

# For the love of the game

Each year the Africa Down Under Football Cup showcases the passion and talent of several young football teams representing the proud African communities based in Perth, Western Australia.

Team African Phosphate (Nigeria) won the day, with Walkabout (Tanzania) coming second, and CSA Global (Naija FC WA) finishing third.

But win or lose, the players were happy enough to be playing football with friends.

Team Arthur J. Gallagher player Dini Abdi, 28, emigrated from Ethiopia as an infant, and lives in Nollamara with his wife and two children.

"This event means I can catch up with my mates and get a feel of the grass. We love football doesn't matter what time it is, what the weather is like, we just play football for fun. There is a social aspect just to hang out and be happy, it's joyful," Abdi said.

Football West chief executive James Curtis said the African community in WA had grown in the last decade, along with their participation in the local football scene.

"The thing is the first time you arrive to a new town there are a whole lot of cultural differences, but football is one of those things that goes across all different cultures," Curtis said.

"This is a chance for them to represent different countries in Africa, and come



There was plenty of passion and action during this year's Africa Down Under Football Cup which is designed to promote Perth's various African communities

together and celebrate it in a multicultural Perth community."

Walkabout Resources Ltd managing director Allan Mulligan said the company was happy to sponsor Team Tanzania, and would continue to do so in coming years.

"It is good to make the connection that Walkabout is a company that is working in some of their countries, and we respect them and where they come from, and we are happy to support them," said Mulligan.

"Social interaction and upliftment is a key part of doing business in Africa. It is

not just about profits and development, it is also about people."

Team Walkabout player Adodomin Pesha, 35, moved to Perth from Tanzania in 2003 and currently works as a computer systems administrator.

"We all do this for fun but at the same time we get to meet our other African friends. We get to meet and know about people who have invested in our countries," Pesha said.

"I didn't know about Walkabout Resources but they have told me about their operations in Tanzania where I come from. It is good to know the things going on at home."

Spectator Emmanuel Mamsaray, 22, immigrated to Australia from Sierra Leone 16 years ago, and stood on the sideline cheering on his mates playing for Team PCF Capital (Zimbabwe).

"Football for us is life. It is what brings us together and keeps us out of trouble," Mamsaray said.

Mamsaray said even though he lived in Cannington, his family kept a good connection with their homeland and culture.

"I study Urban Planning at Curtin University. I have two more years left of my degree," Mamsaray said.

"My aim is to go back when I finish my degree, because there is a lot of development that is needed back home. Why not go back and help your country and try to help build where you come from."

Northlake Senior Campus English Program Co-ordinator Sean Bruce-Cullen said the Africa Down Under Football Cup provided a great experience for his students to share their passion for the international sport.

"All the students at our school are recent migrants and many are from humanitarian backgrounds. So we have got quite a lot of African students in our centre as well as from Vietnam, Indonesia, Afghanistan and Syria," Bruce-Cullen said.

"Football, or soccer, is one of the things they have in common. It is just a way for the students to interact with each other at a level where they have something in common."

The Africa Down Under Football Cup will be back next year for another celebration of Perth's vibrant community.

— Jonathon Daly



This year African Phosphate took out the Cup, beating Walkabout Resources in the final