

Press Release:

Oldest football clubs from Italy, Spain and England unite to play the first “Pioneers Cup”

This past Saturday, 16 November, the city of Sheffield hosted a different kind of football tournament, called the “Pioneers Cup”. The oldest existing football clubs from **Italy (Genoa CFC)** and **Spain (R.C. Recreativo de Huelva)** have both sent a special team of former club legends, supporters and youth players following the invitation of **Sheffield FC**, the world’s oldest football club, to stage the first Pioneers Cup and to celebrate the beautiful game and grass roots spirit together in friendship.

The tournament kicked-off on Saturday night 6pm at the Home of Football, the stadium of Sheffield FC. The teams were playing each other for a total of three Cup matches and the games were played with two legs of 30 minutes each. Sheffield FC was led by the Sheffield legends and former members of the English national team **Chris Waddle** and **Carlton Palmer** to win the Pioneers Cup after tight victories over both Genoa CFC and R.C. Recreativo de Huelva. The event was surrounded by several festivities to connect all participants from England, Spain and Italy beyond the actual games, as they all shared their flags and gifts on the pitch and sang football songs together, before and after the Cup.

Richard Tims, Chairman of Sheffield FC, explains the idea and motivation of this new project back to the roots of football: “Being a community and amateur football club with a large history and pioneering past ourselves, we believe that it is important to remember and protect the social roots of football in today’s world. The game of football has become the most watched and played sport in the world, so our ambition is to find out how the game was spread and developed all around the world”.

After Sheffield FC visiting Genoa CFC and R.C. Recreativo de Huelva in 2013, all three clubs decided to stage a friendly and amateur tournament in Sheffield. “Our ultimate goal is to promote the game at grass roots level and to make sure that history and values don’t get lost along the continuing professionalisation of modern football. Football’s roots still are the amateurs, the local communities and the volunteers who run the vast majority of clubs. And 99,9% of footballers are amateurs”!

Both traditional clubs from Italy and Spain are currently competing in professional league football, but are at the same time ambitious to give something back to base of football’s pyramid, to the grass roots and the volunteers involved in the game. Pablo Comas, President of R.C. Recreativo de Huelva, says: “Looking at the founding history of football, it is fascinating to see the inter-cultural relations through which the game developed. In both Spain and Italy, workers from Great Britain have brought football into our countries and society. It shows from the very beginning, that the game of football always had the power to connect and unite the world, before professionalism was born”.

Before the Cup on Saturday, all three clubs engaged in a press conference to share their pioneering history and also explained the idea behind the newly formed **Club of Pioneers** organisation and the objectives of the first grass roots tournament played together under this new international banner.

The background of this international grass roots football event is the newly formed organization **“Club of Pioneers”**. Since January 2013, Sheffield FC representatives are on a journey to discover and unite the oldest existing football clubs from each country in the world to build relationships on grass roots level. Ever since its foundation in 1857, Sheffield FC has been an amateur football club. To protect the club’s legacy and develop the club at amateur level, Chairman Richard Tims has established a charitable foundation based on the founding principles and values of football:

Integrity, Respect and Community.

Results:

Sheffield FC	3 – 2	Genoa CFC
Genoa CFC	2 – 3	R.C. Recreativo de Huelva
R.C. Recreativo de Huelva	1 – 3	Sheffield FC

1. Sheffield FC	6 Points	6-3 Goals
2. R.C. Recreativo de Huelva	3 Points	4-5 Goals
3. Genoa CFC	0 Points	4-6 Goals

Summary:

What: The first “Pioneers Cup”

When: kick-off 6pm, November 16th, 2013

Where: “Home of Football”; Sheffield FC Stadium; Sheffield Road - Dronfield, S18 2GD

Who: The oldest football clubs from:

Italy, Genoa CFC (1893) // Spain, R.C. Recreativo de Huelva (1889) // England, Sheffield FC (1857)

Why: To remember and cherish football’s first pioneers and the true values of the game, promoting grass roots and amateur football – back to the roots!

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