

WIDE, WIDE WORLD OF FOOS

Another exciting year in the world of foosball is upon us. The USA certainly kicked it off in style, winning both the Men's and Senior's ITSF World Cup team titles, *and* with Dave Gummeson and Tracy McMillin winning the ITSF World Champion title in Men's Doubles and Ryan Moore taking the title in Men's Singles! On top of that, the event was televised Eurosport, the world's largest syndicated network, where the success, professionalism and sportsmanship of Team USA was shown in 58 countries in 14 different languages. But that was only the beginning, as Eurosport has further contracted with ITSF to provide live coverage of all four World Championship Series tournaments being held in Europe this year. (This was a major coup for ITSF as it brings very significant sponsorship visibility to the sport worldwide!)

Part of what made things so exciting was the added effect of the FIFA soccer World Cup. The natural connection between our sports has prompted many sponsors, promoters and manufacturers from both our sports to leverage each in numerous marketing and publicity events. Among my favorites have been:

- **The 55DSL/Diesel and Panini “Galactic Foosball Challenge,”** which also garnered media attention worldwide. Players from seven different countries where the trendy fashion manufacturer 55DSL/Diesel has “Flagship” storefronts (such as in NY City) competed for their own country's championship, with the winners flown to Italy in June for the finals. Winners of the finals received a further trip to see the FIFA World Cup live in South Africa. USA's champions, Kevin Skaltsis (Pro / RI) and Tom Mosher (Semi-Pro / NY) ended up taking second in the finals in Italy to the Italian team, but it was an outstanding performance in that the Italians had played their whole lives on the style of table used for this competition while Kevin and Tom had never played on it before the NYC finals in May. Just another testament – much like the ITSF Worlds/World Cup – to the talent and adaptability of American players. By the way, the promo posters and the website graphics that 55DSL's marketing department put together are fantastic.
- **Nokia's N8 Foosball Fever theater commercial.** Performed on Bonzini tables by a group of French players who now live in the UK, this video demonstrates some of the most unbelievable trick shots you've ever seen. Shown in most European markets (where Nokia is the leading cell phone provider), some of the shots are so amazing most people don't believe they're not done with computer generated graphics. Check them out on YouTube for yourself, where after the main video is over you're given the option to view each shot in slow motion.

- **Cincinnati's World Cup Foosball Challenge.** Held right in downtown Cincinnati's Fountain Square, this tournament was another heavily (locally) publicized event promoted with tie-in to the FIFA World Cup. Plenty more exposure for the sport and a great time in general – all sponsored by the City of Cincinnati and with tables provided by Mary Moore/IFP.
- **The DC Foosball Cup.** Sponsored by Modelo Especial, CHASEKickballs.com, Buffalo Billiards, DC United, Washington City Paper and the DC Social Sports Club, this event brought together a mix of local and international players for qualifiers and elimination rounds during each of DC United's pre-game tailgate parties. More diverse visibility, more diverse media coverage...

And these were only a few of them nation and worldwide. In addition, the ITSF now has over 60 member nations with over 50 tournaments sanctioned this year (11 of which are here in the USA) and continues to meet annually with the International Olympic Committee to evaluate its progress; the USTSF has proudly represented foosball at major sports industry trade shows such as TEAMS, the U.S. Sports Congress, and the National Association of Sports Commissions Symposium as National Governing Body for the Sport of Table Soccer; the USTSF has begun to be approached by a number of corporate sponsors, while foosball has made a resurgence in frequency of appearance in television shows and commercials here in the USA; members of the USTSF Executive Commission were interviewed for over a dozen television and radio segments on our sport; the USTSF finally has its new website built (and needs volunteers to contribute/maintain it); the USTSF now has almost 50 volunteer state and regional directors working to generate grass roots promotions; the USTSF held general elections that added two new "player representative" positions to the Board (Shelly Langley and Tony Alvaro) and will be holding elections for several other rotational positions this September (now's your opportunity to join and make a positive difference in the direction of foosball in the USA – contact us at ustsf@foosball.com to be nominated or to volunteer!).

And let's not forget that there are presently more tournaments giving out more money to more players in more countries than the sport has ever seen in its entire history. NOW is the time to get involved, whether as a player, a tournament director/promoter, a route operator or as a member of the USTSF staff. Let's keep both the creative ideas and the momentum going!!

Thanks to all!!

Very respectfully,

Larry Davis, President

United States Table Soccer Federation

www.ustsf.org

"Ask not what the sport of Foosball can do for you; ask what you can do for the sport of Foosball."