

FUTSAL FEVER

The futsal scenario in Bangladesh has grown quite a bit in the recent times and people are frequently seen to enjoy this diverged form of football. TMAG's very own **BAIZID HAQUE JOARDER** gets in touch with Ahmed Fahad, one of the founding partners of Enlighten Group. They organise "Shootout" which is a series of futsal and football events. All of them are 10th graders at Scholastica

How did you guys start Enlighten?

What motivated you guys?

In 2010, my friends and I started to play a lot of football. We used to look for opportunities to play against stronger teams. On Saturday nights, we used to watch derby matches on television, as we still do, and wished to play in an atmosphere similar to that on screen. So, the four of us, Adnan Khan, Anisul Islam, Sheikh Iqram Mahtub, and I organised a friendly tournament at a local playground, with only a few teams partaking in it. It seemed like a good bit of fun so we kept on organising more tournaments. In about six months, it seemed like we'd started a trend. We were actually pretty good at getting things done. So we tried out other events like gaming, birthday parties, pretty much any and every offer that came our way. From 2010 till early 2012, we organised about 14 underground football and futsal tournaments, four gaming tournaments, and a few other events. All of which were comparatively small scale events.

In August 2012, we had a monthly meeting in which our whole operation changed. We decided that it's time to step up. We started to concentrate more on event quality, rather than the number of events that we host.

Now, I'm glad we had that meeting

purpose? We make sure the DJ drops a beat every time you score a goal, a cameraman takes pictures capturing you celebrating, a monitor is there to replay the winning moments, and to top it all, who doesn't love free WiFi?

When organising events we don't just make them competitive, we make them interactive and fun.

What events have you organised in the past?

In the Shootout series, we've held four tournaments so far. The first Shootout was at International School Dhaka (ISD) in 2012. We had 24 teams, and about 240 participants. It was a success, and it led us to continue with what we started out to do.

Next was Broomfield Shootout. Broomfield is an Astro Turf ground in Banani. We were the first ones to kickoff a tourney there. This too proved to be a special event, in its own way. There were two seasons at Broomfield.

Then, came Abahani Shootout late August 2013. We had, again, a fair number of teams participating and throughout the series, we've had great responses from the underground football and futsal community. For which, we'd like to thank them all the way.

at our event page (www.facebook.com/725687344110937).

What is futsal? What are the requirements?

Futsal is not that different from football. It is played on a concrete court. An ideal futsal match consists of quick passes, freestyle moves, swift runs, quality goals, and lots of excitement. As to its requirements, they are very basic. A pair of indoor boots, five players per team, and a football is all you need to get your futsal journey started. Once you've got the ball at your feet, the moves come by themselves.

What is the futsal scenario in Bangladesh?

I'd say it's reforming, since there was a phase where it started to dip but now it's back. Currently, there's a huge network of underground futsal players and there's not enough quality tournaments going around. Some typical problems with the smaller tournaments, where the organisers don't have much experience to start off with, could be that they can't live up to what they say to the participants and they don't go by the age limits.

These are things that can give underground futsal a bad image. But overall, I'd conclude by saying that



What is shootout?

Shootout is a series of football and futsal events aimed to equate the beautiful game in Bangladesh. It's one of Enlighten's signature series. The goal (pun intended) is to create a platform for football and futsal lovers and bring out the best in them. We believe that a footballer's stage is his pitch. That is precisely why we look for new, spacious, and interactive venues for each event. We bring to you new, competitive, and of course fun ways to play. We present various individual awards, in order to encourage development among players.

On the day of the event, venues are wired with speakers, cameras, monitors, and of course WiFi. The

What are your plans for the future?

With the grace of Almighty, we're about to host our biggest event so far. Our upcoming event, GYC Shootout, promises to be the event of the year. Here, we're introducing "Panna rules" and "Last man standing." This is a new format, being played for the first time in Bangladesh. The event is set to be held at Gulshan Youth Club on December 28. There will be stalls selling goodies and refreshments on the event day, thanks to our supporting partner Mehedi Mart. The event will be covered by Dhaka Tribune, Daily Star, The Independent, and Plaantik. We've got a lot more up our sleeves this time. I'd like to invite any and every futsal lover to be there at GYC. It'll be worth your time. I can guarantee that much. Take a peek

we're getting there. We're definitely on the right track and we've got lots of talent in underground football, which will hopefully speak for itself, very soon.

Any message to the readers of TMAG?

Do what you're passionate about. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. It's difficult establishing your ideas, but once you've done that, it's an open road. Personally, I love helping start-ups. So, if you have creative and crazy ideas you want to share with the world but don't have the right words to say, I'd be happy to help you. Send me an email at ahmed.fahad.15@gmail.com. I'd like to thank you all for reading. Happy Holidays.



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