

## Registration Open MSSA Goes Forward with 2021 Cup Season

**Hope for the new year.** (21 November) Registration is now open for the 2021 MSSA Cup season. We go into the new year with some uncertainty but will plan to conduct our competitions as we have always, ready to make adjustments as necessary. We will start in January, as soon as authorities allow us to use their fields and look to conclude by March.

MSSA teams may register for any of our cups, including the two long standing competitions, the Rowland and Stewart Cups. The winners advance to USASA Region I qualifiers. The Morton Cup is a state only contest and is only for teams not competing in either the Rowland or Stewart Cups. Teams not affiliated with any of our MSSA member leagues are eligible to enter the Morton Cup as long as they register their players. We also have championships for O-30 & O-40, the winners advancing to Region I action.

The format for the various competitions are not set. Much is dependent upon not only the number of entries but also when we will be able to play on the fields. At this time, we have permits for field usage but as we have seen, things may change. Some competitions will be group play, others as knockouts, all dependent upon the factors given.

We will conduct draws for each cup competition. Matches will be played primarily on Sundays. Teams must enter online through the links below. The deadline to enter the cups is 14 December. The entry fee is \$105 per cup (convenience fee included) and must be paid online. Referee fees for the cups are \$200.00 (\$100.00 per team) and paid at the field by each team.

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### Some Changes for 2021 Rowland Cup to Split into Morton Cup

**Start of cup season anticipated for 17 January.** (5 December) Registration for the 2021 MSSA Cup season continues and has been extended to 4 January. With the current situation concerning closures around the state due to the Covid pandemic, we go into the new year ready to make adjustments as necessary. We will start in January, possibly on the 17th if and when authorities allow us to use their fields. We hope to conclude by March.

For this season, we have decided to bring a new element to the cups. The Rowland Cup, Maryland's oldest championship will serve as the entry point for not only that competition but also for the Morton Cup. A first round will be played where the winners advance in the Rowland Cup, the sides eliminated will then compete for the Morton Cup. The format after the first round will be dependent upon the number of teams participating. Every team is guaranteed two matches under this format. Entry is available to all MSSA registered teams as well as teams not affiliated with MSSA.

The non-affiliated teams will need to register their players with MSSA. The winner of the Rowland Cup will represent the state in the Region I qualifiers for the Werner Fricker Cup.

The Stewart Cup is only available to MSSA affiliated sides as the winners advance to USASA Region I qualifier of the Amateur Cup. The Maryland O-30 & O-40 Cups will be used to qualify for Region I action. Teams will need to register their players who are not already on an MSSA roster.

The format for the various competitions are dependent upon the number of entries and field availability. Some competitions will be group play, others as knockouts, all dependent upon the factors given.

We will conduct draws for each cup competition. Matches will be played primarily on Sundays. Teams must enter online through the links below. The deadline to enter the cups is 28 December. The entry fee is \$105 per cup (convenience fee included) and must be paid online. Referee fees for the cups are \$200.00 (\$100.00 per team) and paid at the field by each team.

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### Registration Complete Enthusiasm for Cups Very High

[Rowland Cup starts it off with special first round.](#) (5 January) Despite the battle the past year with the pandemic and scheduling struggles, there is no doubt that teams want to get out there and compete. We have 16 entries for the Rowland Cup, which after the first round will see half the field continue for that championship while the other half eliminated will battle it out for the Morton Cup. It is an interesting format but one we think will give something extra for the teams this season. The Rowland Cup is Maryland's oldest championship first won by the Sons of St. George in 1914. The winner moves on to represent the state in the Region I qualifiers for the Werner Fricker Cup.

The Stewart Cup has a field of 11 teams looking to lift the cup. It is Maryland's amateur championship with the title holder advancing to USASA Region I qualifier of the Amateur Cup. The Maryland O-30 & O-40 Cups will be used to qualify for Region I action as well. A list of all of the entries can be seen below.

