

Youth Teams Have Great Fun At Chicago Beach Soccer Invitational

With the sky brightly blue, the sun shining, a cooling breeze coming off of Lake Michigan and the beautiful Chicago skyline in the background, the atmosphere for the 2008 Chicago Beach Soccer Invitational could not have been better.



For the first time in the events 6-year history, Illinois Youth Soccer partnered with the Illinois State Soccer Association and Chicago Soccer to bring youth division to the event held July 26-27 at Montrose Beach.

Over 40 teams competed in boys and girls age groups of U12, U14, U16 and U19. Teams played three games each, with winners of the round robin points-based tournament advancing onto championship games.

"Since this was our first beach soccer event, I did not know what to expect," said Illinois Youth Soccer Executive Director Mary Jane Bender. "It turned out to be the most friendly and fun soccer ever. It was like being on vacation."

"The players and parents were relaxed and enjoyed the sand, soccer and weather. Since the beach soccer game is quite different, everyone had fun learning how to handle the ball in the sand. The weather was sunny with a cooling lake breeze and the beachfront with the cityscape in the background was so beautiful that you thought you were in Miami."

In between games players could go and refresh themselves in Lake Michigan, play video games, design a personalized adidas ad or play soccer volleyball at the adidas Mobile Tour trailer, get a picture and autograph from US Women's National Team member Leslie Osborne, US Men's Beach Soccer National Team members Benyam Astorga and Francis Farberoff or Chicago Red Stars head coach Emma Hayes, enjoy the Chicago Fire's interactive FireExpress or sit and watch one of the games in the adult divisions which included men's, women's and co-ed.

"Everyone had a great time and we are looking forward to doing this event again next year," Bender said.

The event featured strong competition throughout the weekend, with many teams playing on the sand for the first time. Here is a look at all of the teams that reached the finals of their age groups:

U12 Boys
Champions: Guadalajara
Finalist: NBPD

U12 Girls
Champions: Rage
Finalists: Power Strikers

U14 Boys
Champions: SSSA Basco
Finalists: Elk Grove Storm

U14 Girls
Champions: Bombers
Finalists: SASA United 95 Premier

U16 Boys
Champions: Real Chicago Fc
Finalists: Round Lake United

U16 Girls
Champions: Milan FC
Finalists: Pitong Magaling

U19 Boys
Champions: Aurora Warriors
Finalists: Rock Run FC

U19 Girls
Champions: Sockers FC
Finalists: Taxco



**CHAMPION & FINALIST PHOTOS & MORE
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2008 Chicago Beach Soccer Invitational Champions & Finalists



Boys U12 Champions: Guadalajara



Boys U12 Finalists: NBPD



Girls U12 Champions: Rage



Boys U14 Champions: SSSA Basco



Boys U14 Finalists: Elk Grove Storm



Girls U12 Finalists: Power Strikers



Girls U14 Champions: SSSA Basco



Girls U14 Finalists: Elk Grove Storm



Boys U16 Champions: Real Chicago FC



Girls U16 Champions: Milan FC



Girls U16 Finalists: Pitong Magaling



Boys U16 Finalists: Round Lake United



Boys U19 Champions: Aurora Warriors



Boys U19 Finalists: Rock Run SC



Girls U19 Champions: Sockers FC



Girls U19 Finalists: Ajax

