

The Delaware Rush U12 Nike '00 Girls traveled to Kingston, RI to participate in the USYSA Region I National Championship Series June 27-July 3, 2013. After partaking in opening ceremonies along with ten other Delaware Rush teams on Thursday, June 27, the team settled into their hotel in Providence, RI and met with the Delaware Rush '97 Girls who shared their experiences from prior Region I tournaments.



The interaction proved successful as the girls looked at ease on the first day of bracket "A" play in defeating the West Virginia United SC Athletica 4-0. All goals came in the first half with right back Julia Jogani providing the game winner on a header off a corner kick ten minutes into the game. Striker Sheyenne Allen added two goals in the 12th and 22nd minute, sandwiching left back Mary Pepe's goal in the 18th. Syndey Keld had the shut out in goal. The team went to dinner and had a meeting before lights out at 9 P.M.

On the second day of bracket "A" play the Rush opponent was the Virginia state champions SYA Cardinals '00 Red. The Cardinals took control of the game early with constant attacks into the Rush end, but could not break through for a goal. Striker Sheyenne Allen scored on a counter attack in the 20th minute to have Delaware go into half-time with a 1-0 lead. In the second half, the Rush back line of Summer Stewart, Julia Jogani, Mary Pepe, and goalkeeper Sydney Keld continued to thwart Virginia's chances in front of the goal and the Rush '00 escaped with a 1-0 win. Virginia outshot Delaware 18-2 and had a 9-2 advantage in corner kicks, but defense proved to outlast offense on day two. At the end of the day Delaware was on top of the table in bracket "A", and only needed a tie to advance to the semi-final round.

Day three of bracket "A" play pitted Delaware against Greater Binghamton FC Select Riley out of Western New York.

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The game was physical and Binghamton pushed numbers into the attack knowing they needed a win to advance. However, the Rush '00 were up to the task and when the final whistle sounded the score was 0-0 with Delaware guaranteed a spot in the semi-finals. Brackets "B" and "C" finished later in the day and Northtowns Rage out of Niagara, NY gained the wild card to face Delaware in the semi-finals. The team went back to the hotel and checked back in for another day in Rhode Island.



The semi-final game against the Northtowns Rage was played in the middle third and looked to be heading to overtime, but Sheyenne Allen took a pass 25 yards from goal and put it in the upper corner for the game winner with less than five minutes remaining. The game ended with Delaware gaining a berth in the Regional I final.

In the championship showdown, the Rush met up with the Eastern New York State Champions the Albany Alleycats Ociats '00. The early stages of the game had both

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teams playing tentative until Allen broke through for two or three shots on goal. The best chance of the half came on a corner kick by the Rush which had the ball reach the back post and Rachel Seeney's shot just went over the top bar. Ashley Brentlinger penetrated the box and was set to score, but the ball popped up on her as she went to shoot. The first half belonged to Delaware, but Albany came out in the second half and took momentum. Two Alleycat shots hit the top bar and goalkeeper Sydney Keld came up big with two saves. Keeping a clean slate proved fortunate because Sheyenne Allen picked up a loose ball from 20 yards out and slammed home the game winner with four minutes to play. The team closed out the match and became the first ever female Region I champion out of the state of Delaware. The team scored 7 goals and went unscored upon during the tournament, proving defense wins championships.

