

AKRON INNER-CITY SOCCER CLUB

NEWSLETTER

2026



Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it - Proverbs 22:6

TABLE OF CONTENTS



- | | | | |
|----------|--|--------------|--|
| 1 | Table of Content | 9 | Spring & Fall Standing |
| 2 | Note from The President | 10 | 18th Annual Summer Camp |
| 3 | Coach Corner | 11 | 11th Annual Akron Unity Cup |
| 4 | Summer Essential | 12-13 | Tournaments Pictures |
| 5 | High School Team | 14 | COACHES AND RECOGNITION |
| 6 | Mmunga Almasi, Samwel Matendo & The High School Team. | 15 | SPECIAL THANKS TO AICSC SPONSRS |
| 7 | Game Changers – Chasing Goals Nickelodeon | 16 | PROGRAM TIMELINE |
| 8 | Parent Corner & Christian Kakish | | |





Akron Inner City Soccer Club: 2025 Year in Review

The Akron Inner City Soccer Club enjoyed another successful year in 2025. This forty-one-week program exceeds my expectations every year. The program provides a comprehensive platform that presents participants with an exceptional opportunity to acquire soccer fundamental and essential life skills. As usual the program commenced with eight weeks of indoor winter foot skills training, offered at

no cost to all eligible youths within the capacity limits of the Elder Johnson Family Life Center at The House of The Lord.

This was followed by three months of outdoor spring practices, league games, and tournaments. Following this, four weeks of complimentary summer camps were provided from Monday to Friday at four city locations, offering local youth valuable opportunities for participation. In addition, the Summer Essential program was introduced, offering three weeks of activities.

This was followed by three and a half months of fall practices, league games, and tournaments. It was a great honor to welcome the Nickelodeon Filming Studio to our city for their Game Changers – Chasing Goals episode, which featured one of our players, and was televised nationally during the month of November of 2025.

I am sincerely grateful for the collaboration and dedication of the community partners, including players, parents, coaches, drivers, sponsors, and supporters. Thank you for making a difference for the youth in our community. Thanks to The Almighty's guidance and blessings.





COACH CORNER: Shailer Turner
My Journey with Akron Inner City Soccer Club:
From Player to Coach

Soccer has been a huge part of my life for as long as I can remember. I started playing for Akron Inner City Soccer Club back in 2nd grade and continued through 8th grade. Those early years weren't just about learning the game; they were about building lifelong friendships, learning teamwork, and developing a love for the sport that has stayed with me ever since.

Looking back, I'm so grateful for the experiences I had as a player. Soccer taught me discipline, resilience, and how to work as part of a team. I'll always remember how much fun it was to be on the field with friends, facing challenges together, and pushing myself to be better. The lessons I learned during those years shaped me into who I am today.

Now, after 17 years, I've returned to Akron Winner City Soccer Club—but this time as a coach. I'm lucky enough to be coaching the U10 girls' team, with players ranging from ages 7 to 9. It's incredible to be on the other side of the game, guiding a new generation of athletes. I love coaching these girls. Watching them grow, develop their skills, and build confidence on and

off the field is one of the most rewarding parts of my life now. Every practice, I get to see them take on new challenges and improve in ways they never thought possible. It's a privilege to be part of their journey.

For me, coaching isn't just about teaching them to play soccer; it's about helping them believe in themselves. I want to nurture each player's unique strengths and encourage them to work together as a team. The growth I've seen in them, not just as players but as individuals, is something I'll never take for granted.

When I see these young girls develop confidence, get excited about the game, and start working together as a team, it reminds me of how I felt all those years ago. Soccer has a way of bringing people together, building character, and giving us the tools to face challenges in life.

At the end of the day, I'm just happy to be a part of their growth. Helping them reach their full potential—whether on the field or in life—is the most fulfilling part of coaching. I'm so proud to be able to give back to the sport that gave me so much when I was their age.





Summer Soccer & Leadership Program – July 2025.

In July 2025, Coach Todd designed and led a three-week summer program for 3rd–5th grade students, partnering with an Akron Public Schools teacher to create an experience that blended soccer, critical thinking, and leadership development. The program was made possible through the support of Youth Success Summit (YSS), which secured the funding and selected Akron Inner City Soccer Club to implement and lead the program.

