

STREET SOCCER USA CUP 2006

FOR THREE DAYS I WAS NOT HOMELESS

2006

The first ever Street Soccer USA Cup, then named the Homeless USA Cup, was held in the summer of 2006 in center city Charlotte, NC. Six cities were represented.



50 players from six cities came to Charlotte for first USA Cup.

In 2006, a year and a half after the first street soccer program was initiated at the Urban Ministry Center, six cities came to the corner of 3rd and Tryon streets in Uptown Charlotte for the first ever homeless athletics competition in the United States.

The tournament was a weekend celebration of community and good spirit. Players were housed in various churches and over 200 volunteers provide meals, live music, and a feeling of community and camaraderie to all involved. Volunteers, coaches, players and spectators joined together as one community to celebrate the achievement of the athletes.

Two teams were formed from both the host city Charlotte and also New York. Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Atlanta and Austin also brought teams to compete. New York were the eventual champions beating Philadelphia in the final.

Event sponsors included Bank of America, Wachovia, Coca-Cola Bottling Consolidated and Spectrum Properties.

The event received major media attention from CNN, HBO Sports and footage from the tournament was captured in the Sundance Film Festival documentary, *Kicking It*, made by Susan Koch and produced by Ted Leonsis.

The event also catalyzed the involvement of main stream soccer players and social service providers around the country and resulted in an influx of requests on how programs could be started in other cities.

The following year Street Soccer USA hosted an organizing conference to spread the program methodology and build sustainable projects for the future.

The 2006 Cup was summed up when organizers were cleaning up the grounds following the final and written in chalk on the parking lot was "for three days I was not homeless."