

Richmond Times-Dispatch

SOCCER LEAGUES GO TOE TO TOE

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It took Matt Topee two years to turn his idea of interleague play among Richmond's major adult amateur soccer leagues into reality. But once his friend Derek McCown, the president of Richmond's oldest league, seized upon it, the idea flourished into a unique competition.

The result was the Central Virginia Champions League, a tournament between the elite teams from all three of the area's adult leagues.

The CVCL, which completed its first season this year, matched six of the top teams from the Capital Area Soccer Association (CASA) against five premier teams each from the Central Virginia Soccer Association (CVSA) and the fledgling American International Soccer League (AISL), which sprung up last year out of the city's Hispanic population.

"I think it went very well," McCown said. "What we did was we took the best of each league. The idea of it was to have like a Richmond metro championship. This was for bragging rights."

If Topee, the referee coordinator for the Chesterfield County-based CASA, had not been persistent, the idea might never have taken off.

"I approached Derek about two years ago and kind of suggested maybe we should have an interchange of league play, and it got kicked around [and forgotten]," Topee said. "This past summer, I approached Derek again, and he said it was not a bad idea."

The idea sounded good enough to McCown, in fact, that he, Topee and representatives from CASA and the AISL began meeting every week at Angelo's Italian Pizza & Restaurant, a popular Chesterfield hangout for soccer fans, to hammer out the details of the new league.

They decided to model the CVCL on the European Champions League, with a preliminary group phase followed by an eight-team knockout stage.

The CVCL's goals, Topee said, were to encourage diversity among Richmond's elite teams and promote a high level of soccer.

He and McCown agreed they accomplished that mission. The interleague exchange brought together European, American, Jamaican and Hispanic clubs.



FC Bosnia – 2001 Central Virginia Champions League Champions

FC Bosnia, a CVSA team consisting entirely of Bosnian immigrants, won the inaugural championship, defeating BlackWatch FC of CVSA, which is made up mostly of former local high school and college players, 3-0 at Richmond Sports Backers Stadium on Nov. 21. Two AISL teams and a CASA team also made the final eight.

The champions' league allowed many of the CVSA and CASA players, who mostly come from American college programs and include current and former Richmond Kickers, to experience the passion and excitement the Hispanic clubs and their fans bring to games.

"One thing I've noticed that you don't see with the American-dominated teams is that the Hispanics bring in a lot more fans," McCown said.

AISL clubs, many of which represent a single South or Central American country, have been known to draw crowds numbering in the thousands at some of their games. Topee said.

In one AISL game between Mexico and El Salvador, for example, about 3,000 fans showed up, Topee said.

Topee and McCown agreed there are still bugs to work out. Seeding and scheduling issues posed problems which the organizing committee will have to address over the winter.

The third-place match, scheduled on the day before Thanksgiving, was never played because one team could not turn out enough players. McCown was not pleased because he had reserved Sports Backer's Stadium for the event.

The CVCL's organizers also will have to consider issues of team seeding, to avoid unbalanced groups, and scheduling the Champions League so that it does not interfere with existing league seasons.

"We were playing every night," Topee said. "My wife was saying, `Are you still around here?' "

However, the friends are hopeful that the CVCL will survive and grow. With any luck, they say, it will become an area fixture during the coming years.

CVCL 2001 Schedule

GROUP PLAY

- **Sunday, September 30**

- Bryan Park "B"

- 10:00 Lions FC 0 vs. BlackWatch FC 2
 - 12:00 Deutscher Sportclub 1 vs. Metro Sting 0

- Bryan Park "D"

- 9:00 Richmond City FC 0 vs. Dublin FC 6
 - 11:00 United 4 vs. FC Bosnia 2

- Robious Middle School #7

- 9:00 El Salvador 3 vs. Exodus 1
 - 11:00 F A S 2 vs. Golden Hawks 2
 - 1:00 Honduras 3 vs. Inter 2
 - 3:00 Mexico 1 vs. Municipal Limeño 0
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- **Sunday, October 14**

- Bryan Park "B"

- 10:00 Dublin FC 4 vs. Exodus 1
 - 12:00 Lions FC 8 vs. F A S 0

- Bryan Park "D"