The central focus of the program was one guiding question: Why is soccer the most popular sport in the world, yet less popular than other sports in the United States—and how can we help make soccer more popular in Akron? Students explored this question through age-appropriate discussions about access, culture, media, community identity, and personal experience, then connected those ideas directly to their time on the field.

Soccer sessions were designed to support players of all experience levels, beginning with fundamental skills and progressing toward teamwork, communication, and game

understanding. Emphasis was placed on creativity, inclusion, and joy for the game, while classroom sessions fostered confidence, leadership, and the ability to express ideas and solutions.

By the end of the program, students not only showed growth in soccer skills, but also demonstrated a greater understanding of how sports can bring communities together—and how they themselves can play a role in shaping the future of soccer in Akron





HIGH SCHOOL TEAM

What an amazing team, It was a joy to be part of these young men's journeys. They played skillfully with great chemistry, excelled in both practices and games despite being from different countries, and won many matches and tournaments. Approximately three-quarters will move on to the next phase of life. This team is considered as one of the top five in the club's 26-year history.



**FRONT
ROW**
LEFT-TO-RIGHT

Bakari Ebengo, Mfaume Kipanga, Joseph Bienfait, Stefan Tolmachen,
Yoshua Fazili, Bahininwa Mpenda and Kalonda Katumba

**BACK
ROW**
LEFT-TO-RIGHT

Kamana Pasi, Malanga Esende, Coach Emmanuel Sese, Samwel Matendo, Munga
John, Baraka Mwinsigo, Mmunga Almasi, Martin Kitwonda and Matunda Angalia

MMUNGA ALMASI, SAMWEL MATENDO & THE HIGH SCHOOL TEAM.



Mmunga Almasi, Samwel Matendo & The High School Team at the back row in picture

Mmunga Almasi, North, F, sr.

Almasi led the Vikings to a Division III district final and City Series championship. He was the City Series Most Valuable Player and was named All-Ohio. Almasi led North with 14 goals and 12 assists.

Mmunga Almasi is a striker for our high school team and a coach for our U10-boys.



Ellet Boys Soccer head coach Jeremy Hissner had the honor of coaching senior captain Samwel Matendo in the District All-Star Game at Stow High School on November 12. Their shared hard work and dedication have helped rebuild the program and pave the way for its success. Congratulations to Coach Hissner and Samwel on this well deserved recognition!

GAME CHANGERS - CHASING GOALS NICKELODEON



GAME CHANGERS - CHASING GOALS NICKELODEON

The Akron Inner City Soccer Club is excited to share an incredible update—Nickelodeon’s Game Changers: Chasing Goals is now an ongoing television series airing nationwide, and Savannah Davis, a proud member of our U13 Girls team, continues to be part of this inspiring movement.

What began as a promotional feature has grown into a full series that highlights young female athletes who are redefining the future of sports. Seeing Savannah represented in a nationally televised program is a powerful reminder of how far dedication, discipline, and passion can take our young athletes.

From the Field to the National Stage

Savannah’s journey from the soccer field in Akron to a nationwide television audience is nothing short of remarkable. Her inclusion in Game Changers: Chasing Goals showcases her commitment to the sport and her role as a positive example for young girls everywhere who aspire to compete, lead, and dream big.

The series celebrates athletes who are not only excelling in their sports but also making meaningful impacts in their communities. Savannah’s story reflects the values we uphold at Akron Inner City Soccer Club—hard work, confidence, teamwork, and resilience.

About Game Changers: Chasing Goals

Game Changers: Chasing Goals is Nickelodeon’s nationwide series dedicated to uplifting and spotlighting young female athletes across different sports. By sharing their stories on a national platform, the series encourages the next generation to stay active, believe in themselves, and pursue their goals with confidence.

Inspiring the Next Generation

Savannah’s continued feature in this series is not just a personal achievement—it’s a win for our entire club and community. Her journey serves as motivation for our players to stay focused, committed, and fearless in chasing their dreams, both on and off the field.

We’re Proud of You, Savannah!

