

Wisconsin Players Travel the Globe

US Youth Soccer's Olympic Development program has taken on an international flavor this year for many Wisconsin participants, with players at many varied age groups traveling to the far reaches of the world to play soccer, make friends, and to learn about new cultures.

By virtue of qualifying for regional team or national team participation, the following Wisconsin Olympic Development program players will travel to play soccer outside of the United States:

Sam Ramirez - ('92B) - Argentina
Sebastian Xiong - ('91B) - Costa Rica
Ben Borns-Moore - ('94B) - Italy
Cody Schueller - ('94B) - Italy
Taylor Madigan - ('91G) - Brazil
Brittany VonRueden - ('93G) - Holland
Maddie Vicker - ('93G) - Holland
Emily Jacobson - ('92G) - Portugal
Kate Riegle - ('92G) - Portugal
Amy Kauffung - ('92G) - Portugal

Players are selected for international travel by regional and national team coaching staffs. Most of the costs are covered by the players and their families, with some help from outside fundraising and through corporate and private sponsorships of the events.

The opportunity to play at this level comes from hard work and determination, and just a bit of sacrifice. Brittany Von Rueden ('93G) commented,

"I assess my (US Youth Soccer ODP) experience as a blessing. I know that the commitment required is high and that I might miss out on dances, football games, or hanging out with friends, but one of the greatest things I was told was, 'It is not a sacrifice if you love the game.'"

Ben Borns-Moore ('94B), whose team will play in Italy against teams from Russia, Iran and Serbia noted, *"(US Youth Soccer) ODP requires a big commitment to the game of soccer."* It is something Ben takes very seriously. He conditions himself to be in top shape by doing speed ladders, jump ropes, weight lifting and hour after hour of juggling a soccer ball. He strongly feels that,

"Everyone playing at this level must focus on being their best and that is not something you just do from time to time."

The Wisconsin ODP experience helps many players grow as individuals, as well. The discipline, the contacts, and the schedule, create a potential for growth in the individual player that can extend well beyond their US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program experience.

Madeline Vicker ('93G) says,

"These trips are a great balance of competitive soccer along with the time to learn about the culture through the food and sightseeing. I have developed some close friends from other states I can't wait to see. Through (US Youth Soccer) ODP, I have improved as a soccer player, met many great coaches, and players, from throughout the country. During each camp or trip, I have gained more confidence as a person and a player. (US Youth Soccer) ODP has required me to be more organized with my time. I have missed a lot of school with these trips, so I always have to stay ahead with my school work. I know more about my strengths and weakness as a player motivating me to work harder."

We all wish all our traveling players the best of luck in their travels around the world and are proud to have such fine ambassadors for Wisconsin Youth Soccer.

Wisconsin ODP is administered through the Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association. The Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association (WYSA) is affiliated with the US Youth Soccer Association and is a member of Region II, the Midwest region of the United States. WYSA has nearly 140 member clubs and has over 54,000 registered players throughout the State of Wisconsin. For additional information on Wisconsin ODP registration and other youth soccer programs, go to <http://www.wiyouthsoccer.com>