

Greater Orlando Sports Commission CEO, Jason Siegel was out at the U.S. Women's Soccer National Team Training site and had a chance to visit with head coach Vlatko Andonovski and Olympic Gold Medalist, 2-time FIFA World Cup Champion, and footballer for the Orlando Pride, Ali Krieger.



Interview with Coach Vlatko Andonovski

Siegel: It's your first-time training here, what are your overall impressions of Orlando?

Andonovski: It is beautiful. We've enjoyed the area, the fields are world class and the convenience of the accommodations are great.

Siegel: Tell me about getting the team ready for the 2020 SheBelieves Cup Tournament? How are your preparations going and can you discuss the home crowd on Thursday night playing a role in inspiring your team to a positive outcome?

Andonovski: We are preparing in any way possible and preparation is key with any big tournament and the opponents we are facing are very good teams. Using our resources properly is very important to us. On top of that, we are looking forward to playing on home soil and playing in front of a home crowd that is extremely supportive. Orlando has always been behind this team one hundred percent and it will be a great atmosphere.

Siegel: We will look forward to seeing you again back in Orlando. Best of luck.

Andonovski: Thank you very much for having us here. We have enjoyed it.



Interview with Ali Krieger

Siegel: Living and playing here in Orlando, you know how passionate we are as a sports community. Could you share some thoughts on living, playing, and training here and could you share the impression that Orlando has made on your teammates?

Krieger: My teammates think Orlando is amazing. Before the 2019 FIFA World Cup, we trained at Tottenham Hotspur in London and the facility we are at this week is the next best thing, it's right up there. The training grounds here, the way they take care of the fields is amazing and the weather is great. When I moved down to Orlando from Washington, DC, it's tough in the Winter (in DC) to find places worthy enough to train, and there are not many because most facilities have artificial turf. Coming down here you can train year-round, the weather is beautiful, and the conditions are great – almost perfect. You also know that when you make a mistake, it's not because there's a divot in the grass. It's been incredible to train here and show my teammates what we get to experience on a day-to-day basis playing for the Pride. With a club that supports us, a city that supports us, and the type of soccer atmosphere that we get to play in, it's just so positive and important for us to be successful.

Siegel: Participation in youth soccer in Orlando has doubled in recent years. I've got a daughter who's athletic and looks up to all of you. When you see so many girls at games, share what that means to you and when you get out into the community and see girl's participation at an all-time high, how does that feel?

Krieger: When I show up to play in our Orlando Pride jersey and you look in the stands and see all these young faces, and you see the parents supporting them and us at the same time, you're just that much more inspired to want to win, to provide more for these young athletes. You're more motivated to succeed and show them that a lot of hard work and a belief in yourself that you really can do what you love. That's what this tournament, the SheBelieves Cup, is all about. Trying to implant that self-confidence into, not just little girls, but little boys as well. Having this in Orlando, in a city that is so passionate about the sport that we all love is pretty incredible. To play under these conditions and to be a part of a community that supports us, it's a win-win.

Siegel: Thank you for everything you do for our country. We had World Cup watch parties all over Orlando last summer, the excitement level was so high, and our community is so proud of you.

Krieger: We don't really see that when we're playing abroad. We're just in this little bubble and when it's all over you hear about all the support from the fans really enjoying their time watching us and cheering for us, and you can feel that, so thank you.