



Entire team could change by next season

get to know each other the season is pretty well over."

This year's squad came together very quickly, said Graham, thanks to some great work from co-captains Mauricio Badillo and Daniel Pineda — two Mexican players who both were back for their second seasons with the Bruins.

"They really helped bring the team together this year — I think that without their leadership we could have fallen to the middle of the pack at provincials," said Graham.

"I was impressed with Mauricio and Daniel's commitment to the team from Day 1. As soon as the season started they came up to me and said they wanted to be captains. They told me why and they followed through with what they had to say — they made sure guys were at practice."

And Badillo and Pineda also formed the core of a very strong midfield for the Bruins along with third captain Nikolas Sistiva, a native of Colombia.

"Nikolas is just an extremely talented player," said Graham. "I actually got to play the three of them in the midfield and to me it was the best midfield combination in the league. These boys are just so talented and so good with the ball."

Bodwell played in the North Shore AA league, finishing a close second behind Seycove secondary while handing the Seyhawks their only league loss in the past two seasons. The team performed so well during the season that Handsworth secondary, ranked No. 1 going into this week's AAA provincials — called on Bodwell for a tune-up match last week as the Royals prepared to defend their 2008 B.C. title.

As the season wore on, it became clear to Graham that Bodwell had a special group of players on and off the field.

"They're good quality guys. I really enjoyed their outside of soccer," he said. "They're very sociable. There was no prejudice on the team, everybody supported each other. . . . When we went to (provincials) and we picked out our hotel rooms, right away the four Turkish boys, they all took separate rooms. They said we've got to mix it up, we're a team, we're not just going to segregate amongst ourselves. Just the attitude right there was very positive."

In provincials the Bruins won two games and tied one in pool play to advance to a semifinal against West Point Grey Academy in which Sistiva and Ozan Centinkayali scored for a 2-0 victory with Mufitcan Alp recording the shutout.

The final was close, said Graham, but the Bruins could not make the breakthrough against the talented team from Glenlyon Norfolk in a game played in cold, rainy and windy conditions.

"On this given day we were beat by a better team," said Graham. "I think if we played them in better conditions on a different day it could have been a different outcome but on this

particular day we know that we lost to a talented team so the boys were OK with it."

While the boys took pride in scoring silver, there's not much talk about reuniting next season to make a run for gold.

"I'm looking at next year and the team that I currently have and there's a good chance I could have none of them back," said Graham, adding that the Bruins simply will enjoy their time spent together this season.

"As a coach or a teacher or anytime you're involved, if who you're working with is good bunch it just makes your job not feel like a job. I enjoyed going to the games, I enjoyed watching them play — a lot of times I got mesmerized by what they were doing with the ball. You kind of forget that you're coaching because you're just so impressed by what they're doing. But it was just a fantastic team on and off the field."

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photo submitted

BODWELL'S Nikolas Sistiva (right) slides in for a tackle in a recent league game against Seycove. Bodwell, a private school in North Vancouver, won silver at the A provincials with a lineup full of international students.

Think globally win locally

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NORTH Vancouver's Bodwell High School, a private institution that caters to visiting international students, found a winning formula on the soccer pitch this year that took their senior boys team all the way to the championship game in the A provincials.

The Bruins' roster was made up of players from seven different countries. Canada, however, was not one of those nations.

"Usually we have one or two, but this year not one," said head coach Doug Graham with a laugh. Instead it was 10 players from

Internationals lead Bodwell to B.C. silver

Mexico, four from Turkey, three from Japan and one each from Colombia, Brazil, Thailand and Vietnam that led the team to provincial silver, losing the final 1-0 to Victoria's Glenlyon Norfolk.

Soccer is the global game and, despite its popularity on the North Shore, fielding a team of internationals without having to call on any of us hockey-lovin' Canucks seems like a recipe for success. His team's multi-national makeup did give them some advantages, Graham admitted.

"The boys definitely come with a

passion to play soccer," he said. "They have no idea about the other schools, they don't have rivalries. They come each day and they come to play — for them it's a real passion."

But taking players from all over the world and throwing them onto a North Vancouver field does not guarantee success. Many of the students who come to the school only stay for one year so it is a constant battle just to learn everyone's name, let alone what language they speak.

"One thing I have to worry about is getting them to play as a team," said Graham. "They come with a lot of skill but in terms of playing the full field, 100 yards, and working as a team and supporting each other, it becomes a challenge because they don't know each other and by the time they