

The Mosman Daily

incorporating North Sydney

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2010

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We are the champions

Under-14s coach Frank Gigliotti celebrates with his team after their 2-1 victory over Burwood.
Picture: MATTHEW SULLIVAN

EMMA PAGE

WHEN the final whistle blew, they hugged and cheered as only real champions do.

Two North Sydney football teams have plenty to celebrate after their outstanding success at last week-

end's coveted Champion of Champions tournament.

The North Sydney Bears under-14 boys and North Sydney Football Club's all-age men's team won their grand final matches at Valentine Park, Glenwood, on Sunday.

It was the first time in the history of

both clubs (which belong to the Ku-ring-gai and District Soccer Association) to have a team win the Champion of Champions.

Association general manager John Ceccato congratulated the teams on a "great achievement". He said special honours went to the young lads who

were the first under-14s team in the association to steal victory at the tournament.

"Both teams performed outstandingly in a tough competition and proved that Ku-ring-gai clubs could dominate in any age group," Ceccato said.

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Alfred Tagliaferro, of Mosman, celebrates his winning goal (left) while excited supporters look on. Head coach Andrea Icardi (below) and under-14s coach Frank Gigliotti congratulate their team.

Pictures: MATTHEW SULLIVAN



We are the champions

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The statewide challenge, which has been run by Football NSW since 1972, pits the top division 1 teams from each of the 32 associations across all age groups to reveal the best teams in the state.

Bears president Paul Templeman said he was "immensely proud" of the under-14s, who scored a 2-1 victory over Burwood, thanks to Alfred Tagliaferro's golden goal in the dying minutes of extra time.

"It was a fantastic outcome for a brilliant team - I couldn't be prouder," Templeman said.

The fast-paced match opened with both sides exchanging long-range efforts.

Burwood midfielder Adem Keskin was the first to score from



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a corner to give the Canterbury Association team the lead.

Bears midfielder Giuseppe Costa levelled the score in the second half when he struck home a free kick from 30 yards out in to the top right hand corner.

With the threat of a penalty shoot-out looming, Alfred, of Mosman, became the instant hero when he slotted Christian Calderan's cross into the net to win the match.

The under-14 division 1 team trains twice a week under the auspices of former AC Milan player, Andrea Icardi at the Milan

Academy Australia in Naremburn.

The user-pays academy program is an alternative to other talent-breeding programs for young soccer players including Football NSW's Project 22 and rep football.

Templeman said it was rare to get a coach of Icardi's calibre who wanted to work with young children in Australia.

"The boys are very lucky to learn from a man of Icardi's ability - he could be off coaching Liverpool," he said.

"The academy teaches players tactics and aims to produce a superstar team rather than a team of superstars.

"If we have one player who goes on to play for the socceros or AC Milan, it would be fantastic."

Seasoned club big on talent

NORTH Sydney Football Club may be small in numbers but was big on talent and competitiveness, coach Philip Whelan said.

The club's all-age premier league men's team recently became the first in the club's history to win Football NSW's Champion of Champions tournament.

Whelan, who has coached the team for three years, said North Sydney played a near-perfect 90 minutes of football to smash their rivals Yagoona Lions 6-3 in a dynamic grand final.

"We are an extremely competitive team who love to win by big margins - we really should have scored eight goals," he said.

Whelan said the experience and determination of players contributed to their winning form.

"The average age of our players is 30 - having more seasoned players is definitely an advantage," he said.

"Plus we play an attacking style of football borrowed from the UK that poses a challenge to the more defensive Australian game."

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