

Soccer Helped Refugees Survive

Tournament a window into lives of youth from 22 countries

Crafting a handmade plastic soccer ball is one of the most common ways that youth in refugee camps and poor communities are able to enjoy the sport, often in harsh conditions.

Eder Mutara, an organizer and player for the Portland World Cup Soccer Tournament, was originally from the Congo and he recalls his experiences in a Zambian refugee camp known as Mayukwayukwa.

Many of youth who participated in the tournament over the July 4 weekend were refugees, newcomers to both Portland and the US. The competition was presented by Portland Parks and Recreation and brought together about 350 youth originally from more than 22 countries.

"Living in a refugee camp makes one resourceful. Every day we would play with a ball we crafted from plastic bags and twine," Mutara says. "It was just as much a part of my day as mealtime. The best thing about this type of ball is that it can be played in any kind of field such as on dry ground, on the street, on the grass field, and pretty much everywhere. In my native language we call a plastic soccer ball Tshibulundu. By playing with a Tshibulundu, I was able to keep my mind away from thinking of not having enough food and pure water. I was able to stay out of

trouble and focus on making the right decisions."

Mutara says he always had hope for a better future, and tried to encourage those around him by getting them involved in sports such as soccer and track.

"We were without shoes, balls or water to drink," he said. "I relied on the spirits of dozens of youth who were able to focus on something other than their immediate situation for a while. Eventually, I moved to America, where I've tried to use the same leadership skills learned in soccer to build community by organizing this large tournament through Portland Parks and Recreation."

This was Mutara's fifth year as a Portland World Cup Soccer Tournament participant. He spent several years in a refugee camp before moving to Portland with his mother, sister and six brothers. In the fall, he will attend Western Oregon University on a scholarship. Mutara speaks seven languages, wrestles, plays football, soccer and plans to study accounting.

The tournament and its associated programs were meant to engage underserved and underrepresented immigrant and refugee youth who've come to Portland from all over the world, representing nearly two dozen ethnicities and cultures.

The event was an important



PHOTOS COURTESY ANN DOWNING/PORTLAND PARKS AND RECREATION
Eder Mutara, an organizer and player for the Portland World Cup Soccer Tournament, balances a soccer ball crafted out of plastic bags and twine. Mutara, originally from the Congo, played with homemade soccer balls just like this (as did many tournament players) during his years in a Zambian refugee camp.

celebration of diversity, family, partnership, and integration in Portland.

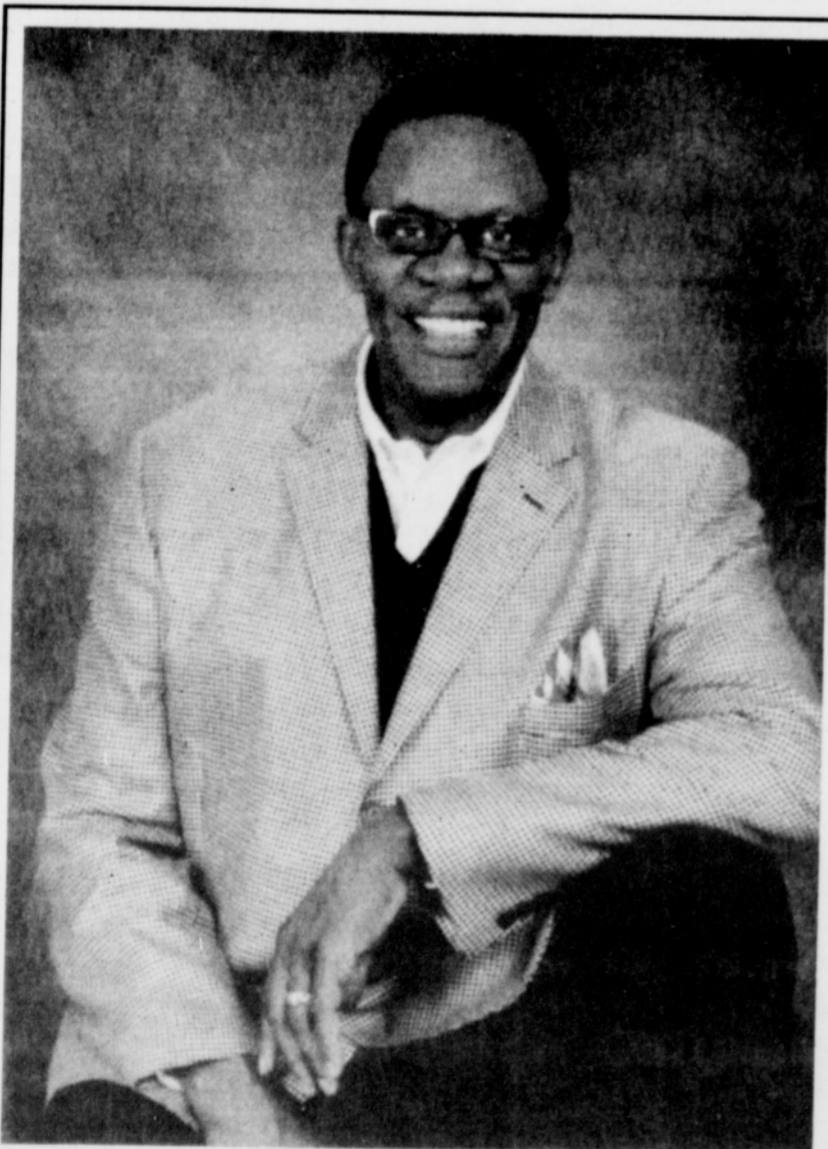
"The Portland World Cup Soccer Tournament and its related activities help foster awareness about what our city offers for people new to Portland—athletic, educational, career opportunities and more - through the international language of football - also known as soccer here in Portland," said Portland Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

"The Portland World Cup Soccer Tournament is about much more than a game," says Polo Catalani of the Office of Equity and Human Rights. "It's about investing our efforts now to embrace the changing face of our city, about integrating people new to both Portland and the United States into our society and our quality of life, and about showing them how to take part in democracy."

Catalani notes that one in five Portlanders are now foreign-born, and nearly half of area public school students belong to ethnic minority families. In many underserved north and east Portland neighborhoods, these percentages are even higher.

The Portland World Cup Soccer Tournament helps youth get past the challenges of being a teen, and a newcomer to Portland. It fosters peace, understanding, and the embracing of other cultures.

Perhaps nothing could be more American.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

THE SPINA COLUMN™

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 5. WHIPLASH: It doesn't take a serious accident to cause serious damage.

Q: How bad an accident does it take to actually cause whiplash?

A: While most people think of whiplash only as the result of a rear end collision, it can occur as a result of a fall or other sudden jolt. In car collisions, speeds as low as 5 MPH (a brisk walk) have caused whiplash. What's more, major studies show there is virtually no correlation between damage to the car and its occupants.

Q: How can I tell if whiplash has happened to me?

A: Whiplash often exhibits symptoms such as a sore neck,

arm or shoulder, nausea, blurred vision and headaches. If not treated immediately, these problems can lead to other more severe ones. To complicate matters, it sometimes takes years before whiplash symptoms occur.

Q: What should I do if I've had a fall or a car accident?

A: Don't take any chances. Schedule a complete chiropractic

exam immediately. Our office specializes not only in relieving whiplash symptoms, but also in making sure those problems don't become bigger ones down the road. For diagnosis of possible whiplash, or answers to any questions you might have about your health, please call us at the number listed right below.

Flowers' Chiropractic Office

2124 NE Hancock, Portland Oregon 97212

Phone: (503) 287-5504