

How the Beer City Cup came to be

After having the opportunity to play soccer again as adults (Asheville indoor soccer center and ABASA outdoor) in the early 2000s, both Eric and David have played on or captained teams from Asheville in NCASA's State Cup, USASA's Regional Cup and the Charleston International Cup.



Having had success with the Asheville Wizards and Smush FC respectively, David joined Eric to help him expand the Blue Ridge Cup he started in 2009.

Asheville was producing both: excellent amateur soccer teams and some of the tastiest beers in the country.... in 2007 and 2009 the Asheville Wizards won NC State Cup - and, in 2009, Asheville won the coveted "Beer City Capital" of the US in Portland's online survey beating out cities in Michigan, Oregon, California and beyond!

Since soccer and beer go back a Century or so, it only seemed fitting to change the Blue Ridge Cup to the "Beer City Cup". We decided to be the first tournament to offer beer sales and a cash prize while targeting the most talented and skilled adult soccer teams in the

Region. The combination of SOCCER | BEER | CA\$H separated us from other adult soccer tournaments.

During the 2009 NCASA State Cup in December and 2010 Charleston International Cup over Memorial Day weekend, David and Eric personally invited each opponent to join them in their inaugural Beer City Cup over Labor Day weekend 2010.

21 teams competed in that first official Beer City Cup with 7 of them being Asheville based. Determined to create something unique in the adult soccer world, Eric and David continued to reach out to teams and captains from their league and leagues around the Southeast.

Driven to bring a festive, social atmosphere to the fields with the hopes of having a crowd to play in front of, they showcased tasty beers from local Asheville breweries at the Finals on Sunday. Along with the support of NCASA's Executive Director, Darius Ejlali and their player support specialist, Cindy Morrison, the Beer City Cup has navigated the waters of sanctioned adult soccer so it could create a special tournament that was fair to all participants and legitimate as a structure.

Where do we go from here

Over 14 years, Beer City Cup's popularity had exploded to the point that expansion seemed logical. In 2023, Savannah hosted the first Beer City Cup outside of Asheville. In only its second year, the 2024 Savannah event boasted 110 teams which approached the sold out 2023 Asheville Beer City Cup event, which had 130 teams from 60+ cities, 18 states and 3 countries..

In 2024, Beer City Cup expanded to Indianapolis with Indy Eleven as their main sponsor. Over Veteran's Day weekend, they'll be on the road in Nashville!

ERIC USHER, Beer City Cup Co-Founder and Director

Combine jock, musician, referee, teacher, entrepreneur and stir. Eric Usher is equal parts of the former and an avid adult soccer enthusiast. Eric has been involved in the local Asheville adult league for 20+ years and a professional soccer referee. Usher believes in the positive of adult soccer and loves the energy the game still brings to all ages. Beer City Cup has been an outlet for this energy and his passion for the adult game. Over the past 20 years, Eric has been a team captain, a league administrator and a referee at levels including the USL Championship and for 10 years in the ACC. Besides being a co-founder of Beer City Cup

DAVID TURNER - Beer City Cup Co-Founder and Director

I've waited a long time for soccer to finally be 'cool'

- 1978: starts playing Rec soccer in Winter Park, Florida as a field player, but mostly part-time sub
- 1983: coach levels with him and says he should pick a different sport, or, consider being a GK
- 1983: starts playing in goal and isn't much better than in the field, but goes to his first GK camp that summer (Jim Rudy / UCF - Michelle Akers' coach)
- 1984: tries out for, but doesn't make the local 'select' team. Goes to GK camp again
- 1985: the select team calls to see if he's still interested because the GK they selected now wants to play baseball. He joins the Winter Park Lions as their GK and is still terrible
- 1986: some improvement and goes to 3rd GK camp
- 1987: starting to get it and is learning from playing against other teams who have good GKs
- 1987: goes to Joe Machnik's GK camp for the first time and learns a lot about being an effective GK. Finishes the week off winning "Goalie Wars" at 15
- 1988: Winter Park Lions lose State Cup Finals. Saves two PKs
- 1988: Starting GK for Winter Park High School, lose in Regionals

- 1989: Winter Park Lions lose 2nd State Cup in PKs again
- 1989: Winter Park High makes it to Regional Finals
- 1989: Redshirted at University of South Carolina, Columbia
- 1990 - 1993: Four year starter / all-time GAA avg leader / all-time shutouts / 3rd saves / 4th save percentage
- 1992: U23 National team
- 1992: Infamous U2 incident
- 1993: NCAA Div I Finals. Lose 2-0 to Virginia
- 1994: Played with Charleston Battery
- 1994: Tried out with Watford FC and Charlton Athletic
- 1994 - 2003: 'Retired' / can't find places to play as an adult
- 2003 - 2007: Starts playing again at Asheville indoor soccer center
- 2006: MVP of Tournament of Friends helping the Asheville Wizards defeat the Charlotte Eagles
- 2006: Asheville Wizards are the first ABASA adult team to enter NCASA Open State Cup. Lose in the Semis
- 2007: Asheville Wizards win NCASA Open State Cup
- 2007: Asheville Wizards compete in USASA Regionals
- 2007 - 2012: Asheville Wizards reign as ABASA Open league champions
- 2008: Asheville Wizards win Charleston International Cup
- 2009: Asheville Wizards win NCASA Over 30 State Cup
- 2010: Plays as a guest player for Smush FC (Eric Usher's club) and wins Charleston International Cup
- 2010: Partners with Eric Usher's Blue Ridge Cup (8 teams) to morph it into the Beer City Cup, growing it from 21 to 130 teams
- 2010 - 2022: Plays in and Co-Directs Beer City Cup Asheville winning it 4x and losing in the Finals 2x
- 2022: Beer City Cup becomes the first tournament to be affiliated and sanctioned by NCASA
- 2023: Beer City Cup becomes the first tournament to be affiliated and sanctioned by USASA
- 2023: Expanded Beer City Cup to Savannah (92 teams in 2023, 110 teams in 2024)
- 2024: Expands Beer City Cup to Indianapolis and Nashville
- 2025: Expand to Southern California, Virginia Beach and Chicago