The draws have taken place and the schedules can be found at the tabs above. It starts with the first round/playoff for the Rowland & Morton Cups on 17 January.

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### Off to a Good Start Fields Set for Rowland & Morton Cups

[Rowland Cup enters its 107th year.](#) (18 January) We played a special match day with 16 sides competing to determine where they will be placed for this cup season. The first round/playoff of the Rowland Cup saw the winners advance while those

eliminated will compete for the Morton Cup. Both competitions move into group play that will take place over the next several weekends.

The Rowland Cup, Maryland's oldest championship first played in 1914, has defending champion Christos FC paired with the Baltimore Kickers, Columbia FC and Maryland Internationals Athletics FC in its group. The other bracket has last season's Morton Cup winner All Stars United along with Colombia FC, Steel Pulse FC and Yinz United. The top two in each group advance to the semifinals. The winner moves on to represent the state in the Region I qualifiers for the Werner Fricker Cup.

The Morton Cup enters its ninth season of competition. Group A includes DC Flames, Deportivo Club de Districtonia, Dream Team FC and Frederick Spires FC. In Group B we have Columbia FC 2, JA Raiders, Motorik FC Alexandria and TrendSetters FC.

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### Match Day 1

#### Rowland & Morton Cups in Group Play

**Stewart Cup is around the corner.** (22 January) After determining the placement of teams into the two competitions, we completed the first date of group fixtures this past Sunday. After two more rounds, the top two in each group advance to the semifinals of the respective cups.

Steel Pulse FC and Yinz United were victorious to take the lead in Group A in the Rowland Cup. Steel Pulse beat Colombia FC 3:1 while Yinz got a goal from Chris Fanet with less than ten minutes left to squeeze by All Stars United. In Group B, Christos FC crushed Maryland Internationals Athletics FC 7:1 as Columbia FC shutout the Baltimore Kickers 5:0.

The Morton Cup saw Group A with two winners. Deportivo Club de Districtonia defeated DC Flames 4:2 and Dream Team FC making it 2:1 against Frederick Spires FC. Motorik FC Alexandria starts off in sole command of Group B after a 3:1 triumph over TrendSetters FC as Columbia FC 2 and JA Raiders finished with a 2:2 draw.

This Sunday, each cup will have its second match day and then we turn to the Stewart Cup the following weekend. Three first round matches will determine who advances to the quarterfinals of Maryland's amateur championship.

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### Snowed Out

#### Expected Storm Postpones Rowland & Morton Cups

**Stewart Cup to start next week with first round.** (30 January) The forecasts call for significant snow and bad weather overnight, therefore, the fixtures for Sunday, 31 January have been put on hold. Those games will likely be rescheduled for 28 February as we continue with our scheduled program in the next few weeks.

The Stewart Cup will get played next week with three first round matches to determine who will be among the final eight of Maryland's amateur championship. We then return to the scheduled Match Day 3 of the Rowland & Morton Cups on the following weekend.

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### **Snowed Out Again** **Fields Shut Down for Stewart Cup**

[Back to the drawing board as we reschedule the first round.](#) (7 February) The unpredictable Mid-Atlantic winter dropped snow again in the area today after a few days of good weather. Unfortunately, the County officials have closed the fields, thus postponing today's round for the Stewart Cup. We will have a makeup schedule and post it when set.

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### **Schedule Change** **Forecast Not Looking Good**

[Matches scheduled for 11:00 moved to 3:00.](#) (12 February) The forecast for this weekend is questionable. To give more time to make a call and hope that fields are cleared, the matches for this Sunday originally scheduled for 11:00 have been moved to 3:00. Those that were scheduled for 1:00 remain the same. If the weather cancels us out once more, we will post that information here and on Twitter. Managers will receive an email.

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### **Shut Down Again** **Winter Weather Shows Us Little Heart**

[Matches called off due to field closure.](#) (14 February) Not the day to be heart broken but there is too much ice on the fields. The County has them closed. We will work on the reschedule and post it once complete.

