

**World Cups Soccer Festival**  
**March 2016**  
**Speech written by Renton Leversedge**

Welcome to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Cups here at Lochside Park! This is a very special event which was founded over 30 years ago by my father and a group of dedicated families here in Cordova Bay.

30 years ago, this festival was likely one of the first of its kind – small sided games using mini goals and mini fields for all age levels, with teams made up of players from different clubs and different skill levels and all playing on national teams in a World Cup format – all of this was originally inspired by the success of Canada's 1986 men's national team who in that year were on their way to the World Cup in Mexico – including three homegrown players - Ian Bridge, Ken Garraway, George Pakos and we now have here in Victoria the team's captain Bruce Wilson.

This event is also special as it started as a way for a team to fundraise for team travel abroad – and fundraising from this tournament has since helped numerous Victoria based youth teams travel and play in over eight countries including Canada, Denmark, England, Mexico, Scotland, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United States!

Many of the players who traveled on these tours won numerous awards and many played and represented Victoria, BC, their universities and for Canada, however ALL players who traveled as a result of the fundraising efforts of this tournament developed into better soccer players and most importantly, into better people – both on and off the field. Ultimately, they were all exposed to different places, cultures and importantly learned the virtues of team spirit -- Together Everyone Achieves More.

So, to advocate for team travel and cultural exchange, the World Cups has established the Frank Leversedge Memorial Award to help with the fundraising efforts of as many Victoria youth teams as possible. And this year, we are very proud to announce that the recipient of this year's award is Sam Wong and his U-16 boys team comprised of players from Saanich Fusion and Bays United who will be traveling this summer to the prestigious Gothia Cup in Gothenburg, Sweden. So at this time, I would like to call up Samuel Wong and some of his players to receive this award.

On behalf, of the World Cups organizing committee, the alumni many of whom continue to financial support this award, our corporate sponsors as well as our family, I would like present to you and your team the 2016 Frank Leversedge Memorial Award.

Importantly, the ability of the WC's to support wonderful team's like Sam's, would not be possible without the support of corporate sponsorships and we thank every one of our sponsors this year, including Peninsula Coop for its generous support. What is special is that the Coop was one of the original sponsors back in 1986 as they supported the Cordova Bay United team's tour to the Gothia Cup in 1986 – 30 years ago! In fact, the team was left with 10 players and without a goalkeeper only 2 weeks before leaving for Sweden and the Peninsula Coop came forward with a cheque to pay for the airfare of a goalkeeper. So thank you very much to the Peninsula Coop for your continued support of the World Cups, youth soccer and our community as a whole.

Lastly, I would like to also thank the volunteers who have made this event possible – and especially the organizing committee --- Nisha Jhwar, Meredith Campbell, John Kilbank, Aaron Walker Duncan, Chelsea Mckibben and Dominic Richards. And this committee was led by a fantastic President – someone though his vision and hard work has really brought this tournament back! Please join me in a very large round of applause, to my friend, a great guy, and the tournament's President – Dominic Butcher!

And very lastly, we thank you the players and families for being here today. Play and compete hard, buy lots of hotdogs at the concession, and enjoy the rest of the festival! Thank you.