The Akron Inner City Soccer Club congratulates Savannah Davis on this outstanding achievement. We are proud to support and celebrate our athletes as they reach new heights and represent our club on a national stage.

Be sure to tune in and support Game Changers: Chasing Goals on Nickelodeon, and stay connected with us for more inspiring stories from our players and programs.



Nick HAIDET, Brian Zietlow, Dele Olabisi, Tara Cole, Vanessa Naïve, Joslyn Mobley & Matt Petrunak





PARENT CORNER - JERIES KAKISH

PARENT CORNER - JERIES KAKISH



Jerries & Christian Kakish

Our family joined the Akron Inner City Soccer Club in the Spring of 2023. We had not previously been involved in soccer. As soon as the practices began, we knew that we had found the right place for our family.

The coaches focus on development of skill and provide constructive feedback while also treating the players like family. The coaches immediately included our children as if they had been part of the league for years. Our boys, now 13 and 11, had zero soccer skills when they started. However, with the help and dedication of their coaches they really began to find their places on each of their teams.

Their teammates are some of the most respectful and wonderful children we have met. We have watched all the players grow and gain skill. We are always impressed by our teams' performances but more than anything we are so proud of the sportsmanship they show. Coach Dele, Coach Todd, Coach Emmanuel and all of the coaches give so much of their time and energy to each of the players on all the teams.

They have taught our boys to play with skill and to play with an extraordinary level of sportsmanship. We have seen the coaches work with each player on the team to enhance their individual talents and truly admire the way they have taught these boys to work as a team. What

we love most about this club is that the focus is always on discipline, skill, and teamwork.

The club remains dedicated to soccer and sportsmanship and leaves behind drama and unnecessary frivolities. The parents come together to assist in creating a great environment for our players and always work together. Watching this league over the last several years we have seen what an amazing sense of community Coach Dele has created within this league and how much it means to each of the players. The teams have pulled off amazing wins more often than not and always support each other. At tournaments and even at regular games other aged teams often come to support those who are playing. Coach Dele created this league more than twenty-five years ago and has helped so many children in the process.

We are grateful we became a part of it and look forward to the years to come. We are very grateful to God for Coach Dele and for this Akron Inner City Soccer Club, and as Coach Dele would always say, "God is great always"



Christian Kakish, U12-Boys, Coach Todd and Coach Dele Olabisi

Christian Kakish

Congratulation to Christian Kakish, a member of our U12-Boys and a student at NIHF Science Tech Engineering Math, had a "perfect score" on the Grade 4 Mathematics Ohio State Test (OST)

SPRING STANDING 2025

	WIN	TIES	LOSSES	PLACEMENT
1. U9-BOYS D6	4	1	2	2ND OF 6 TEAMS
2. U9-BOYS D5	1	1	6	8TH OF 10 TEAMS
3. U9-GIRLS	2	0	6	9TH OF 13 TEAMS
4. U10-BOYS	0	4	4	10TH OF 10 TEAMS
5. U11-BOYS	5	0	3	5TH OF 8 TEAMS
6. U12-GIRLS	5	1	2	3RD OF 6 TEAMS
7. U14-BOYS	7	0	2	2ND OF 10 TEAMS
8. HIGH SCHOOL	7	1	0	1ST OF 10 TEAMS

WIN	TIES	LOSSES	PLACEMENT
5	0	3	3RD OF 8 TEAMS
7	0	1	1ST OF 10 TEAMS
2	0	6	9TH OF 10 TEAMS
3	2	3	5TH OF 8 TEAMS
7	0	1	1ST OF 5 TEAMS
2	2	4	4TH OF 6 TEAMS
8	0	0	1ST OF 7 TEAMS

1. Spring Challenge, Sports Complex Sandusky
2. 11th Annual Akron Unity Tournament
3. North Olmstead Tournament, North Olmstead, Ohio
4. Mike Good Memorial Tournament, Green, Ohio
5. Mason Dixon Tournament, Maryland
6. Battle for Lake Erie Tournament, Sandusky, Ohio
7. Season Finale Tournament, Lodi, Ohio



18TH ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camp

The 18th Annual four weeks summer camp took place at four city locations in the city. The yearly anticipated free summer camp ran from Monday-Friday served over four hundred youth each summer.