- 10:00 BlackWatch FC 2 vs. Golden Hawks 1
 - 12:00 Municipal Limeño 2 vs. FC Bosnia 7

- Robious Middle School #7

- 9:00 Honduras 0 vs. Deutscher Sportclub 2 - forfeit
 - 11:00 Inter 1 vs. Metro Sting 1
 - 1:00 Richmond City FC 0 vs. El Salvador 13
 - 3:00 Mexico 1 vs. United 3
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- **Sunday, October 21**

- Bryan Park "B"

- 10:00 Dublin FC 4 vs. El Salvador 0
 - 12:00 Inter 1 vs. Deutscher Sportclub 3

- Bryan Park "D"

- 10:00 BlackWatch FC 3 vs. F A S 1
 - 12:00 Metro Sting 2 vs. Honduras 4

- Robious Middle School #7

- 9:00 Exodus 8 vs. Richmond City FC 5
 - 11:00 Golden Hawks 0 vs. Lions FC 7
 - 1:00 FC Bosnia 3 vs. Mexico 2
 - 3:00 Municipal Limeño 0 vs. United 2 - forfeit

2001 CVCL Standings

Final Group Standings

Group A

	<u>Name</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>GF</u>	<u>GA</u>
1.	Dublin FC (CVSA)	3	0	0	9	14	1
2.	El Salvador (AISL)	2	1	0	6	16	5
3.	Exodus (CASA)	1	2	0	3	10	12
4.	Richmond City FC (CASA)	0	3	0	0	5	27

Group B

	<u>Name</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>GF</u>	<u>GA</u>
1.	BlackWatch FC (CVSA)	3	0	0	9	7	2
2.	Lions FC (CVSA)	2	1	0	6	15	2
3.	Golden Hawks (CASA)	0	2	1	1	3	11
4.	F A S (AISL)	0	2	1	1	3	13

Group C

	<u>Name</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>GF</u>	<u>GA</u>
1.	Deutscher Sportclub (CVSA)	3	0	0	9	6	1
2.	Honduras (AISL)	2	1	0	6	7	6
3.	Inter (CASA)	0	2	1	1	4	7
4.	Metro Sting (CASA)	0	2	1	1	3	6

Group D

	<u>Name</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>Pts</u>	<u>GF</u>	<u>GA</u>
1.	United (CASA)	3	0	0	9	9	3
2.	FC Bosnia (CVSA)	2	1	0	6	12	8
3.	México (AISL)	1	2	0	3	4	6
4.	Municipal Limeño (AISL)	0	3	0	0	2	10

QUARTERFINALS

- **Tuesday, November 6**

- [Dorey Park](#)

- 7:30 Dublin FC 2 vs. Lions FC 0
 - 7:30 BlackWatch FC 4 vs. El Salvador 1

- **Thursday, November 8**

- [Dorey Park](#)

- 7:30 Deutscher Sportclub 0 vs. FC Bosnia 3
 - 7:30 United 5 vs. Honduras 3

SEMIFINALS

- **Thursday November 15**

- [Dorey Park](#)

- 7:30 Dublin FC 3 vs. FC Bosnia 6
 - 7:30 BlackWatch FC 3 vs. United 0

FINALS

- **Wednesday, November 21**

- [Richmond Sports Backers Stadium](#)

