



THE UNSPOKEN LANGUAGE OF FÚTBOL

by: Manucla Salinas

Soccer, or "fútbol" in Spanish, is one of the most unifying and important sports in Hispanic communities worldwide. For the Latin community, soccer means union, life and family. Their hearts beat to the rhythmic echo of the ball because soccer is a form of expression. It is a universal language that breaks barriers and connects generations.

At UCF, Latino students share that feeling so much that they decided to create a space to share their passion for soccer at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year. Guadalupe Molinari, president of the Argentinian Student Association, said that her organization and the Peruvian Student Association started the first Latin Cup at UCF. This cup is a soccer competition where eight Hispanic-registered student organizations compete to share their love for the sport and its culture. "Having created this competition helped us create a family," Molinari said.

For many people, soccer is a tradition that extends across many generations. Molinari said that since she was a child, her family gathered in front of the television to immerse themselves in every minute of an Argentine team's match. Nicolas Levy, a junior industrial engineering major and Venezuelan soccer player, shares that feeling. "I was born in a soccer family," Levy said. He started playing soccer at the age of four with his older brother and said he has not stopped since. "Soccer is a lifestyle," Levy said.

The colors of the team shirts are a symbol of comradery and loyalty. Even the names of players become heroes and role models. In the Latin Cup, passion is present in every play and every scream of celebration. Matheus Agramunt, a senior finance major and vice president of the Brazilian Student Association, said that passion for soccer is one of the main Brazilian characteristics. "Soccer to us is more than just a sport. It is something that we play day and night with love for the game," Agramunt said. "We like to express soccer as if it were art with flicks and tricks on the field."