Participants received healthy meals from the city of Akron summer food program, we provided a complimentary summer camp t-shirts, balls, and weekly reading hours with free books to take home, thanks to our partner at the Vernon Branch Library.

Book distributions and dedicated reading sessions were strategically integrated into the program to address learning gaps that can occur during the summer months. Both the participants and parents consistently rated the camp as one of best things for the family during the summer.





11th Annual Akron Unity Cup

The 11th Annual Akron Unity Cup took place on Saturday, August 9, 2025, featuring 37 teams and 618 players who competed in 59 exciting games. This marked an increase compared to the previous year's 10th Annual event, which included 30 teams, 482 players, and played in 46 games. Tournaments bring people together to enjoy the Beautiful game. The Annual tournament showcases what a community can achieve by working together. It offers teams valuable tournament experience and atmosphere.

Last year's tournament was a remarkable event and achieved significant success, with the complex hosting over a thousand soccer enthusiasts in a single day. I am deeply appreciative of everyone who made this possible—players, parents, friends, family members, coaches, referees, volunteers, the city of Akron Parks and Recreation for providing access to Copley Road Soccer Complex, our sponsors whose support is allowing us to keep building opportunities for the youth of our community. To God be the glory.

The 12th Annual Akron Unity Cup will take place on Saturday, August 8, 2026, following the widely viewed Soccer World Cup.
Tournament Division Winners



TOURNAMENTS PICTURES



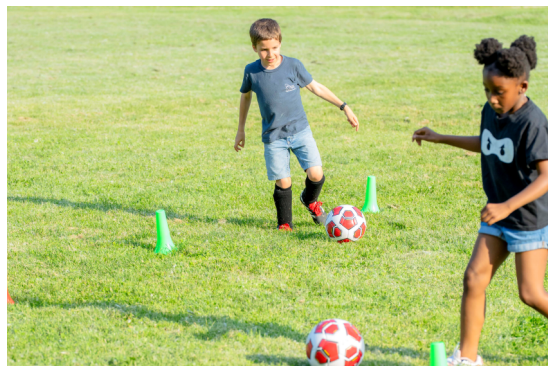
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TOURNAMENTS PICTURES



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COACHES AND RECOGNITION



Todd Ingraham
Kashmere Greer
Shailer Turner
Reilly Dougherty



Emmanuel Sese
Olabisi Adesusi
Oba Eni
Dele Olabisi



Emmanuel Appiah
Gerald Nkwate



Samwel Matendo
Mmunga Almasi
Yashua Fazili
Munga John
Kamana Pasi





Akron Community Foundation
 Charles E. & Mable M. Richie Memorial Fdn.
 Glenn R. & Alice V. Boggess Memorial Fdn.
 Henry V. & Frances W. Christenson Fdn.
 Laura R. & Lucian Q. Moffitt Memorial Fdn.
 Musson, R.C. & Katharine M. Charitable Fdn.
 SAF Inc.
 The Sister McFawn Fdn.
 Welty Family Foundation
 Vernon Odom Fund of the Akron Community Fdn.
 Mr. Martin P Houser Fund of the
 Knights of Columbus Council 14551
 John S. Knops
 Dick's Sporting Goods

In-kind Donation

Akron Public Schools
 CTI Web Services.
 The City of Akron Parks & Recreation
 The House of The Lord Church
 Mike Pinter



PROGRAM TIMELINE 2026



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WINTER PROGRAM - FREE

Winter Foot Skills Training Starts
Winter Foot Skills Ends

Sat., January 17
Sat., March 7

SPRING PROGRAM

Spring Practice & Game Starts
Spring Practice & Game Ends

Mon. March 16
Sun. June 7

SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camp Starts
Summer Camp Ends
12th Annual Akron Unity Cup

Mon. June 15
Fri. July 10
Sat. August 8, 2026

FALL PROGRAM

Fall Practice & Game Starts
Fall Practice & Game Ends

Tue. July 14
Sun. October 25



<https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/an-examination-of-black-soccer-participation-and-fandom-in-america/248327298>

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NEWSLETTER
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