

# NORTH AMERICAN SAND SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIPS



Date: May 23, 2018

## MEDIA RELEASE

Re: **“FERGUSON NORTH AMERICAN SAND SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIPS”**

**June 8-10, 2018, Virginia Beach, Virginia**

**POCs:** Dick Whalen, NASSC Director; [seamanseye@cox.net](mailto:seamanseye@cox.net); 757-496-0274

Lauren Bland, HRSC Exec. Director, [Lauren.Bland@sandsoccer.com](mailto:Lauren.Bland@sandsoccer.com); 757-368-6000

Matt Whalen, NASSC Operations and U.S. OPEN Director; [Matt.Whalen@sandsoccer.com](mailto:Matt.Whalen@sandsoccer.com); 757-407-1421

### *Sand Soccer at Oceanfront celebrating 25 years*

Thousands of beach soccer enthusiasts, young and not so young, will soon be streaming into the Virginia Beach resort from around the U.S. and several countries, as the Ferguson North American Sand Soccer Championships (NASSC) prepares to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> “Silver Anniversary” festival June 7-10. Since its 1994 inception, the huge charity event has cumulatively attracted nearly 19,000 athletes packing the Virginia Beach shoreline during the 3-day extravaganzas, with an additional 200,000 families, fans and amazed spectators observing sand-blasting action in this rapidly expanding global sport. Competition is 5 v 5 on sixty sand fields stretched over 25 seaside blocks. The high endurance sport is much like ice hockey or lacrosse, with frequent on-the-fly substitutions. Should things become intense, over-eager athletes are simply invited to take a cooling dip in the Atlantic Ocean before resuming play.

The Ferguson Company is supporting the huge charity festival as its “Title Sponsor” in a multi-year partnership, teaming with over a hundred corporate and individual and firms in 2018. A thousand teams of excited players, from 8 years of age through seniors, have competed annually since NASSC’s inception in 1994. Many of the more seasoned

veterans will be watching their grandkids in action, beginning with a Friday evening free “Kid’s Clinic” for Under-13 youths and younger with professional pro mentors sponsored by Operation Smile.. A festival favorite, the Clinic, will be graced by Cecili Weber, Miss Virginia 2017, and followed immediately by the first professional match of the OPEN at 9PM.

The capstone of beach competition will occur in a beach stadium erected at 24<sup>th</sup> Street in the 16-team men’s pro/am “U.S. OPEN” which has attracted perhaps its strongest US and international teams thus far including:

Antioquia, Colombia	Beach Soccer Zeeland, Netherlands	Costa Rica Natl BSC,
Florida BSC, Florida	GoBeachSoccer, California	Great Lakes, Michigan
HRSC Elite, Virginia	Maryzilians, Maryland	New England FC, Mass
PA Azzurri, Pennsylvania	Santa Cruz BSC, California	Syracuse, New York
Red/White/Blue Select, Ca	Tidewater Captains, Virginia	Toronto, Canada
VB Alliance, Virginia		

Although not formally in the U.S OPEN, three women’s teams will be in Stadium action in an HRSC pilot effort to gauge potential for a future international WOMEN’s OPEN.

Global soccer power “FC Barcelona” won the OPEN crown in 2017. This year’s slate includes many players from the USA National Team, competing as Team R/W/B Select. Also in the hunt is the local Hampton Roads “Elite” – the only 3-time U.S. OPEN winner, and GoBeachSoccer, U.S. OPEN 2017 Finalist, who recently won May’s Oceanside, California’s Western OPEN.

Joan Cusco, Executive Director of “Beach Soccer Worldwide” observed firsthand the “North American Sand Soccer Championships” in 2016. Having travelled internationally organizing professional beach soccer, he was extremely impressed by what he saw in Virginia Beach! As he gazed north and south along the Boardwalk, Cusco remarked “NASSC is an event every single member of the beach soccer family must see at least once in their lives. Witnessing the atmosphere, and how people react with each other, is stunning!”

NASSC celebrity guest Cecili Weber, Miss Virginia 2017, will be on site throughout the competition.

The horizon-to-horizon sandblast is produced by the non-profit “Hampton Roads Soccer Council (HRSC)” to continuously develop its privately operated 75-acre “HRSC Soccer Complex” in Virginia Beach. NASSC is repeatedly honored by the Southeast Tourism Society as one of its “Top 20” summer events, and has been cited by Discovery/ESPN’s “BRAND USA” concept as one of the premier sports tourism attractions in the United States. The tournament was also selected as one of the top 100 free tourism events in the Nation. Beyond its nearly 2,000 sand soccer matches, NASSC will continue its highly popular “beach games” flavor by offering “SideKick” competitions in Beach Coed Football, and Beach Sand Hockey.

No need to wait ‘til June 14 for the FIFA World Cup to begin in Russia since the beach soccer pro/am equivalent begins June 8-10 in Virginia Beach!

NASSC is open to the public at no charge. Info at [www.sandsoccer.com](http://www.sandsoccer.com) and facebook.com /NASSC.HRSC, 757-368-4600.

END

