



In 1993, a group of men had a vision, it was to have the top 80 soccer players from the State of Nebraska (40 girls and 40 boys) square off in a couple of soccer games. Hence, the Nebraska Shrine Soccer Classic was born. In 1994 the first Soccer Classic was played at Seacrest Field in Lincoln, NE.

The first four years, the Classic was held in Lincoln Nebraska (Sesostris Temple), in 1997 the Classic was moved to Omaha Nebraska (Tangier Temple) where it stayed until 2000, at that time it was moved to Hastings Nebraska (Tahama Temple) which has been the location since 2001. Hastings has been a dream come true for the Shrine Soccer Classic. What a great place for these young athletes to play soccer.

For the first 3- 4 years the players would board a bus and travel all day and night to the hospital in Minneapolis to visit the kids. This was a great experience for the soccer players. Due to the raising cost of travel, this experience had to be eliminated from the program. We now arrange for patients from Nebraska that have been helped by the Shriners Hospital, to not only visit the players, but serve as honorary captains during the games, which has worked very well.

The first four coaches in 1994 were John Walsh (Ralston) Girls South (now at Millard North), Don Klosterman (Millard North) Boys South (now at UNO in Omaha), Don Gilpin (Westside) Girls North, and Todd Wick (Blair) Boys North (now teaching in Blair). These coaches will be the Grand Marshals of the 1st Annual Shrine Soccer Parade held on June 14, 2008 in downtown Hastings NE. starting at 9:00 A.M.

The 14th Annual Shrine Soccer Classic was held at the Osborne Sports Complex on Saturday June 9, 2007. The teams checked in around noon on Thursday, by 2:00 P.M. they were on the practice field. That evening they were treated to BBQ. The teams had an opportunity to inner mix with each other and also autographed soccer balls, which are auctioned off at the Friday evening event. Friday was an intense day for the athletes as the teams practiced twice that day once in the morning and then again in the afternoon. That evening all team members were bused to the Masonic Lodge for the annual banquet. After the spaghetti dinner, everyone moves to the auditorium where the players, coaches and honorary captains were introduced and had an opportunity to say a few words. The autographed soccer balls are auctioned off. The auction is always very successful due to the generosity of the parents and relatives. Saturday, started out with the girl's game at 10:00 A.M. The girl's north squad won 1-0 in a great defensive battle. Cassie Phillips from the south squad was named MVP. The boys took the field at 12:30 p.m., the game was equally exciting, the score ended up 3-2 and that last goal was scored in the last 39 seconds. MVP was Mikah Mather who had 1 goal and 1 assist. The North Girls lead in the series 8-5-1 and the South Boys lead 8-5-1.

We would like to extend a SPECIAL THANKS to Nick Longly as Executive Chairman for the past 5 years. Nick stepped down in October. If it weren't for him the Shrine Soccer Classic wouldn't be what it is today.