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### **Weather Does Us In Again** **Pitches Resemble Ice Rinks**

[The weather does not want to give us a break.](#) (21 February) The fields are frozen over with ice. Too cold to make them playable. So we have another delay and go back to resetting the schedules.

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### **Back to the Drawing Board** **Revised Schedule Posted**

[After several delays, let's end February on a good note.](#) (22 February) We worked out some new field permits and have a hefty schedule going into March. But we will close out the month with group play in both the Rowland & Morton Cups.

The Rowland will feature Yinz United against Colombia FC followed by the Baltimore Kickers taking on Christos FC at Cedar Lane Park. Over at Blandair Park, Columbia FC faces Maryland Internationals Athletic FC with All Stars United and Steel Pulse FC rounding out the doubleheader.

The settings for the Morton has Motorik FC Alexandria hosting the JA Raiders as the TrendSetters FC finish the day against Columbia FC 2 at Blandair. Deportivo Club de Districtonia starts things off at Cedar Lane Park in their match against Dream Team FC while DC Flames kicks off against Fredrick Soires FC.

Group play in both competitions conclude on 14 March. At this point, semifinals are tentatively in the plans but are dependent upon field availability and scheduling considerations. For the first weekend of March, we look to start the Stewart Cup to determine Maryland's Amateur Champion.

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**Finally!**  
**Weather Gives Us a Break**  
**(Well Sort of)**

**Round 2 of Group Play for Rowland & Morton Cups make the books.** (1 March) It was wet. It was cold. But it did not snow and there was no ice. Finally, we got a round of cup games played, group matches in the Rowland & Morton Cups. Next, we start off the Stewart Cup.

The four finalists for the Rowland Cup are set with Yinz United and Steel Pulse FC facing off to determine first in Group A while Christos FC and Columbia FC doing the same in Group B. Yinz crushed Colombia FC 13:2 while Steel Pulse shutout All Stars United 2:0. In the other bracket, Christos demolished the Baltimore Kickers 11:1 and Columbia gave a beating 5:0 against Maryland International Athletic FC. The semifinals will see the group winners against the runner-ups to determine who joins Christos in the Region I qualifiers of the Werner Fricker Cup. Christos earned their place by winning the Rowland Cup last season. Due to Covid, the Region qualifiers were not played.

The picture is not as clear in the Morton with only Motorik FC Alexandria and Dream Team FC securing places in the semifinals. Motorik is in command of Group B after a 6:3 victory over the JA Raiders. Dream Team has picked up all 6 of its points so far to take the Group A lead. Frederick Spires FC and Deportivo Club de Districtonia battle it out for the remaining spot in Group A while Columbia FC 2 needs only a draw against Motorik to advance to the semifinals.

Group play in both competitions conclude on 14 March. This Sunday, we turn to the Stewart Cup to be played at Montgomery Blair High School. It starts off with a quarterfinal pairing between All Stars United and Maryland International at 11:00. Then we have first round actions with a Columbia/Colombia derby of sorts, Motorik

and Capital City FC followed by the Kickers against the Raiders. The Stewart winner advances to the Amateur Cup along with last year's winner Christos.

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## **March Madness Gets Off on a Roll** **Stewart Cup First Round Complete**

**Next we finish group play in Rowland & Morton Cups.** (8 March) The weather was more than cooperative this time, sunny with a slight breeze. It gave us a good afternoon and evening to play three first round matches of the Stewart Cup, Maryland's Amateur Championship that started in 1932. This year's version has eleven sides battling it out to see who will join Christos FC in representing the state in the USASA Region I qualifiers of the Amateur Cup. Christos won the competition last season but due to Covid, the Region qualifiers were cancelled.

