



VA National Championship Series Semifinal Spotlight

12U Boys

VYSA's "Road to the National Championships" began in early March with over 100 of Virginia's elite teams in three age groups looking to earn their place as State Champions. 24 teams remain and will come together at the Publix Virginia Soccer Training Center on Saturday, May 19th, to play in the semi-final round with winners advancing to the finals on Sunday. State Champions will compete in the US Youth Soccer Regional Championships in June 2018 for a shot to advance to the National Championships in Texas next July. The US Youth Soccer National Championship is the most competitive and well established national youth soccer competition with all 50 states competing to earn the right to be named *National Champion*.

With just four teams left in the under 12 boys age group, we have two very exciting games to look forward to this weekend. The top team in this age group has made their way into the semifinals. **Bethesda South**, led by coach Yuri Bogdanov, secured their spot by knocking out Shenandoah Valley United in the quarterfinals. "We are excited to be participating in this year's State Cup. It has provided us with the opportunity to play some of the best teams in Virginia from all different leagues. We are looking forward to playing in the final four weekend against these top teams." Bethesda has managed to score eight goals so far in their State Cup games. The question now remains - can they continue their goal scoring form against **Springfield South County Youth Club** in the semifinal round? SYC Lions had a close match in the quarterfinals, beating SOCA 3-2. SYC coach Julian Chang said "We are very excited to have made it to the final four round of State Cup, with so many competitive teams in the state of Virginia already eliminated. The State Cup single elimination format is very different from our other competitive experiences and makes for very thrilling games, and adds a psychological component to play that is interesting to see how the kids respond. We are looking forward to a very competitive match against Bethesda South, who we know little about, but heard they are a very good team."

Sixth-ranked **Herndon Estudiantes Black** are on to the semifinal round by edging out third ranked Arlington Red in the quarterfinals 3-2. Head coach Nick Arzani is "excited to continue to advance in the State Cup this year. The majority of our players started at the club in U5, and it's very rewarding to see their development within the club from such an early age to the level they are at now." Herndon will meet a tough opponent in the semifinals against second-seeded **Beach FC Red**. Beach FC squeezed their way into the semis after an overtime win in the quarterfinals against Lee-Mount Vernon Red. Coach Harry Gillespie said "our quarter final match against LMVSC was absolutely incredible. Against a tough opponent we were pushed to the limit and showed great heart and determination to come back from being down 1-0. We're excited for our semi-final matchup and we will see how far we can continue to extend our season!"