

CGH (in red) and Private Practitioners (in white) celebrate coming in first and second respectively



Having a Ball of a Time

By Paul Tern

The warm morning sunshine lighted up Jalan Besar Stadium on 1 May 2012 as the SMA-Fullerton Soccer Tournament kicked off its 38th consecutive year. A tournament rich in history, it saw a huge turnout of over 100 doctors and dentists, all of whom gathered for a day of fun and fellowship in the sun while enjoying their favourite sport, soccer.

With an eight-a-side format and an impressive football pitch at the stadium, the eight participating teams managed to put together some nice moves and play fast flowing football. All the teams fielded strong sides, while rolling substitutions ensured that everyone managed to get some time on the pitch. Changi General Hospital (CGH) even fielded a female player, Dr Kimberley Kiong. A lady doctor playing in this tournament was unprecedented and she had all the spectators rooting for her when she was on the field. Additionally, Mr George Suppiah, Singapore's

first World Cup referee, oversaw the match referees officiating the 17 matches.

The tournament kicked off with the group stages, where defending champions CGH were grouped together with Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), the Singapore Armed Forces, and the Private Practitioners in what was arguably the group of death. Group B featured the Singapore National Eye Centre and Pharmacists, Singapore Dental Association (SDA), Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National University Hospital (NUH).

After some keenly contested matches, the Private Practitioners and SGH went on to top their respective groups, with CGH and SDA not far behind. Meanwhile, the other teams pushed them all the way, with some hard fought draws, gritty wins and last minute goals featuring among the games. The sweltering heat at Jalan Besar turned the tournament into a fitness contest as

well, but players and spectators were kept cool, thanks to complimentary sunglasses provided by Dr Chng Nai Wee of the Eagle Eye Centre.

As expected, the semi-finals proved to be an enthralling spectacle, with CGH pipping SGH 2-0 with a well-taken goal by top scorer Dr Lee Kai Wen and Dr Fairuz Bin Ahmad. In the other match, the Private Practitioners comfortably held off SDA's challenge to win 2-0 in a match where they dominated the midfield and put SDA under constant pressure.

In an eventful final match, the Private Practitioners raced into the lead after a free kick picked out an unmarked Dr Timothy Teo who hit a long range 30m shot into the bottom left corner of the net. They continued to dominate CGH, with Dr Yan Yet Yen missing a glorious opportunity to put them 2-0 up. However, the tide began to turn, and CGH gradually muscled their way back into the game. Their hard work paid off eventually as the referee awarded two soft penalties in quick succession against the Private Practitioners, which Dr Malcolm Tan and Dr Daryl Lim confidently dispatched to seal the win for CGH.

The day rounded off with a guest match between players representing the sponsors and organisers of this year's tournament, and the guest team comprising of old boys from Victoria Junior College. Although this match was a friendly, it still proved to be equally entertaining, with chances galore for both teams.

Dr Tan Yew Ghee, consultant gynaecologist and faithful Convenor of the annual SMA soccer tournament, graced the occasion and gave away the prizes to the winning teams.

The event was made possible courtesy of the generous sponsorship from Fullerton Healthcare. "It's our way of giving back to the medical fraternity, so we count it all joy to be sponsoring this event for the second year running and for many years to come," said Dr Michael Tan, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Fullerton Healthcare.

All in all, this year's soccer tournament certainly lived up to its billing in providing tough but fun matches, and also provided an excellent opportunity for doctors and dentists to catch up with each other and to de-stress after a hard year of work. All the participants left the event with smiles on their faces, having had great fun on the field, delicious food from the buffet, and fantastic goodie bags from the event.

We are definitely looking forward to next year's tournament! **SMA**



Paul Tern is currently in his first year of medical school at the University of Cambridge. He is an avid Arsenal fan, and believes in the power of soccer in bringing people together.



Players warming up before the tournament



Team captains' briefing



Doctors in action on the field



Convenor Dr Tan Yew Ghee (centre), sponsor Dr Michael Tan (right) presenting the award to Dr Chia Yih Wei (left), team captain of the Group A champions the Private Practitioners, with Mr George Suppiah (seated in background) looking on