



## 2025 ATLANTIC UNION BANK NORTH AMERICAN SAND SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIPS

June 6-8, 2025, Virginia Beach, Virginia

Date: June 2nd, 2025

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### Contacts:

- Lauren Bland, HRSC Executive Director
  - Lauren.Bland@sandsoccer.com
- Matt Whalen, NASSC Operations and U.S. Open Director
  - Matt.Whalen@sandsoccer.com

**Stadium Location:** Between 28th-29th Streets on the beach (2809 Atlantic Ave)

**Event Map:** <https://www.sandsoccer.com/fields-map/>

**Volunteers:** <https://www.sandsoccer.com/volunteer>

The 31st Annual Atlantic Union Bank North American Sand Soccer Championships (NASSC) will take place June 6–8 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. This premier event will host nearly 800 amateur and professional sand soccer teams, featuring divisions ranging from Under-8 to Over-40, making it one of the largest beach soccer tournaments in the world. This year, NASSC is proud to debut its new official merchandise, featuring a distinctive design produced in collaboration with MSP Design Group. The artwork captures the Virginia Beach skyline in a dynamic day-to-night transition, with a marlin and the iconic NASSC ball as the focal point. Attendees are encouraged to explore the latest design and take home a unique piece of this year's event. Spanning from 6th Street to 33rd Street—nearly two miles of oceanfront—the tournament is projected to attract approximately 100,000 attendees over three days. Notably, 77% of visitors are expected to travel from outside the Virginia Beach area, generating between 8,500 and 11,000 hotel room nights and significantly contributing to the region's tourism and hospitality sectors nearly \$15 million in economic impact annually.

Lauren Bland, NASSC Executive Director, shared: "We are excited to welcome thousands of families and friends to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront for our 31st anniversary. The vibe at the oceanfront is upbeat, friendly and feels like the world's largest soccer reunion. Our participants

have asked for more festival entertainment and we are excited to deliver a vendor village, nightly entertainment, and enhanced beverage options next to our stadium. Thank you to all of the sponsors, vendors, teams, committee members, referees, and City of Virginia Beach staff that make our event possible!"

The U.S. Open at NASSC attracts elite men's and women's beach soccer players from across the country and around the world. This year, standout athletes from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Europe and our own local region will compete for a cash prize and the prestigious title of U.S. Open Champion. In thrilling fashion, our three-time NASSC U.S. Open Men's Champion and last year's winner—Maryzillians—is returning in pursuit of glory. They will be joined by the always competitive Punta Hermosa and Barra de Santiago Beach Soccer Clubs. The crowd favorite, SoCal Legacy, from California will return for their 3rd U.S. Open and will be joined by Atletico Rio, who is loaded with talent and ready to make an impact. NASSC continues to serve as a premier platform for emerging talent to gain national attention and potentially earn a spot on the U.S. National Beach Soccer Team. Local standouts Chris Albiston and Austin Collier exemplify this path, serving as regulars on the U.S. Men's roster. Matt Whalen, U.S. Open Director, shares: "We are proud to host another edition of NASSC's flagship professional division, the U.S. Open. Both men's and women's brackets are highly competitive and will surely showcase the best beach soccer our planet has to offer."

To honor the legacy of Dick Whalen, founder of the North American Sand Soccer Championships, the Dick Whalen Soccer Scholarship was established in 2020. This scholarship supports graduating high school seniors from the local soccer community and has awarded over \$50,000 to deserving student-athletes to date.

This year's applicant pool was incredibly competitive. After careful consideration, we are proud to recognize seven (7) outstanding seniors who represent one of our four affiliate soccer clubs—Beach FC, Over Thirty Soccer League (OTSL), Southeastern Virginia Women's Soccer Association (SEVWSA), Virginia Rush—or the Tidewater Soccer Referee Association (TSRA).

**The 2025 Dick Whalen Soccer Scholarship recipients are:**

- Alec Emond
- Avery Hunn
- Hunter Lawver
- Nikolas Panayiotou
- Charlotte Petchel
- Kaden Pratt
- **Carter Whalen** – grandson of NASSC founder Dick Whalen

We are extremely proud of these student-athletes and all they've accomplished. We can't wait to see where their journeys lead and are honored to be a small part of their next chapter.

### 31st Anniversary Festival Entertainment:

- A diverse vendor village (26th-30th streets) with booths featuring local businesses such as:
  - Chicho's, Dick's House of Sport, Las Palmas, MSP Design Group ODU Athletics, Sand Soccer Gear, Tropical Smoothie and more!
- Beer Tent and Crush Bar overlooking the U.S. Open Stadium at 28th Street
  - Sandy Sidekick - the official NASSC Collaboration Beer with Pretty Ugly Distribution sold (stadium and select oceanfront restaurants)
  - Partnering with: Ocean's Group, ShoreBreak Pizza and Pretty Ugly Distribution and Las Palmas
- Sidekick sports:
  - Beach Volleyball and Beach Kickball
- U.S. Open Championships (Men's & Women's)
  - June 6-8 at 28th Street Stadium
  - U.S. Open games "under the lights" on Friday and Saturday night
- Beach Events sponsored by the City of Virginia Beach:
  - Discover an exciting lineup of vibrant festivals and unforgettable events happening along 17th and 24th streets.
  - Friday, Saturday and Sunday, concerts in 17th & 24th Street stages.

Since its debut in Virginia Beach in 1994, the North American Sand Soccer Championships (NASSC) has grown into one of the largest charitable sports festivals in the region, drawing thousands of soccer families who are captivated by the fast-paced excitement of this rapidly growing global sport. Being played 5v5 on 66+ sand fields spanning 25 blocks of oceanfront, the competition is as intense as it is entertaining. With its nonstop action, quick substitutions, and highlight-reel goals, beach soccer has often been compared to the energy and speed of ice hockey and lacrosse—only on sand. Bringing an event of this scale to life requires a tremendous community effort. Each year, NASSC relies on more than 2,400 volunteer hours from dedicated local residents to support everything from event setup and operations to breakdown. Their contributions are vital to the continued success of this extraordinary tournament.

The NASSC is produced by the Hampton Roads Soccer Council (HRSC), a 501c3 non-profit organization. Proceeds from NASSC go towards continuously developing its privately operated 75 acre Hampton Roads Soccer Complex in Virginia Beach. The complex has 2 turf fields with lights and 24 bermuda grass fields. HRSC has partnered with Landtek Group, Musco Lighting, Branham Electric Corp, Sprinturf and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) to convert 6 of the bermuda grass fields into new artificial turf fields with lights to deliver a world class upgrade to the complex. Construction began on March 17, 2025 and is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2025. HRSC hosts over 30 user groups and events 324 out of 365 days a year. The complex can see 20,000 patrons in a weekend and over 750,000 per year.

NASSC is open to the public at no charge.

For more information, please visit: [www.sandsoccer.com](http://www.sandsoccer.com) or call 757-368-4600

- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/NASSC.HRSC>
- Event Photos - <https://www.sandsoccer.com/photo-gallery>

-- END --