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Nepean Hotspurs Soccer Club – *Lightning* - Stellar 2009 Season Sees Return to OYSL in 2010

The Nepean Hotspurs Soccer Club is pleased to announce that the Nepean Hotspurs *Lightning* (GU15 OYSL) will return to the Ontario Youth Soccer League (OYSL) for the 2010 season. The *Lightning* are currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, on a record of 8 wins, 2 ties and 5 losses, 5 points behind Pickering, the divisional leader, in the OYSL U15G East division.

The OYSL is the top of the pyramid of play for competitive youth soccer in Ontario. Dominated by powerhouse clubs from Southern Ontario, very few teams from Eastern Ontario survive more than one season at this level. However, the Nepean Hotspurs *Lightning* (U15G) squad are in the process of completing a second successful year in the OYSL, having finished 2008 with a fifth place ranking and are on target to place 3<sup>rd</sup> overall this year. Remarkably, the depth of Ottawa soccer's 1994 girls is such that a second Ottawa based OYSL team, the Gloucester Hornets, is also competing strongly in this division. Both teams are currently ranked in the provincial top 10 for this age group. In many age groups, Ottawa is unlikely to see teams returning to OYSL for the 2010 season.

There are no easy games in the OYSL, with most games settled by a single goal. Teams from Ottawa typically request back-to-back games on the road to reduce the number of trips to Toronto, to four or five per season, to allow for tournaments and participation in Ontario soccer's most prestigious event, the Ontario Cup. The league also provides black-out weeks that allows players and families time for vacation, but the downside of the back-to-back schedule is that the players must maintain the highest level of fitness prior to, and throughout the season.

In addition to solid league play, the *Lightning* enjoyed an excellent run in the 2009 Ontario Cup competition, losing a hard fought semi-final to Pickering on a penalty kick shoot out. A crowning accomplishment to the 2009 season saw the *Lightning*, as tournament hosts, strike gold at Ottawa's National Capital Invitational Girls Soccer Tournament in August. The *Lightning* claimed the National Capital Championship by defeating sides from across the Province before topping their cross town rivals, the Gloucester Hornets, in a hard fought final.

Under the tutorage of Club Head Coach, Boris Bajagic (CSA National "A" License) and team head coach Adam Knight (OSA Provincial "B" License), The *Lightning* continued their development in 2009, with the emphasis on team play. In rounding out their game, the *Lightning* learned why, and how, to change their formation on the fly. Most importantly, our girls have embraced the philosophy of preparing for games mentally, as well as physically. The goal for 2010 is clear, a trip to the National Championships.

To this end, the *Lightning* will soon be hold tryouts (see [Tryouts](#) for more information) in preparation for a carefully designed winter training program. With four teams competing in the OYSL in 2009, the Nepean Hotspurs technical staff have formulated a training program designed to suit elite level soccer athletes, which includes yoga, speed, agility and quickness (SAQ) and conditioning, in addition to ongoing skill and team-play sessions on the indoor fields of the state of the art Ben Franklin Superdome. The 1994 side will also be exposed to high level guest coaches from universities, colleges, the OSA and CSA and will again be supported by team physician Dr. Lino.

To supplement the existing program for the 1994 girls, the Nepean Hotspurs are pleased to welcome former Ottawa Fury coach Rocco Barresi to our technical staff. Rocco will lead our GU16L3 team into action in 2010. This side will be a key supporting component for the *Lightning* in 2010, offering players the opportunity to play up with the OYSL side during the season. The collective 1994 girls group will play indoor exhibition games against local universities and colleges this winter, and will again travel to Montreal and Carolina to showcase their abilities prior to the

start of the 2010 campaign. Throw in a possible March break tour of Costa Rica with 4 exhibition games, whitewater rafting, volcano hiking and some surfing in the sun, and it looks like an extremely challenging schedule in advance of the new outdoor season.

As articulated by Club Head Coach Boris Bajagic (CSA National "A" License), the Hotspurs strive for a game based on possession soccer featuring quick interplay passing, combined with a focus on developing individual skills. This philosophy is somewhat at odds with many of the programs adopted by other Ontario soccer clubs in a league that is primarily oriented to team results. Nevertheless, in 2009, the Hotspurs saw 3 GU17 OYSL players and one GU14 OYSL player invited to the National All-Star selection tryouts. The philosophy of the club, at a minimum will be to expose our elite players to local universities and colleges in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto, with the goal of assisting them to advance their sporting and educational aspirations, including assistance with scholarship opportunities.

As a well rounded, and well grounded, group several of the girls have been actively giving back to the community by helping to coach junior age groups within the Hotspurs program, and the players will again be involved in these activities next year, with some obtaining paid positions.

Will the girls be prepared for chasing the goal of a National Championship? Depend on it!



The entire Hotspurs family congratulates Coach Adam Knight and the *Lightning* on an outstanding team effort during the 2009 season. We are extremely proud of your efforts, and the support of your families, in representing our club on the provincial stage.

In order to ensure the best possible environment for our members, the Nepean Hotspurs strictly complies with OSA policies regarding coach certification and volunteer screening. For further information, please email the Hotspurs office at [info@hotspurs.on.ca](mailto:info@hotspurs.on.ca) , or telephone us at 613-723-5762.

*The Nepean Hotspurs Soccer Club was founded in 1970. Proudly promoting the "beautiful game", the Nepean Hotspurs Soccer Club provides inclusive soccer programs for all age groups and skill levels. A full service, community based soccer club, the Nepean Hotspurs serve a large geographical area in Ottawa's western and southern areas.*

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