The first match we termed as the Columbia/Colombia derby that saw the Maryland city side rout the national one 10:2. It places Columbia FC into the quarterfinals against Steel Pulse FC. Motorik FC Alexandria and Capital City FC followed with a nil-nil draw, settled by 6 rounds of penalties in favor of Motorik, 5:4. They face defending champion Christos FC next. The final match was a Maryland Old Bays Classic as the two oldest clubs in the state fought for the last quarterfinal spot. The Baltimore Kickers ran past JA Raiders 6:1 to set up their counter against Yinz United. The quarterfinals are set for 21 March.

This weekend, we finish group play in both the Rowland and Morton Cups. The four finalists are set in the Rowland but the seedings still need to be determined for the semifinals. Group A has Yinz United facing Steel Pulse FC and Group B sees Christos FC against Columbia FC. There is still more to play in the Morton with Dream Team FC locking first in Group A while Motorik FC Alexandria has secured a semifinal spot. A draw against Columbia FC 2 will give Motorik the group and also push forward Columbia to the playoffs. JA Raiders need a victory and a Columbia loss to see which of the two advances. The two played to a 2:2 draw earlier in the competition. The match between Frederick Spires FC and Deportivo Club de Districtonia will determine the other Group A semifinalist with the Spires in advantage on goal differential. Deportivo needs to win to go through. The semifinals will take place on 16 & 17 March at Troy Park.

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## **Group Play Complete** **Rowland & Morton at Semifinal Stage**

**Stewart quarterfinals this coming Sunday.** (15 March) We finished the group stage of the Rowland and Morton Cups. It started in January with 16 teams battling for places in the first round of the Rowland Cup. The sides eliminated moved onto the Morton Cup, the winners remained in the Rowland. Both championships then went into group play that got delayed by the weather.

The four finalists were already set in the Rowland with the final match day determining seedings for the semifinals. Group A featured Yinz United and Steel Pulse FC that saw Steel Pulse hang on to a 3:2 victory. They will play on 23 March against Group B runner-up Columbia FC. Yinz gets defending champions Christos FC on the 24th, who took Group B with a 5:1 victory over Columbia.

There was more than seeding at stake in the Morton Cup. against Columbia FC. Dream Team FC had already secured first in Group A and finished undefeated beating DC Flames 8:2. The match between Frederick Spires FC and Deportivo Club de Districtonia determined the second spot with the Spires shutting out their rivals 8:0. That gave them a date against Group B winner Motorik FC Alexandria for this Tuesday, 16 March at Troy Park. The second semifinal will be on Wednesday, 17 March at Troy Park between Dream Team and Columbia FC 2. The Columbia side lost to Motorik 3:0 but the 6:6 draw between JA Raiders and TrendSetters FC left them in second.

On Sunday, we have the quarterfinals of the Stewart Cup. Columbia FC meets Steel Pulse FC, Motorik FC Alexandria faces Christos FC and the Baltimore Kickers play Yinz United. The Stewart Cup is Maryland's Amateur Championship with teams qualifying for the US Amateur Cup. We also have a Maryland Over-30 Cup quarterfinal match between Maryland United and Colombia FC.

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## Morton Final Set Dream Team & Frederick Spires Final Two

[March Madness has us winding down with Stewart next on plate.](#) (18 March) This season we took an interesting twist with Rowland and Morton Cups. The Rowland is Maryland's oldest competition, the state's Open Championship of which the winner advances to USASA Region I qualifiers of the Werner Fricker Cup. The Morton was established in 2013 in recognition of Darwin "Lefty" Morton who was a former officer of the MSSA with decades of service to the game. It was organized for teams not at the level or interest to play at the Region rounds. For 2021, we had all teams enter into the Rowland Cup with 16 sides placed into a first round. The winners continued in the Rowland Cup while those eliminated competed for the Morton Cup.