- 6:30 Consolation Match
Dublin FC 2 vs. United 0 - forfeit

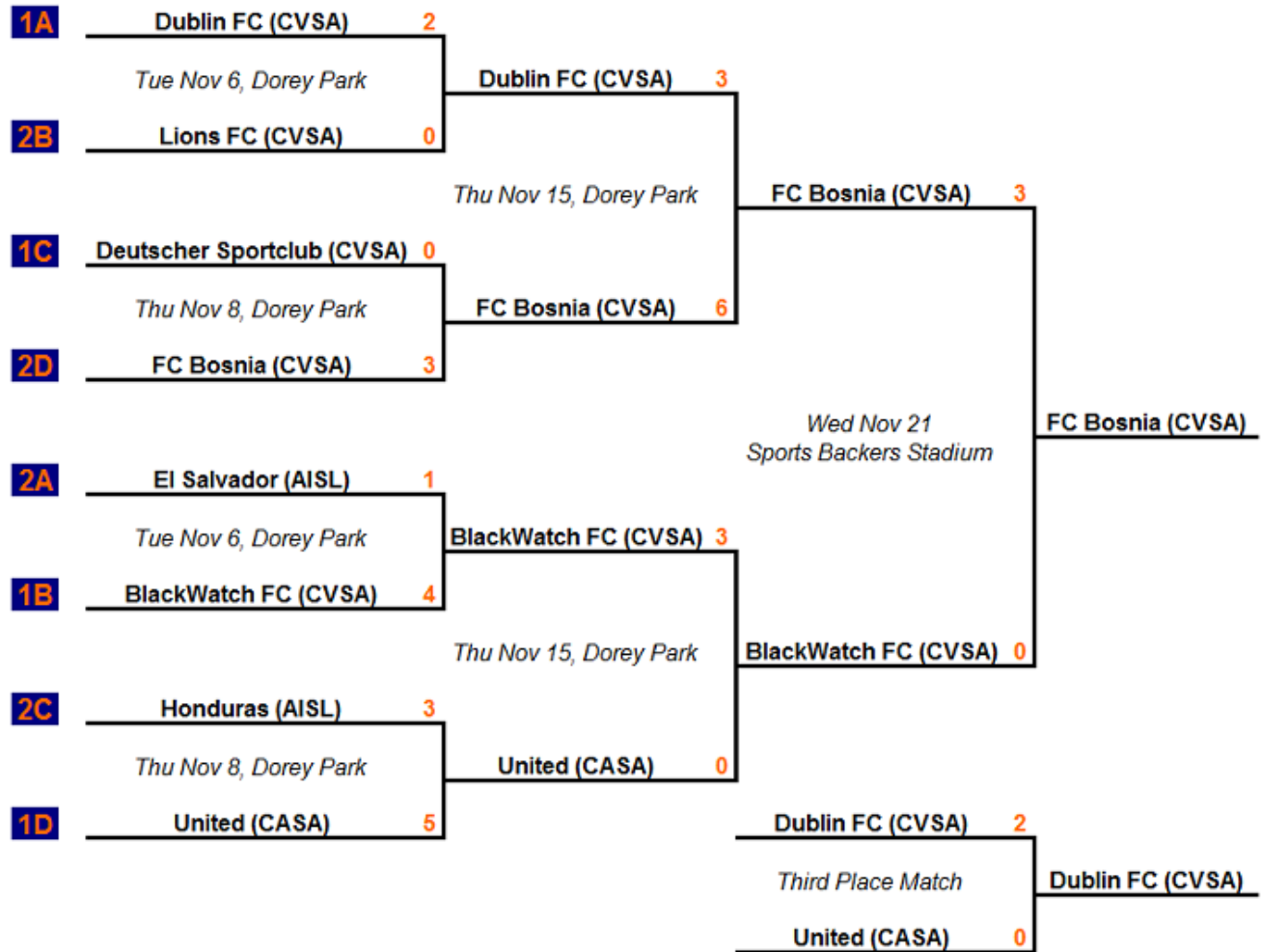
2001 CVCL Final

Wednesday, November 21

Richmond Sports Backers Stadium

<u>Team</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>Final</u>
BlackWatch FC	0	0	0
FC Bosnia	3	0	3

2001 CENTRAL VIRGINIA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINALS BRACKET



CVCL 2001 Final Rankings

<u>Rank</u>	<u>League</u>	<u>Team Name</u>
1	CVSA	FC Bosnia
2	CVSA	BlackWatch FC
3	CVSA	Dublin FC
4	CASA	United
5	CVSA	Deutscher Sportclub
6	CVSA	Lions FC
7	AISL	El Salvador
8	AISL	Honduras
9	CASA	Exodus
10	AISL	México
11	CASA	Inter
12	CASA	Metro Sting
13	CASA	Golden Hawks
14	AISL	F A S
15	CASA	Richmond City FC
16	AISL	Municipal Limeño