

Each year, Rush Soccer undertakes a rigorous and extensive review of all of its members and invites sixteen players per age group to represent the organization on the national stage as part of Rush Select, a team of top players that competes in some of the nation's most prestigious soccer tournaments and events throughout the year. In February 2012, **Sophie Gross** (99G Nike) was selected and played with the U13 Rush Select team at the invitation-only 33rd-annual President's Day Tournament in Phoenix, Arizona. The U13G Selects won their bracket in impressive fashion outscoring their opponents 9 to 0 before knocking out the reigning Oklahoma State Champions in the quarter-finals. However, in the semi-finals they battled hard, but lost to the eventual tournament winner. When asked about her experience, Sophie said, "I am so glad I had the opportunity to represent my club with the Select team. I feel like I left the tournament a stronger player and it has motivated me to work harder."

The next event for the U13 Rush Select team will compete in is the U14 age division at the 2012 Rush Fest, this year held in Virginia Beach, Virginia in July. The Rush Fest is an annual event that brings together Rush players of both genders in the U12 to U14 age divisions from across the country. Teams compete against one another in a friendly format while also joining up to participate in training sessions both on and off the field. Top coaches from within the Rush family comprise the staff that work with the players and team coaches throughout the event.

Sophie was again asked to represent Alaska Rush as a part of the Rush Select team. In addition to Sophie, another Alaska Rush player, **Brianna Linnell** (99 Nike), was also selected to join the team and compete at Rush Fest. When told of the news, Brianna said "I feel amazing. I am grateful for my team and my coaches that always push me to be the best I can be." Brianna added "I am so honored to be selected for this team and am proud to be a part of Rush." The Technical Director for Alaska Rush, Jason Leonardis, said that "Brianna is always wanting to improve her skills as a goalkeeper and is a player you can always count on." Leonardis added, "Alaska Rush is proud of both Sophie and Brianna and I know that they will make us proud."



*From left to Right: Sophie Gross, Jason Leonardis, Brianna Linnell*

The opportunity to be invited and participate on select teams, such as the one Sophie and Brianna have been chosen for, is very unique and distinguishes Alaska Rush Soccer Club from other clubs within Anchorage, and even Alaska, that do not have the same international affiliation. Because of Rush Soccer, which, as an organization, has a long, consistent history of developing players that go onto play for elite NCAA Div. 1 programs, Olympic teams, and even World Cup teams, members of Alaska Rush have the option to play on select teams, train with clubs in other states and countries, and even receive training on a national level. “To be a member of the Rush Select team is a clear example of the opportunities Alaska Rush can offer its members as opposed to a local club where the international footprint is much smaller,” Leonardis added.