Last night, the Morton got paired to the final two. On Tuesday, Group B winner Motorik FC Alexandria was upset by the Frederick Spires FC 2:1. Wednesday evening Dream Team FC kept their perfect record in the contest as it shutout Colombia FC 2 1:0. Dream Team and Frederick will meet on 11 April to determine the next champion of this state competition.

It is now onto the quarterfinals of the Stewart Cup. This has been played as a single elimination competition that will see defending champion Christos FC take on Motorik FC Alexandria, Steel Pulse FC against Columbia FC and Yinz United battling the Baltimore Kickers. The Stewart winner is crowned Maryland's Amateur champion and qualifies for the US Amateur Cup. Along with these quarterfinals, Maryland United and Colombia FC will play for a semifinal spot in the Maryland Over-30 Cup.

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## Stewart Down to Four Rowland Semifinals Next

**Cups winding down as we get closer to the finals.** (22 March) Another full Sunday put us nearer to our end goal as we now have all of our cup competitions down to at least the last four places. The quarterfinal matches were played in both the Stewart & Maryland Over-30 Cups as we get caught up after a snow delayed February.

The Stewart Cup is a knockout competition that advances teams to the National Amateur Cup. Christos FC reserved a place winning Maryland's Amateur Championship last season but with USASA Region I allowing two entries per state, one more side will push through. Among them are All Stars United who will face Yinz United. Yinz took out the Baltimore Kickers 7:1. The other semifinals has Steel Pulse FC that shutout Columbia FC 4:0 against Christos with a big 9:1 victory over Motorik FC Alexandria. The semifinals will take place next Sunday at Laytonia Recreational Park in Gaithersburg.

Maryland United booked a spot in the Maryland Over-30 final four after edging Columbia FC 3:2. They will meet will meet Fighting BOB's/Yinz Legends. The other semifinal has Christos and the Kickers. All also next Sunday at Laytonia.

We have two midweek fixtures as we pair down the Rowland Cup. On Tuesday evening at Cedar Lane Park Steel Pulse replay their Stewart battle against Columbia. Wednesday has Christos and Yinz at Troy Hill Park. The Rowland advances teams to the Werner Fricker Cup.

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## April Finals State Champions to be Crowned

**Eight sides heading to USASA Region I qualifiers.** (6 April) The weather delays in February set us back a bit but we were able to make it a March madness and pair all of our competitions to the final two. Along with our Maryland finals, eight of our teams start of on a venture to Region I qualifiers in four different cups.

The first of our finals will be tomorrow evening for the Maryland Over-30 Cup between Christos FC and Fighting BOBs/Yinz Legends 030. Christos edged the Baltimore Kickers 3:2 while the Fighting Yinz combination wore down Maryland United 6:1. The final will take place 8:15 at Troy Park #2 in Elkridge. Both sides will take part in the Region I qualifiers for the Gerhard Mengel Cup. Fighting BOBs/Yinz Legend travel to New Jersey to face Ironbound Alumni in the first round.

On Sunday, we have the Morton/Rowland doubleheader. The cup season started in January with a first round of 16 teams to determine who would advance in the Rowland Cup, Maryland's oldest competition, and who would compete in the Morton Cup. After three rounds of group play followed by semifinals, we have our two sets of

finalists. At 5:00, Dream Team FC meet up against Frederick Spires FC in search of lifting the Morton Cup. That will be followed by the Rowland final between Christos and Columbia FC at 7:00. While the Morton is a state only event, the two Rowland finalists will play in the Region I qualifiers of the Werner Fricker Cup.

Next week the Maryland Over-40 Cup final will feature Christos against the Baltimore Kickers, who last week shut out Colombia FC 5:0 in the lone semifinal. These two will play in the Region qualifiers for the National Over-40 Cup. We end the month with the Stewart Cup, Maryland's Amateur Championship. A common theme in these finals, Christos will be fighting for a fourth title when they take on All Star United. Both are in the Amateur Cup with All Star traveling to Pittsburgh to take on Steel FC.

