

Doing
what
they can
for others

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UNFORGETTABLE DREAM COME TRUE

High school teams
compete for first
time at Allianz Field

By ERIK ERICKSON

On Friday, Oct. 8, 2021, the Minnesota United Football Club (MNUFC) hosted the first high school matches ever played at Allianz Field – the sixth annual Mayor’s Cup trophy games between the Como Park and Humboldt varsity girls and boys teams.

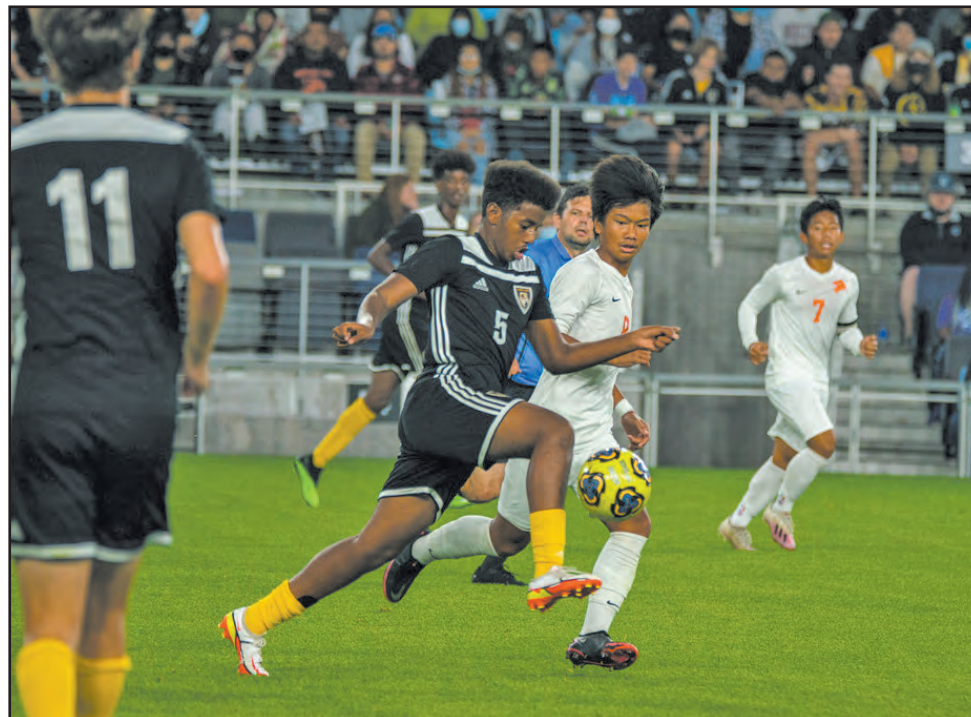
The experience was an unforgettable dream come true for the players, families, fans, and the St. Paul high school soccer community as a whole.

Bell Bank partnered with MNUFC to sponsor the event and provide free admission. Club officials reported just over 2,000 fans in attendance. For most, it was their first time inside the professional stadium.

And for the Como and Humboldt players who have watched their hometown team’s games on television to actually compete on the pitch and represent their schools? More than they ever could have imagined.

“It’s amazing. I never would have thought we’d be able to play here at Allianz,” said Como captain Soren Berg. “To be the first high school teams playing in this stadium is just amazing.”

MNUFC Public Relations Director Eric



Como Park High School player Khadar Aden works to advance past a Humboldt defender during the Mayor’s Cup on Friday, Oct. 8, 2021. About 2,000 local families filled Allianz Field for the event. For most, it was their first time inside a professional stadium. The Mayor’s Cup has been held annually since 2016. The Como boys team lost in a 4-3 match, and the girls won 1-0. (Photo by Rob Spence)

Durkee, a Como graduate from the class of 2004, says the club’s values are based on growing the sport and uniting the community around the game.

“From the outset of building and designing Allianz Field we wanted to create

a space for soccer to succeed at all levels,” Durkee said. “We felt this was a fun way to provide a moment for high school soccer players to create memories that will hopefully last a lifetime.”

UNFORGETTABLE >> 10

Mile in My Shoes
builds relationships,
breaks down barriers

POWER OF RUNNING

By MARGIE O’LOUGHLIN

When Mishka Vertin moved from New York City to Minneapolis in 2014, she hit the ground running. Trained as a social worker, she took a job at Mill City Running while looking for a job in her field. She and her partner, Michael Jurasits, settled into life in the North Loop of downtown Minneapolis.

Vertin said, “We loved exploring the city and developing a new running community. The only thing was, we were surrounded by people who looked and sounded just like us. We’ve always thought there’s a danger in this homogeneous kind of living.”

“Living in downtown Minneapolis, we ran past homeless shelters regularly. We started to think there could be a real benefit in getting people out running; people who might not think of running in a positive way. We thought maybe we could grow our own community to include more diverse people through running.”

From thought to reality

Mile in My Shoes launched its first running team in May 2014. The team included six shelter guests living at Catholic Charities Higher Ground of Minneapolis (resident members), two Higher Ground staffers, and eight volunteer runners (run mentors). In November 2014, Mile in My Shoes (MiMS) became a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and created its board of directors.

