



***IA ODP 97B National Finalists: Will Nurre 2nd from right standing next to Kenan Smajlovic 3rd from right standing***

## **IA Rush Nurre and Smajlovic starring at ODP National Championships!!**

Will Nurre and Kenan Smajlovic, current Iowa Rush U16 Boys players, were key members of the Iowa 97-Boys ODP team that competed at the ODP National Championships at the Reach 11 Sports Complex in Phoenix, Arizona February 28- March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Iowa 97-Boys won their way into



the National competition after winning **challenging the ball with Will first behind in white** the Region II last summer. At Nationals, Iowa 97-Boys first faced Eastern Pennsylvania and beat to advance to the National Final versus California South. With both Will (center mid) and Kenan (forward) starting and playing key roles for Iowa, the final was a very contested contest. With 1 minute left Cal South was leading 3-2 when Kenan Smajlovic came up with a late equalizer sending the final to a PK shootout. In the end, Iowa came short in the shootout lottery, but both Kenan and Will appreciated this terrific opportunity to compete at a National level representing Iowa and Iowa Rush!!

**Kenan**

Will Nurre: "Firstly, it was honor to represent the state of Iowa and the Rush on such a high level. Playing for Iowa was a great experience and something that I will treasure for a very long time. As a player, I was extremely proud because soccer is such a great passion of mine. While playing, I quickly discovered that the difference in quality between teams was far more narrow than our team was accustomed to. This forced us, as a team and individually, to focus on small details in order to get the results that we wanted. I hope that this is something that myself and Kenan can help teach to our teammates at Rush. Although we were unable to win a National Championship, and lost in PK's in the final, participating was a great experience, and once again, something that I will always remember."



**Will third white from the right; Kenan**

***first from the left walking into the semi-final vs E Pennsylvania*** Kenan Smajlovic: "It was a great experience to be a part of something wonderful and to go down to Phoenix and compete against other challenging and elite teams. I enjoyed playing with the high intensity along with my great team mates and I learned a lot from the national ODP tournament, overall it was a great experience

Watch video highlights from the Iowa – Cal South final in the link below, including Kenan's goal:

**ODP 97B National Championship Final Cal South vs Iowa - Video**

[ODP National Championships Website](#)