



KVIDAHL: CBC's title run stuns even its legendary coach

By David Kvidahl | dkvidahl@stltoday.com | Posted: Wednesday, November 21, 2012 7:44 pm

This wasn't supposed to be their year. Decimated by defections to the St. Louis Scott Gallagher Academy and playing in the shadow of its high flying, top-ranked football team, the CBC soccer team wasn't supposed to go out and make history. The Cadets and their legendary coach Terry Michler weren't supposed to add another star to their crest, another trophy to their case and another record to their incredibly lengthy resume as the best program in the state and, more importantly, the city that's nutty for futbol.

This was Chaminade's year. The Red Devils were ranked No. 1 all season, lost the fewest players to the Academy and returned the most experience. They were the odds on favorite before the first kickoff and lived up to that billing all season until the last game.

You know what they say about the best laid plans.

The Cadets stunned the Red Devils with a 2-0 victory in the Class 3 title game at Blue Springs South on Saturday. The win gives CBC its eighth championship, breaking a tie with Vianney for the most in state history. Michler, long established atop the career victories list in the nation, has been at the helm for seven of them.

For a guy who's been around awhile and seen some things, even he was caught off guard by his team's achievement.

"It's a surprise, there's no doubt it's a surprise," Michler, in his 42nd year at CBC, said.

It's a surprise because of the way the Cadets (25-5-1) put things together. They battled injuries throughout the season and competed against a schedule that was more condensed than any before it. From the start of September until the second week of October the Cadets played 22 games. It was a grueling stretch that left little to no time for practice and training. So Michler adjusted.

"There was a significant part of the season that our schedule was brutal," he said.

Michler singled out one game a week during that stretch that was the key game of the week. The rest of the games he said were important but they would be used to grow the depth and experience of the roster and to give those key players a breather.

"I wanted to keep key players fresh for the main game," he said. "So everyone would play a half (in those other games). They were getting experience and building our depth. Everyone was looking forward to playing."

When the schedule lightened up Michler also took a different approach to training. He wanted to get the team to pick up the pace of play and do it as quickly as possible. At this point the postseason was rapidly approaching. The Cadets took their practice into the gym and worked feverishly through futsal drills. The smaller sided, faster games and drills did what Michler hoped they would do.

"Futsal increases the speed of play and touches on the ball," Michler said. "It brought the group along faster."

Once they hit the playoffs the Cadets still had to find their way through a tough district. They played defending champion De Smet in the district semifinal and then had to topple an impressive Marquette for the district championship. They then knocked off Lafayette and Vianney just to make the state semifinals. They slipped past Rockhurst 1-0 in the semis and then took the title home with a 2-0 win over the Red Devils.

All told the Cadets opponents had a combined record of 105-44 and 19 state titles between them.

"That's a tough road to hoe," Michler said.

What carried the Cadets to their eighth championship was something that Michler could see but can't conjure on demand. He watched as this group developed into a team.

“We had great leadership. Leadership is always key,” he said of his players. “I told them I wouldn’t trade any of them. Everyone one of you that are here made it a team. You made it a team.”

It’s a team that delivered an unexpected piece of history.

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