

Report – CIHT North East & Cumbria Football Tournament 2022

Fairhurst get that sweet taste of victory in the 2022 CIHT North East & Cumbria Football Tournament.

This year the CIHT NE&C football tournament was set to be bigger and better than ever with more teams competing, a selection of trophies to fight over and perhaps most sought after reward of all - pizza. With Capita keen to take home the spoils again this year could Fairhurst, AECOM, Stantec, Northumberland County Council or the unknown quantity Cundall topple them from the top spot?

Now with the formalities complete, it was time to get underway with the action. Northumberland CC were given the group of death with their first game against Capita Design and their second against Cundall. Missing their marksman striker **Scott Young** didn't help matters as they were put to the sword by both, much to the frustration of their talismanic warriors **Ryan Convery** and **John Briggs** who battled hard and fought gallantly but couldn't do anything to steer them from defeat. Capita Design started like a steam train netting double figures in their first two games conceding just one in each. Their momentum continued against Fairhurst 2nd team which was a close feisty affair initially but the floodgates opened as fitness showed. It was Cundall that proved their sternest test to date - a step up in pure physicality. Capita Design were getting knocked from pillar to post and it seemed an upset could be in the offing. They dug deep though thanks to some sterling work on the wings from **Aaron Dodds** and **Dan Hodgson** ensuring a relatively smooth run into the Semis.

Fairhurst 1st team got off to a shaky start having to come back from losing positions against Stantec and Capita TPS. With Stantec holding AECOM to a draw and both making short work of Capita Transport Planning, it set up a group defining fixture between AECOM and Fairhurst 1st. Taking a 3-1 advantage, AECOM looked set to top the group, until Fairhurst turned to super sub **Stuart Conley** scoring 4 goals with 6 touches. The consequence, AECOM were unlucky to finish in third behind Fairhurst 1st, whilst Stantec took the top spot on goals scored.

So group winners Capita Design would face 2nd place in the group Fairhurst 1st team in the semis in what would prove to be the game of the tournament so far. Neither team could be split by full time, **Chris Armstrong** leading the charge from Capita Design and the eventual player of the tournament **Chris Pearson** for Fairhurst. With the game ending in a draw, the cruellest of knockout options 'golden goal' was chosen. But it made for a superbly exciting climax with both teams pushing for the winner. And yes, it was that man again **Chris Pearson** that dipped one way then the other, drilling the ball into the corner to seal a well-deserved place in the final.

The Final was between Fairhurst and Stantec who looked to revisit the 4-4 thriller from the group stage. Weary legs due to the additional time played in the semi-final and an early injury to birthday boy **Mumo Musyimi** meant Fairhurst resorted to 'slowing the game down' tactics – and thankfully their grand plan paid off much to the relief off the Fairhurst lads who dug deep to take home that all-important trophy.

So **Fairhurst** take the spoils for 2022 with a supreme footballing display from start to finish. They will be the team everyone wants to beat in next year's tournament set for Spring 2023. If you want to submit a team in either the league or the tournament format, please contact Paul McKenna at: paul.mckenna@wsp.com.



Fairhurst winning team photo



Photo - Paul McKenna presenting the Player of the Tournament Trophy to Chris Pearson (Fairhurst)