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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Three WA Youth Soccer EPD Teams Win Region IV ODP Championship**  
*Girls 98, Boys 98 & Boys 97 Crowned Champions, Girls 96 Finalists*

FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON (Friday, January 20, 2012) — Washington Youth Soccer is proud to announce that three Elite Player Development teams, Girls 1998, Boys 1998 and Boys 1997 were crowned champions Tuesday afternoon at the 2012 US Youth Soccer Region IV Olympic Development Program Championships in Phoenix, Ariz. The title was the first for each team and brings the total to six championships by Washington teams in the last three years at the prestigious event, featuring the top youth players from throughout the Western U.S.

In all, five of Washington's six teams at the tournament advanced to the semi-final round, with a record four winning their semis to advance to Tuesday's finals.

The Region IV ODP Championships brought together boys' and girls' elite teams in four different age groups from the 14 US Youth Soccer state associations that comprise Region IV — Washington, Alaska, Arizona, California North, California South, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming.

Teams played a round-robin format in two groups Saturday through Monday, with the top-two teams in each group advancing to Monday's semifinal, and subsequently, Tuesday's final.

Washington's Girls 98, lead by coaches Malia Arrant and Lyndsey Patterson, went 2-1 in group play before beating Cal-South's first team, 4-0, in the semi-finals. That set up a championship game Tuesday with Cal-South's second team, in which Washington again prevailed, this time by a narrow, 1-0 margin.

The Boys 98 team, led by coaches Dennis Sanchez and Willy Leiste, went 3-0 in group play to face Arizona in the semi-finals where they made a 1-0 shutout-win. The undefeated team then faced Cal North in the finals where they closed the tournament with a 2-0 win.

The Boys 97 team, led by coaches Jason Prenovost and Jamie Bloomstine, went 2-0-1 in group play before beating Utah 1-0 in the semi-finals. The team then went on to face Cal North, who they defeated with a 4-0 shutout.

"What a fantastic weekend for our Elite Player Development program, said Washington Youth Soccer Technical Director Gary White." "All of our teams showed the required quality of high performance athletes on and off the field and served as wonderful ambassadors for our state. The various trophies are symbolic of the efforts of all of our staff, players and parents over the past few years. The Washington Youth Soccer/ Sounders FC EPD program continues to solidify itself

as a leader in modern player development both regionally and nationally; our preparation, presentation, and performance sets us apart. Congratulations to all EPD players, parents and staff I couldn't be more proud."

In addition to the champions, Washington's Girls 96 EPD team also reached Tuesday's finals. The Girls 96 team, led by coaches Peter Lechak and Fawzi Belal, went 3-0-1 in group play and defeated Oregon 2-1 in the semi-finals. They fought hard in the final against Cal South, coming away the finalists after a 2-0 loss.

The three titles won by Washington teams — plus the appearance of five of six Washington teams in semi-finals, and four of six in finals — is a further sign of the successes being made in Washington's Elite Player Development (EPD) program, a joint venture of Washington Youth Soccer and Seattle Sounders FC, to train and develop the best players in the state for regional, national and professional competition.

"Each and every team participating in this weekend's Region IV ODP Championships should be extremely proud – it was hard work and determination that got them to the competition," said Doug Andreassen, Washington Youth Soccer President. "Our players' performance on and off the field – their professionalism, sportsmanship and talent – is a testament to the Elite Player Development program and the commitment put in by our players, parents, and volunteers. Thank you to our Technical Department, lead by Gary White for the success on the fields and in the program. Congratulations to all!"

Complete scores and tournament information can be found online at [regioniv.com/odp/championships.htm](http://regioniv.com/odp/championships.htm). For more information on Washington Youth Soccer, visit [WashingtonYouthSoccer.org](http://WashingtonYouthSoccer.org).

### **About Washington Youth Soccer**

Washington Youth Soccer is the largest youth soccer organization in Washington. Washington Youth Soccer is the state's affiliate for US Youth Soccer, which is the largest sports organization in the United States and the most populous member of the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body for soccer in the United States. The Washington Youth Soccer is the sixth largest membership in the nation; our organization represents over 128,000 players (ages 4-19) and their families, 15,000 coaches on 12,000 teams and 6,500 referees in the state of Washington. Washington Youth Soccer's mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of the State of Washington's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition.

**Media Request:** *When referring to Washington Youth Soccer, please refer to the association only as Washington Youth Soccer, and never as WYS or WSYSA. We appreciate your cooperation.*

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