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### Three Finals Done - Two to Go 2021 Cup Season Coming to a Close

[Maryland Over-40 trophy next piece of hardware to give out.](#) (12 April) We completed three of our finals this past week with two new champions making the Maryland record books. We have one more to play this week with the Maryland Over-40 Cup and the last final at the end of the month for the Stewart Cup. A few of our teams took part Region I qualifiers and a few more will play this weekend.

The Maryland Over-30 Cup kicked off our group of finals as Christos FC returned as champions after three years with a 4:0 defeat of Fighting BOBs/Yinz Legends O30. Joe Mangione's 22nd minute goal turned out to be the game winner as Jon Ports, Cesar Ramos and Matteo Vertucci guaranteed the trophy with second half goals. This made it the 8th time Christos lifted the Maryland Over-30 Cup.

Sunday featured a final doubleheader at Marriotts Ridge High School in what turned out to be two entertaining conclusions. The Morton Cup field consisted of the eight teams that were eliminated in the first round of the Rowland Cup. Three rounds of group play, two semifinals, the remaining two sides were Dream Team FC and Frederick Spires FC. The Spires jumped took the lead before the half and doubled it in the second. Dream Team made an inspiring comeback, tying it before putting away the game winner with less than 5 minutes in the match. This was the 9th edition of the Morton Cup, named after Darwin "Lefty" Morton, with Dream Team becoming the 8th champion.

The Rowland Cup is familiar territory for Christos FC who first lifted the trophy in 2000. It is Maryland's Open Championship and one of the oldest running competitions in the country, first established in 1914. In a tough battle between Christos and Columbia FC where neither side was giving an inch, Jamie Merriam gave Christos the lead right before the half from an assist from Jake Bender. A penalty call in the 65th surely would have guaranteed Christos their 7th Rowland title but keeper Johnny Paletar came up with a big save. Ten minutes later, Jeremy Shugars put in a thundering header from a corner kick from Taylor Gray to draw it even. The match went into penalty rounds with Columbia starting off and making good on all five of

their kicks to become Maryland's newest Rowland Cup champion. Both teams will enter the USASA Region I qualifiers of the Werner Fricker Cup with Columbia hosting Clifton Elite of New Jersey at Western Regional at 4:00 Sunday. Christos heads out to Warminster, Pennsylvania to meet their NESL foe Vereinigung Erzgebirge.

Next in line is the Maryland Over-40 Cup final between Christos and the Baltimore Kickers at Marriotts Ridge High School Wednesday evening, 7:45. Both will play in the Region qualifiers for the National Over-40 Cup in what turn out to be a Mason-Dixon derby against Eastern Pennsylvania foes. The Kickers travel Sunday to Fort Washington, Pennsylvania to face West Chester United. Christos will host Vereinigung Erzgebirge at Western Regional at 2:00.

Along with several Region I qualifiers, we conclude our Maryland season with the Stewart Cup on 25 April. Christos and All Star United will battle it out for Maryland's Amateur Championship.

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### Only the Stewart Left Christos Wins Over-40

**Mixed results in Region I play for our Maryland sides.** (19 April) It has been a long and trying cup season but we finally come to a conclusion this Sunday with Maryland's second longest competition, the Stewart Cup. It is the state's Amateur Championship first established in 1932. Earlier in the week we played our Over-40 final and some of our teams took part in USASA Region I qualifiers over the past weekend.

It was Christos FC and the Baltimore Kickers Wednesday night to determine the winner of the Maryland Over-40 Cup. This was the third edition of the championship as the Covid shutdown hit us before we could get any games played last season. Christos has been the sole cup holder of the competition and it looked as if the Kickers would put an end to that with a goal in the first half and a quick strike early in the second. But Christos woke up and put away four unanswered goals to lift the cup for a third time. Both sides took the pitch Sunday in the Region I qualifier for the National Over-40 Cup. Christos handled Eastern Pennsylvania rival Vereinigung Erzgebirge with a 2:0 shutout at home. The Kickers did not fare so well on their trip up north losing 8:1 to West Chester United. Christos will next host Jaguars FC of New Jersey on 2 May in the Region quarterfinals.

