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Thunder U14 soccer team wins Capital Fall Classic Tournament

Written By Brian Lockhart

It was quite an accomplishment for the Shelburne Thunder U14 team when they traveled to Ottawa to compete in the Ottawa National Capital Fall Classic Tournament from Oct. 4 to 5 and returned home as champions.

This local squad of elite athletes was up against teams from much larger urban centres, but the Thunder showed how sports development in Shelburne is working well to help players hone their skills so they can compete at the national level.

The tournament hosted around 250 teams representing several divisions, with games being played at several venues in the nation's capital.

In the regular season, the Thunder compete in Tier 1 of the Southwest District Soccer League.

Gary McCreadie took over coaching duties with the team during last year's indoor training and worked with his assistants through the 2025 season to make the Thunder a competitive elite squad.

The trip to Ottawa, McCreadie said, was a good team-building exercise. The Thunder enjoyed not only playing soccer during the trip, they enjoyed the social aspect of being in a new town and experiencing life on the road.

?We currently have 17 kids on the squad and three development players,? McCreadie explained. ?I like ?away tournaments' for the boys because they get to go away and spend time together in restaurants, hang out by the pool, and just have fun. It's really a team building thing as well as playing soccer. I was looking for tournaments we could go to and Ottawa seemed like a good choice.?

The Thunder played four games during the tournament, winning two and tying one before going to the final. In the final, they were up against a hometown team, Ottawa South United.

?What this means is Shelburne, as a town of around 10,000 goes to Ottawa with a population of around 1.1 million and we beat their top Tier 1 team,? McCreadie said. ?It talks about the development process we have here in Shelburne. We have to take raw athletic talent and develop it into a soccer player. I think that in this club, we are doing this very well. After the final win, we all went out for dinner as a group and they had a fantastic time.?

In the final game, the Thunder hammered Ottawa and left the pitch with a 3-0 win to claim the tournament title.