

## ***Oldsmar Girls U-18 Goalkeeper to Travel to Europe for Training!***

Rachael Howard loves the challenge of goalkeeping, she says, "because it's a position that can decide the difference between winning and losing games." That challenge will take on a bigger role as she prepares for a trip of a lifetime this Spring. Rachael and her parents will accompany Kai Velmer, Rachael's Goalkeeper Trainer on a two-week whirlwind tour of Germany, Holland, France and Switzerland training with and seeing some of the premier club soccer teams in the world.



***Action Photos of Rachael  
during a recent training session***

***Rachael Howard and Coach Kai Velmer***

In what will surely be the highlight of the trip, Rachael will train with **Silke Rottenberg**, Germany's Women's World Cup Winning National Team Goalkeeper. Ms. Rottenberg helped Germany win the Women's World Cup just this past July with a 3-0 win over the USA in the semi-finals. Anyone who saw that game certainly remembers save after save from Germany's goalie! Silke now plays for FCR 2001 Duisburg, which is a Division One Women's team in the German League.



***Silke Rottenberg, Goalkeeper,  
German Womens National Team***



***Silke Rottenberg in  
action during 2003  
Womens World Cup***

Rachael Howard is the starting goalkeeper for St. Petersburg High School. She plays club soccer with Oldsmar Soccer where her U-18 girls team finished near the top of the table in Division One. "Rachael's work ethic and desire to improve her game is second to none", adds Kai Velmer. Mr. Velmer is very involved in local soccer as the Assistant Coach to both the Oldsmar U-13 Boys and U-18 Girls teams and the Oldsmar Soccer Club's Head Goalkeeper Trainer.

## ***Oldsmar Girls U-18 Goalie to Travel to Europe for Training!(Continued)***

Kai, a native of Germany, used his German soccer contacts to arrange a lot of the trip. "I was amazed how nice and accommodating these teams have been. It also helps that I speak German, so the language barrier is not a problem!" Kai explained. Mike Figgener, Kai's brother, also was instrumental in arranging parts of the trip. Mike is the Head Coach of the Oldsmar U-13 Boys team.

Jim Harte, Director of Coaching at Oldsmar Soccer Club added, "This is a fantastic opportunity for Rachael and the Oldsmar Soccer Club. I applaud Rachael, her parents and Kai's efforts in making this happen".



***Kai Velmer,  
Oldsmar Soccer Club  
Head Goalkeeper  
Trainer***



***Jim Harte  
Oldsmar Soccer Club  
Director of Coaching***

Other planned events during her two week trip include training with PSV Eindhoven(Dutch Pro Mens Club) with their boys youth keepers. (PSV is a perennial top notch team in the Dutch Soccer pro leagues...this is like someone training with the Yankees or Braves!). She will also participate in goalkeeper training with Herforder SV and other professional women soccer teams.

Rachael plans on sending back frequent emails and pictures which will be posted on the Oldsmar Soccer website ([www.oldsmaarsoccer.org](http://www.oldsmaarsoccer.org)).

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