

Westside, Milken JCC teams medal in Israel

By Ashley Zeldin | PUBLISHED Aug 17, 2011 | Community

At the beginning of the JCC Maccabi Games boys' soccer tournament in Israel, Westside JCC co-head coach Neil Sadhu gave striker Ari Spitzer three words of advice: power, precision and composure. Tied 1-1 with 15 minutes left in the final at Hebrew University, Spitzer approached Sadhu.

“We were on our last legs, but he said, ‘I can go hard for 15 minutes,’ ” Sadhu recalled.

Into the game Spitzer went.

“I had that feeling you get when you know you're about to do something great,” the 17-year-old Milken senior said.

Spitzer's game-winning shot went into the goal eight minutes later, sealing Westside's win over the combined Denver, Detroit and Houston team for a third consecutive gold medal.

Southern California was well represented in soccer at the JCC Maccabi Games in Israel, July 24-Aug. 5, as one of two Milken JCC boys' soccer teams secured the bronze with a 2-0 win, and one of two Milken JCC girls' soccer teams also avenged a semifinal loss with a 2-0 win for bronze.

Top-seeded Allie Peris won the gold medal, and No. 2 seed Nicole Getelman took bronze for Westside in the 17-and-under girls' tennis tournament.

Second-seeded Sigal Spitzer, cousin of Ari, earned the silver in the 15-and-under girls' tennis tournament.

Jake Stark was the only Westside swimmer to medal in individual events, taking the silver in the 100- and 200-meter butterfly, and bronze in both the 50-meter backstroke and 200-meter individual medley in the 14-15 division. Stark said the Israel experience was “a thrill.”

“I think I gave my all,” said Stark, a sophomore at West Hills Chaminade. He also added a relay medal to his haul.

Griffin Koffman came away with four medals, all in 14-15 division relay events, including one in which he teamed with fellow Westside swimmer Jake Defeo.

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