



Press Release

Outsiders Würzburger Kickers Win the U19-Tournament at ebm-papst Hallenmasters Indoor Soccer Championship

Surprise Winners in Mulfingen

The 16th ebm-papst Hallenmasters Indoor Soccer Championship was won by FC Würzburger Kickers. The biggest surprises at the U19-Tournament Saturday were the Würzburger Kickers (U19 Bayernliga) and SpVgg Ansbach (Landesliga Nord, Bavaria) who came through as outsiders to claim first and third places. "It's brilliant that a club from the local region has won. You can see that the underdogs can really compete with the top-level Bundesliga teams," said Linda Hener, the deputy press spokesperson for ebm-papst.

In a dramatic final, Würzburg finally defeated a spirited Bayer 04 Leverkusen team 2:1 after extra time. It could hardly have been more exciting. One minute before the end, Bernard Bukusi scored to put Leverkusen into the lead. But it only seemed to be the winner: Just a few seconds later, Fabio Bozesan scored the equalizer. And just a second from the final whistle, Hamed Saleh netted the winner for Würzburg.

This year, there were three international teams in the competition in the form of sc Heerenveen (Netherlands), FC St. Gallen (Switzerland), and Watford FC (England). "Opening up the tournament to international teams really paid off. It could be a recipe for success in the future," said Kai Halter, the Head of Marketing at ebm-papst. Once again, the spectators in the sold-out Gerhard-Sturm-Halle were treated to high-quality youth soccer and plenty of goals on the artificial pitch.

Two of the three foreign teams, Watford FC and sc Heerenveen, even qualified for the quarterfinals, but FC St. Gallen were knocked out in the group stages. "I'm still satisfied," said their coach, Brunello Lacopetto. "We were never completely dominated by any of the teams. We just weren't clinical enough in taking our chances. That was the difference." He also had several players from the younger year group in his team. "The other players were simply physically stronger," he said. "But all in all, it's a fantastic tournament. Very well organized. Everything is just right."

Just like for St. Gallen, the group stage was the end of the road in the championship for FSV Hollenbach, Hannover 96, and Fortuna Düsseldorf, even though they had played in the final last year. The team from Hollenbach had secured a place in the tournament as the second regional qualifier via the Jako Cup in Niederstetten. After a nervous start, the Hollenbach team from the "Verbandsstaffel Württemberg" never quite found its stride; they only put in a pleasing performance against Hanover, and did not manage to qualify with only one point.

In the group stage, the most convincing performances came from Bayer 04 Leverkusen, SC Freiburg, and also the qualifiers SpVgg Ansbach (the winners of the RBKJ Cup in Mulfingen). "I think we did ourselves proud," said the coach, Duane Collins. The Bavarian team (Landesliga Nord) played in a refreshing, fearless style and came second in their group behind Leverkusen, but ahead of 1860 Munich and Heerenveen.

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“But, after a weak start, I was also impressed with Watford,” said Mr Halter. “They had to take a while to get used to playing in the hall. At the end of the day, though, the group phase does not count for anything.”

For instance, the Dutch team only survived the group stage in the very last seconds, but then defeated the imperious group winners, Freiburg, 1:0 in the quarterfinal. The match between Leverkusen and Karlsruher SC also ended 1:0. In these matches, the result was more important than the performance. The Würzburger Kickers from the Bayernliga scored their second goal right on the final whistle to wrap up a 2:0 win against 1860 Munich – the next big surprise. The Landesliga team from Ansbach also won – as the better team against the English team, Watford, they fully deserved their 2:0 win.

The Würzburger Kickers and Bayer 04 Leverkusen then both claimed their places in the final. The Kickers did not allow Heerenveen many chances, and managed to hold on to a 1:0 lead. After taking an early 1:0 lead, Leverkusen confidently controlled the match against Ansbach and even extended their lead just before the end for a final score of 2:0.

The team from Ansbach clinched third place with a 1:0 victory against Heerenveen.

Apart from top-class sport, the organizers from ebm-papst and SV Mulfingen were determined to create an exciting, fun atmosphere away from the pitch. This year, that included high-quality show acts in the breaks once again with performances from the aerial fabric acrobats, Aerial Silk, the jazz dance group, 24null9, from the host sports club SV Mulfingen, and the hip hop dance formation, Flawless. “We’re delighted that the tournament was so well received by both the teams and the spectators,” said Linda Hener. “This is an event designed not only for soccer fans.”

Further information is available on the Internet at www.ebmpapst-hallenmasters.de and on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ebmpapstHALLENMASTERS

Captions (photos: Philipp Reinhard)

Images 1+2: The Würzburger Kickers can celebrate: They defeated Bayer Leverkusen 2:1 (a.e.t.) in the final.

Image 3: A scene from the gripping final of the Hallenmasters Indoor Soccer Championship between Würzburger Kickers and Bayer Leverkusen.

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About the ebm-papst Hallenmasters Indoor Soccer Championship

The teams taking part:

A Youth teams: 1860 Munich (Bayernliga), Bayer 04 Leverkusen (Bundesliga West), FC Würzburger Kickers (Bayernliga), FC St. Gallen (U18 Liga), Watford FC (U18 Professional Development League), Fortuna Düsseldorf (Bundesliga West), Hannover 96 (Bundesliga Nord/Nordost), Karlsruher SC (Bundesliga Süd/Südwest), SC Freiburg (Bundesliga Süd/Südwest), sc Heerenveen (U19 Ehrendivision), RBKJ Cup Qualifier, Jako Cup Qualifier.

Active: FSV Hollenbach (Verbandsliga Württemberg), FV Lauda (Landesliga Odenwald), Spf. Schwäbisch Hall (Verbandsliga Württemberg), SpVgg Gröningen-Satteldorf (Landesliga Staffel 1 Württemberg), SV Königshofen (Landesliga Odenwald), SV Mulfingen (Bezirksliga Hohenlohe), SV Osterburken (Landesliga Odenwald), TSG Öhringen (Verbandsliga Württemberg), TSV Crailsheim (Landesliga Staffel 1 Württemberg), TSV Ilshofen (Verbandsliga Württemberg), TSV Pfedelbach (Landesliga Staffel 1 Württemberg), VfR Gommersdorf (Verbandsliga Nordbaden).

General Information: The 16th annual ebm-papst Hallenmasters Indoor Soccer Championship will take place on January 6 and 7, 2018 in the Gerhard-Sturm-Halle in Mulfingen. There will be two groups of six teams each. Places one to four in each group will go through to the quarterfinals. Tickets for the A Juniors tournament can be purchased starting Monday, December 4, 2017 on our online sales service at www.ebmpapst-hallenmasters.de and at Sport Steinbach in Künzelsau. Adults pay 12 euros, children (up to 16 years) 8 euros. The entry fee for the active teams tournament is 5 euros for adults and 3 euros for children (up to 16 years). Admission is free for children under 6 years.

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