

CASE STUDY: Northwest United FC Soccer Tournament

Location:	Skagit River Park in Burlington, WA
Event:	Northwest United FC Soccer Tournament
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Background

In August 2008, Northwest (NW) United FC managed recycling programs at two soccer tournaments. Both tournaments were held at Skagit River Park in Burlington.

The first tournament was held over two weekends, August 9 & 10 and 16 & 17. There were 80 matches on the first weekend and 30 on the second. This small tournament was managed by Northwest United FC for the Washington State Youth Soccer Association.

The second tournament, the Labor Day Kick, was held over the three days of Labor Day weekend with 90 teams and 170 matches. Although this tournament was larger than the first, it was only moderately sized compared to other tournaments that NWUnited FC has hosted. NWUnited FC's largest tournament in 2008 had over 200 teams and nearly 400 matches. Recyclables were not collected at this large tournament in 2008, but will be in 2009.

Recycling Activities

During the first tournament, to test a basic recycling program at Skagit River Park and to capture all plastic and glass bottles and metal cans and cardboard. At the second tournament, the goal was to improve beverage container recycling and to test the capture of food and paper waste.

Organization and Responsibilities:

NWUnited FC was responsible for managing recycling at both tournaments. The responsibilities included:

- Contacting Waste Management, Inc. to arrange for drop-off of appropriate containers and to provide pickup and transfer services for all recyclables and garbage.
- Obtaining appropriate recycling containers for placement on fields.
 - ClearSteam recycling frames for beverage containers were provided by Burlington Parks and Skagit County.
 - 96 gallon bins were provided for food waste and paper by Waste Management.
- Making signs for the field containers to clarify and enhance the information already printed on the containers.
- Providing for regular checks of garbage and recycling containers to ensure recyclables and garbage were in the appropriate containers. This proved to be an important step.
- Emptying field containers when they were close to full and taking content to larger collection containers to be picked up by Waste Management.

- Contacting Skagit Soils, Inc., to clarify the food and paper waste they would accept at their composting facility. These materials would be picked up and delivered by Waste Management

Recycling Team

- A “recycling team” was organized with field marshals (parent volunteers at all soccer tournaments) to be responsible for our recycling effort.
- Because public compliance with recycling is far from perfect, *a recycling team is essential* to an effective program. The “team” would check periodically all the containers, remove all garbage from the recycling containers and place it in garbage cans and remove recyclables from the garbage and place them in the recycling containers. In addition, they stack cardboard along side the frames.
- One or two dedicated recyclers on the fields at all times could take care of the recycling. It was very helpful—and for larger events it would be necessary—to have a “gator” or other motorized hauling capacity to move full containers to the central storage area.
- Even with sufficient numbers, good containers, and great signage, there is still a need for “quality control” that recycling teams provide. This is essential to producing maximum yield and reducing contamination of the recyclables. Contamination can condemn the collected recyclables to the garbage dump and land fill.
- The recycling team is effective if it consists of people who are conscientious about recycling. Neutral or anti-recycling participants (there are some of those) should be asked to do other jobs.
- Recyclers removed all caps and lids from bottles and cans. In some communities this would not be necessary.
- Teens are quite capable of doing this with about a 10-minute training, but they—like any other person in this role—need to be impressed with the importance of doing a good job. In many cases, volunteers associated with the event sponsor can do the job. Other options: Master Composters from the local community; Vendor support for hiring “recyclers.”

Recycling Bins for glass and plastic collection

There were 13 ClearStream frames available to place on the fields. Each frame was placed next to a garbage can. It is important to have a garbage can next to each frame. This improves public compliance and reduces the work required of the recycling team, since the team can easily move inappropriately placed items to the proper container. On each frame, we made and attached a laminated sign indicating that—

- Only beverage containers (glass, cans, plastic bottles) and clear plastic cups (e.g., from Starbucks iced drinks) were to be placed in the frames.
- All caps should be removed and thrown in the garbage.

There were not enough ClearStream frames. There should have been at least ten more for the larger of the two tournaments. Ideally, there would have been enough frames

to place one on each side of each field, several near our vendors, and several more for the RV parking area.

Recycling Bins for food and paper collection

- Three 96-gallon recycling bins were placed in the vendor area for food-paper waste, however, the tournament could have used six to ten.
- Laminated signs were made for each bin indicating that the bins were not for garbage, but only for food waste and paper.
- For use on the field and in the vendor area, the food waste bins were sufficient, but there were insufficient food waste containers to handle the large amount of waste generated by the 30 or so RV campers.
- Signage on the food waste bins is very important. The food containers required frequent attention from the recycling team to remove garbage, metals, glass, and plastics.
- Vendors need to be instructed on how to handle their own waste. They can be the least compliant recyclers. They need to be given written instructions beforehand: For example, break down cardboard boxes, separate their own beverage containers, and how to handle food wastes.
- Not enough attention was paid to the RV overnights at the tournament. Next time, there will be instructions for the campers.

Cardboard

There were no special containers for cardboard, but rather the recycle team removed cardboard from the garbage and stacked it alongside of the frames.

Central Storage

Further contamination can occur in the central pickup area, during or after the tournament, so it is worth considering how to prevent that. For example, tie-off full dumpsters or provide signs.

Beyond Recycling

While recycling is important, optimally the major tournament discard-plastic bottles-would not exist. Instead, players and families would bring re-useable bottles. This will be encouraged in future tournaments.

Results

During the first tournament NWUnited FC collected 900 gallons of bottles and cans, and 180 gallons of cardboard and clean paper.

During the Labor Day Kick, NWUnited recovered 6 yards (over 1000 gallons) of beverage containers, 2 yards of cardboard (over 330 gallons), and about 300 gallons of food waste.