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# ConIFA World Cup: Final Summary

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The tournament was not without its hiccups, but it is worth remembering ConIFA is a small organisation with around 20 volunteers, what they have managed to achieve with nearly 50 games in 10 days was remarkable.

The tournament was full of colour, bringing together people from many different walks of life, connected by one thing. A desire to express themselves by playing football. It is very easy to become disillusioned with modern football, but this brought the game back to its' core and reminded those watching why they fell in love with it years ago.

Every single team has a unique identity and every single player wished to represent their side with pride and they did so. Even the placement games where nothing was to play for, teams went for it.

In whatever over tournament would you find these teams and their fans able to represent themselves and showcase their identity. [Kabylia manager Lyes Immemai](#) told me quite clearly the team wouldn't exist without ConIFA.

Like the [Northern Cypriot delegation](#) said they just want to play football and swim "like sh in the ocean."



It is a real shame the tournament could not last even longer and ConIFA needs to make sure it continues to grow, so it can inspire and empower more and more people around the world. But for the fans that experienced the 10-day tournament, it was an event like no other.

To conclude the tournament, I have created a set of categories to celebrate the very best of this tournament, this was very difficult to do as all teams contributed to the quality of the tournament.

### **Player of the Tournament**

Maxwell Oldham (Cascadia)

The Cascadia winger who plays his club football for Corinthian Casuals in the English eighth-tier propelled his side to a sixth-place finish.

His pace and trickery was impossible to deal with and he was strong on the ball too. He made a noticeable contribution everytime he walked on the pitch and was one of the best, if not the best player every game he played.

### **Manager of the Tournament**

Justin Walley (Matabeleland)

[Walley](#) led Matabeleland to an eventual 13th place finish. Though his role goes beyond just managing the team. He made personal sacrifices to take on the job and worked tirelessly to manage the team, meeting with sponsors, taking training and even making sandwiches and doing the dry cleaning.

It was hard work just get the team to London but Walley worked tirelessly to raise the funds to do so. His side clearly appreciated it, going over to celebrate with when [they scored their first goal](#). His side worked hard tactically, being set up well by the Englishmen and would no doubt have learned loads from the experience.



### **Fans of the Tournament**

Szekely Land





This was the hardest award to give. But Szekely Land win the award for support that was passionate and unwavering as the side reached the semi-finals. They were noted for their boastorous noise and also for their colourful pyrotechnic shows, no matter what happened on the pitch.

Keeping with the spirit of the tournament, a large quantity of Szekely Land fans stayed after their [third-place play-off defeat](#) to support their fellow ethnic Hungarians in Karpatalja [in the final](#), where they were just as impressive.



## Goal of the Tournament

Gyorgy Toma (Karpatalja) v Szekely Land, Semi-Final

In the big games, you need your players to perform. 22-year-old Cigand midfielder Toma did just that as he picked up the ball, showed close controlled and weaved past several players and nutmegged Horvat to put Karpatalja 1-0 up in [their semi-final](#). He would later add a second and win a penalty for a third.

## Individual Performance of the Tournament

Firat Ersalan (Northern Cyprus) v Barawa, Quarter-Final

Ersalan was the midfield maestro in Northern Cyprus's crushing [quarter-final win](#) over hosts Barawa. With the game at 0-0, his interception denied Mo Bettamer a sure goal, while his amazing range of passing blew the opposition away. It was his long range pass to Turan which bypassed the Barawa back line that resulted in the first goal and he clocked up a further two assists in that game, one from a pinpoint free-kick.

## Team Performance of the Tournament

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### Karpatalja v Abkhazia, Group Stage

Karpatlaja were still an unknown quantity when they took on [world champions Abkhazia](#) in Enfield.

They took home a clear and deserved win. Abkhazia were poor because they weren't allowed to play well. Karpatalja were fast, energetic and strong. They were confident throughout the game both with and without the ball and punished any sloppiness in the Abkhazia back-line.

This win seemed to give them the confidence they needed to progress and win the final tournament.

### Team of the Tournament





GK - Bela Csongor (Karpatalja / Sepsi)

Csongor who plays in the Romanian top flight made three saves in the penalty shootout to win his side the trophy. He also made fantastic saves throughout the tournament and was crucial in organising his backline. He entertained the crowds, being confident enough to take on and beat attackers.



## Csongor Final Save



RB - Sam Caine (Ellan Vannin / St. Georges)

Despite his [team controversially pulling out](#), the Manx defender was solid in attack and effective and clever going forward, he also scored a fantastic solo goal to start the [tournament against Cascadia](#).

CB - Marinus Stankevicius (Padania / Crema)

The 36-year-old former Lithuania international rolled back the years with impressive displays at the back. Stankevicius showed fine intelligence and ball-reading ability and was excellent at bringing the ball out of defence to start attacks.

CB - Serhan Onet (Northern Cyprus / Cetinkaya)

Onet has been a man mountain at the heart of the Northern Cyprus defence. He did not lose a signal physical battle and was the captain of a side that had clear team spirit and unity.

LB - Yoo Jun Kang (United Koreans in Japan / Monroe Mustangs)

20-year-old [Yoo](#) impressed at left-back both defensively and offensively. At the back, he was composed, strong and good in the air, going forward he was quick and dangerous with his crossing and darting runs.

RM - Maxwell Oldham (Cascadia / Corinthian Casuals)

As stated before, Oldham, was in my opinion, the best player in the tournament. A fine attacking outlet, he will be key to any future Cascadian success.

CM - Gyorgy Toma (Karpatalja / Cigand)

The jewel in Karpatalja's crown. Toma seemed to have the ball glued to his feet and had a good burst of pace, allowing him to score some cracking goals and play a big part in assisting others at crucial moments. He scored his penalty in the final, too.

CM - Istvan Sandor (Karpatalja / Cegledi)

Now, 32, Sandor who plays in the Hungarian second tier was the ticking metronome at the heart of the Karpatalja side. He was calm and composed and dictated games from the centre of the pitch with remarkable intelligence and quantity, aided by amazing stamina.

LM - Ugur Gok (Northern Cyprus / Kaymakali)





27-year-old Gok was lethal down the left side for Northern Cyprus. He worked hard and frightened full-backs with his direct and quick running. He contributed goals and assists when it mattered to help propel his side to the final.

FW - Billy Mehmet (Northern Cyprus / Merit Alsanack Yesinova)

Now, 33, Mehmet still showed he possessed bags of pace, strength, and intelligence. Indeed, it was his lethal partnership with Halil Turan that propelled the Northern Cypriots into the final. Though both cruelly missed decent chances and their penalties, Mehmet's goals were vital in getting them there. He was a real talisman for his side.

FW - Giacomo Innocenti (Padania / Castellazzo)

28-year-old forward Innocenti impressed with his pace, strength and finishing. He was selfless in his play and got his teammates plenty of assists. His close control and intelligence gave his play a class aura that made his performances look effortless. But no doubt about it, Innocenti worked hard all tournament long.

ConIFA's European Championships will be played next summer, likely in either Nice or Nagorno-Karabakh. An Asian tournament may also be launched next year before the next World Football Cup in 2020. With the success of this tournament and 2016's in Abkhazia, which had passionate local support and state backing, spectators are in for a treat.

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