POWER OF RUNNING >> 3



A pair of MiMS runners compete in the full 26.2-mile Twin Cities marathon on Oct. 3. (Photo by Margie O’Loughlin)

City, school and county
raising budgets, levies

Taxes rising

By JANE McCLURE

Own a home in St. Paul? Your property taxes will increase, with large hikes in some neighborhoods.

Taxes on the city’s \$228,700 median-valued home could rise by \$338, or 11 percent. In Frogtown and other neighborhoods where values have played catchup since the 2007-2008 housing market collapse and recession, the increases would be even greater.

East Side neighborhoods and the North End would also see large jumps in value and taxes. Other neighborhoods would have smaller increases, even in areas where values remain flat or even decline slightly.

What a homeowner actually pays is based upon a home’s value, comparable sales of properties and whether or not physical improvements have been made to the home. But median values give an idea of the picture by neighborhood.

TAXES RISING >> 2

Midway Center finally demolished

What next? Parking lot
or United Villages?

By JANE McCLURE

As October began, demolition equipment was quickly crunching through the remains of Midway Center. Excavators smashed down walls, and carefully picked out and set aside metal. Parts of the structure were totally gone, to the ground, as the month began. Other areas were falling fast.

A demolition permit for the fire-damaged 1950s-era structure was issued Sept. 16, 2021. Demolition began Sept. 20. While area residents and business owners are pleased to see the structure removed, there are questions about future use of the space.

If the building is replaced with a parking lot, district council members and some neighbors want to make sure that isn’t a permanent change.

The Union Park District Council (UPDC) land use committee Sept. 20 reaffirmed its concerns about the parking lot and future development of the Midway Center superblock around the Allianz

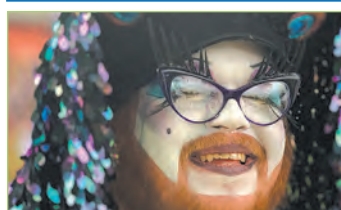


A backhoe eats through the remaining rubble at the Midway Center on Oct. 12, 2021. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

Field Major League Soccer stadium. The full council added its support Oct. 6.

Much of Midway Center was torn down a few years ago to make way for the stadium. The east wing at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Pascal Street remained, as did buildings along University. The shopping center and the Big Top Liquor store were looted and set ablaze during the civil unrest following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd.

The former Big Top building, which was built as a Perkins restaurant, was torn down in August. MIDWAY CENTER >> 17



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volunteer, bring joy
to Twin Cities

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Keeping medical supplies
out of landfills

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KNOW BEFORE YOU VOTE
Get to know the candidates
in the school board race

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Over 2,000 fans came out to cheer Como Park and Humboldt in the Mayor's Cup soccer matches at Allianz Field. It was the first time high school teams played at the professional stadium. (Photo by Wil Galvez)



Mayor Carter presented the trophies in a ceremony after the games on Friday, Oct. 8. (Photo by Rob Spence)



Como's Lenia Lopez scored the game-winning goal for the Cougars. The final score for the girls team match was 1-0. (Photo by Wil Galvez)

UNFORGETTABLE DREAM COME TRUE



The Como girls soccer team celebrating with the Mayor's Cup after receiving it from St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter on Friday, Oct. 8, 2021. (Photo by Wil Galvez)

>> From 1

Mission accomplished. The memory making began when the gates opened. Fans filled in to the lower bowl seats behind the team benches as the girls teams warmed up, with all the music, video, and fanfare the professionals receive.

Once the girls game kicked-off, the competitive instincts of both teams kicked in. In a back and forth contest, all scoring chances were denied through the first half. Early in the second half, Como senior Lenia Lopez pounced on a loose ball in the box and powered a shot into the back of the net.

The goal would hold up as the difference maker with the Como girls winning the Mayor's Cup match by a score of 1-0.

A spontaneous celebration on the field at the final whistle was the prelude to the awards ceremony with Mayor Melvin Carter, who was on hand to watch the action and present the actual Mayor's Cup trophies to the winning teams at the conclusion of the boys' game that followed.

Boys match



The victorious Como girls team with Superintendent Joe Gothard, Como Principal Kirk Morris, Mayor Melvin Carter, and the Mayor's Cup. (Photo by Eric Erickson)

It started with the typical speed and intensity of every Como-Humboldt boys match. The Cougars and Hawks always play with pride, but the Mayor's Cup adds another element. And so did Allianz Field.

The pitch is wider than the school fields, the grass is beautiful and real (not turf), and the lights were shining brightly as the large crowd roared. There were several quality scoring opportunities for both teams, but even after two overtime sessions, the score remained locked at 0-0.

A penalty kick shoot-out isn't used by the state high school league in the regular season. But when you're the mayor, and two St. Paul teams are playing for the Mayor's Cup, you ask the crowd if they want a penalty

kick shoot-out. The answer was a resounding "yes" and the mayor approved.

In dramatic fashion, Humboldt converted 4 kicks to Como's 3. The Hawks jumped for joy while the Cougars felt momentary heartbreak.

All four teams were honored by the mayor in the post-game ceremony. They all represented their schools with outstanding effort and gave the St. Paul soccer community a night of joy.

Como boys co-coach Jonah Fields, who created the Mayor's Cup matches back in 2016, reflected on what the night at Allianz meant.

"It was such a special privilege," Fields said. "It's been so much fun celebrating soccer and our communities together."

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