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| **Sports Quest Prison Soccer Ministry** |
| Sports Quest Shield  **Match Day:** Wednesday July 18, 2007 at Bastrop FCI (kick off 5.30 pm)  **Match Analysis:**  Twelve months ago to the day, Sports Quest and Bastrop FCI went toe to toe in an all time soccer classic…the 3-3 tie leaving spectators and players hungry for more. This year’s eagerly awaited re-match proved to be no less dramatic, with one team finally emerging victorious.  Stepping out onto Bastrop turf, Sports Quest was greeted by news that the Bastrop Boys had been practicing for five hours a day for the past twelve months. In contrast, Sports Quest had enjoyed (endured?) a mere two days preparation, both of which were far from productive. Sunday evening’s technical training session turned into a fitness and endurance exercise, as players chased one stray pass after another. Tuesday’s scrimmage against Austin Premier proved to be a nightmare for defender Dannon Wells. Jumping to clear an opposition corner, he suffered a sickening blow to the nose from a stray, anonymous elbow. X-rays would later reveal a break in two places but more worryingly, the incident robbed Sports Quest of a key and influential team member.  http://www.bop.gov/locations/institutions/bas/graphics/BAS.jpg  It was under the clouds of Sunday and Tuesday’s work outs that Sports Quest entered the fray…a fourteen man roster up against the wall before a ball had even been kicked.  Captain for the day, Ryan Frommel, broke with tradition and elected to play a 3-5-2 formation. Murmurings within the team failed to change his mind, with Frommel adopting the “My way or no way” approach to man-management. His single-minded determination seemed to be paying dividends as the first twenty minutes were dominated by a surprisingly spirited and combative Sports Quest.  Up front, Clarke and Mullaney posed a constant threat, eluding markers but shooting wide on more than one occasion.  Breaking out from the back, Captain Frommel tried his luck a couple of times but had spectators and linesmen scrambling for cover as his misplaced shots threatened their safety.  As the half progressed, Sports Quest found themselves pushed further and further back, staying on level terms only by the brilliance of newcomer Miguel Gallardo in goal.  Going into the interval at 0-0, Frommel was satisfied with his team’s performance, but noted that the final pass needed to be cleaner, sharper and more clinical. “Let’s open “em up like a can of worms” was his parting words as the second period got under way.  Unfortunately, the Bastrop Boys had a plan of their own…high pressure all over the field to pin Sports Quest in their own half. The tactic worked, with Sports Quest’s rear-guard coming under severe pressure from a barrage of Bastrop forages into the penalty box. Thankfully, hitting the target was not Bastrop’s strong point either, and Sports Quest managed to weather the storm. An astute tactical adjustment from Captain Frommel saw Sports Quest regain the initiative, and on the 25 minute mark, wide man Leblanc hammered home from 12 yards after Clarke had weaved his magic on the opposite flank. The loud roar from the crowd was overshadowed only by the collective Sports Quest battle-cry of “come on boys…we can do this”!  With time running out, and cramp setting in, Gunzelman signaled his discomfort to the bench. A hush came across the ground as veteran playmaker David Markley stood poised to ply his trade once again in front of an expectant and delighted gallery of spectators. Alas, in spite of a vigorous warm-up routine on the sidelines, his teammates and entourage of support were denied Markley’s silky skills as he graciously stepped aside to allow debutant and goal-scorer Leblanc to sample the sweet taste of victory. Markley’s standing ovation was a fitting tribute to the man and the player…undoubdedly one of Austin’s finest. The final whistle blew soon after to draw to a close another exciting and memorable battle between the boys from Bastrop and Sports Quest...Victory for the visitors, a lesson in leadership from Frommel, humility from Markley, and amazing heroics in goal from MVP Gallardo.  **The Bigger Picture:** Seated around the center circle, a message of hope was presented to both teams at the end of the game. Sports Quest explained that the mission and purpose of the visit to Bastrop goes beyond soccer. Sharing God’s love and the message of salvation is at the heart of the excursions into Federal Correctional Institutions. The point was made that God does not require us to clean up our lives before coming to Christ. He only asks that we come to Him by faith….Admitting our sin and asking Jesus to take up residence in our heart and in our lives. He promises not only to live within us, but also to remain with us throughout this lifetime, as well as throughout eternity. The lives of David (murderer and adulterer), Peter (denied Christ three times), and Paul (persecutor of Christians), were highlighted as examples of God’s grace extending even to society’s vilest offenders.  After receiving Bibles and tracts, inmates were challenged to trust Jesus Christ to become their Personal Lord and Savior…to give their life meaning, purpose and significance, no matter how much the past may accuse them of their unworthiness. It’s all about the One who died in our place…not our performance (or lack of) in life. By grace alone are we saved…Praise the Lord! |
| **“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”  (Romans 5:8)** |