishes for a wonderful future - the most important day is today.

### **AWARD RECIPIENTS**

#### **Activities Participation Awards**

Gabrielle Behl	Gracie Blaedorn	Gwen Brouhard	Grace Ecklund
Kendra Erickson	Grace Gardas	Olivia Glidden	Emma Haley
Avery Helm	Sarah Leaser	Gretchen Mattson	Payton McEachern
Kylie Olsen	Maria Paz Armada	Elena Roberts	Zoey Stephany
Olivia Williams	Kayla Zinken		

#### **Varsity Letter Winners**

Kelsi Anderson	Madelynn Anderson	Madeline Dahl
Isabella Felegy	Mackenzie Haley	Kaisa Hogan
Taylor Inman	Ella Kostrzewski	Elizabeth Kuker
Abigail Larson	Sarah Larson	Shannon Mattson
Raleigh Miller	Samantha Paulsen	Reese Rivers
Josephine Rowley	Shane Rowley	Andraya Sailor
Miranda Schwieger	Danie Scott	Samantha Spindler
Sarah Tucker	Lanie Wehmhoff	Kamryn Wesloh
Kyla Wiley	Ella Williams	

