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CAL SOUTH'S DOXA ITALIA TO TAKE ON VC FUSION IN OPENING MATCH OF LAMAR HUNT U.S. OPEN CUP

June 10, 2011

[For team roster, click here](#)

Ventura, CA (June 10, 2011) - Top Cal South adult team Doga Italia has earned an opening round berth in this year's Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup and will face off against PDL side Ventura County Fusion on Tuesday, June 14 at Ventura College. Kickoff for the match is 7:05 pm.

The Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup, first held in 1913-14, is the oldest ongoing tournament in American soccer, and is open to all USSF affiliated teams, from pro MLS teams down to amateur adult clubs. Doga Italia earned their spot in the Open Cup by finishing on top of group play at the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA) Region IV Men's Open National Cups competition held near Sacramento from May 20-22. Doga eventually went on to win the championship title at that event.

"The Open Cup is the Super Bowl of soccer for an amateur team like ours," said Doga Italia coach Derk Droze, who also plays at forward. "The Open Cup gives our team an opportunity to play against professional organizations and helps to put our club on the map."

Doga Italia has been one of the most dominant and successful teams in the Southern California adult soccer scene since the late '90s, winning numerous Coast Soccer League, Pacific League and State Cup titles in that span, as well as three Las Vegas Silver Mug championships. The current incarnation of Doga is composed of a mixture of older, deeply experienced players along with some top younger talent. While most of the team has collegiate experience, there is also a wide variety of professional, semi-pro and international experience stirred into that mix.

Some of the talented players to look out for on Doga Italia on Tuesday include:

Bryan Byrne

University of California, Santa Barbara - 2006 NCAA Division 1 Champions  
2007 MLS Superdraft #38 pick overall by the New England Revolution  
Ventura County Fusion - 2009 USL Premier Development League Champions

Alex Bengard

California State University, Dominguez Hills - 2000 NCAA Division 2 Champions  
2001 MLS Superdraft #57 pick overall by the Los Angeles Galaxy  
Los Angeles Galaxy - 2001 U.S. Open Cup | 2002 MLS Cup  
former Seattle Sounders, Portland Timbers & Toronto FC player (USL | pre-MLS)

Eric Meister

University of Rochester  
former Indiana Invaders player (USL Premier Development League)  
United States Men's National Beach Soccer Team - CONCACAF Beach Soccer Championships, Dec. 2010 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

While Doga were a solid scoring force in the Region IV National Cup last month, winning one match 18-0 on their way to appearing in the championship final, Droze chalks up their success to an equal but opposite factor. "We pride ourselves on defense. After all, defense wins championships. If your team can keep a clean sheet, then you always have a chance to win."

Their defensive strength came in handy on May 22 in Sacramento as Doga sought to bounce back from a 1-0 deficit against the San Francisco-based DV8 Defenders in the USASA Region IV Men's Open championship game. Holding the Defenders at bay in the second half , Doga midfielder Steve Chirgwin launched a free kick in the 78th minute that found the head of team captain Nas Koubouras, who played the ball back across goal to an onrushing Bryan Byrne. Byrne finished a diving header into the top corner, equalizing the game and eventually forcing extra time. The game remained locked at 1-1 after two overtime periods, sending the game to penalty kicks, where Doga's Chirgwin, David Adams, Andrew Villalobos and Andrew Martinez went 4 for 4. Meanwhile, Doga goalkeeper Brian Burdue, who got his hand on the Defenders first successful shot, used his presence in goal to force the second and third DV8 shooters to send their shots high over the bar, sealing Doga's victory.

"Naturally, it takes a lot of hard work and commitment to get to this stage where we have qualified for the US Open Cup first round," said Droze. "Normally, we only train once a week during our regular season, but in preparation for the Open Cup, we have increased that to twice a week. We would have gone to three times a week, but unfortunately we do not have the finances or resources to do so, just as most amateur teams do not. That's the difference between the professional and amateur circuit: the finances and the amount of training that takes place."

Not only does the Doga team have U.S. Open Cup play to contend with on Tuesday, but they will also carry their Region IV championship forward to the USASA National Cups Finals in Bowling Green, Kentucky from July 15-17. For now, though, the concentration for Doga Italia is simply on getting past the first round of the Open Cup.

"The things we look forward to most in having reached the US Open Cup are putting on a good performance and getting the win to move on and advance in the competition," said Droze. "I keep telling the guys that these opportunities come along once in a lifetime for most, so let's make the most of it, and have some fun while we're at it! I've told my guys to not be satisfied with just qualifying... think big and work even bigger".

Doga Italia Team Roster for Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup match vs. VC Fusion June 14, 2011   Ventura College   7:05 pm		
David Adams	M	Diamond Bar, CA
Brandon Avery	GK	Anaheim Hills, CA
Alex Bengard	M	Chino Hills, CA
Brian Burdue	GK	Santa Monica, CA
Bryan Byrne	M/F	Castledermot, Ireland
Joseph Cartledge	D	Redondo Beach, CA
Steve Chirgwin	M	Storrs, CT
Derk Droze	F	La Plata, MD
Eduardo Gonzalez-Pinto	D/M	Torrance, CA
Kyle Holland	M/F	Anchorage, AK
Athanasios Koubouras	D	Athens, Greece
Sean Lockhart	M	Palm Springs, CA
Andrew Martinez	M	Santa Monica, CA
Eric Meister	D/M	Coto De Caza, CA
Iliia Nazarov	M/F	Los Angeles, CA
Raul Palomares	M/F	Santa Monica, CA
Marco Pulido	D/M	South Gate, CA
Nathan Reeves	D	Lakewood, CA
Ryan Taylor	F/M	Chino Hills, CA
Devin Toohey	D/M	Ventura, CA
Andre Tuoldo	M/F	Torrance, CA
Andrew Villalobos	M/F	Whittier, CA

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