Christos looks to make it six straight Stewart Cup titles as it takes on All Star United Sunday evening at Western Regional Park. It will be their fourth championship match for this season, lifting the trophy in the Maryland Over-30 & Over-40 Cups and missing out on PK's in the Rowland Cup. All Star is seeking its second straight Maryland silverware as it lifted the Morton Cup last season. The match is scheduled for 5:00.

Our two Rowland Cup finalists were involved in Region qualifier for the Werner Fricker Cup, the Amateur Open championship. Columbia FC were edged out 2:1 in a difficult battle against Clifton Elite of New Jersey. Christos made good on their trip to

Warminster, Pennsylvania to hold on to a 1:0 victory over Vereinigung Erzgebirge. They will travel to New Jersey on 9 May to match up against Clifton.

Only one Region match this weekend as Christos head up to Eastern Pennsylvania to play Phoenix SC in the Gerhard Mengel Cup.

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## Christos Lift Third Title to Conclude Cup Season Take Stewart for 6th Straight Year

**Christos 0-30 reach the Region I semifinals of the Gerhard Mengel Cup.** (26 April) After a year in which the pandemic shut down our cup program at the midway point and a weekly dose of Sunday morning snowfall that pretty much shut down play in February, it was with great satisfaction to finish the cup season even at this late in the season. As always, a yeoman effort by our Cup Director Fran McGrath and thanks to Nigel Fullerton for assisting him each Sunday. Most of all, we could not put together our cup program without the work of our team managers and coaches along with the referees assigned by John Henderson to provide this competitive atmosphere for the players. We think Maryland has the best cup program in the country and it is due to all who take part in it.

We finished the cup season with Maryland's Amateur Championship, the Stewart Cup, the state's second longest running competition. The final featured Christos FC, who had won the title for five years running against the 2020 Morton Cup champion All Star United. Jacob Benter put away Keegan Kelly's pass in the fourth minute and Christos never looked back as it coasted to a 4:0 shutout. Bender then assisted Demetrius Shepard-Lewis to double the lead in the first half and then hooked up again with Kelly in the second half for his brace. Taofik Lucas-Walker put it out of reach near the end of the match as Christos held on to the Stewart Cup for a sixth straight year.

The Over-30 side took a drive to Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania in its Gerhard Mengel Cup match up against Phoenix SC. Christos did not get off to a good start, falling behind 2:0 but then struck twice quickly to send the match into extra time. Again, two fast goals gave them the advantage before Phoenix cut it to 4:3 for the final result. Tommy Quaranta earned a brace while John Ports Aaron Rilling (match winner) added their tallies. Christos will host Ironbound Alumni of New Jersey on 16 May in the Region I semifinal.

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## Christos Brings Home Region Title Adds Another Gerhard Mengel Cup to its Trophy Shelf

**Will next seek national title at the Championship of Regions.** (25 June) The Christos FC Over-30 side returned to familiar grounds, the Ukrainian Americans Sports Center in Horsham, Pennsylvania to face the NY Pancyprian Freedoms of Eastern New York in the final of the Gerhard Mengel Cup. The Freedoms were the current cup holders defeating the Maryland Bays in extra time at the Region I finals in 2019. The title

match featured two historic clubs with plenty of bragging rights for the trophies they collected over the years.

Christos got off to an early start when Alex Lee set up Jon Ports for the goal. Ports doubled the lead from an assist from Zack Bowman. The Pancyprian cut the deficit by one and the two sides went into the half with the Maryland team leading 2:1. In the second half, Glenn Leitch found Karou Forbes to give Christos a two goal advantage only for the Freedoms to respond and make it 3:2. Ports iced the match when he assisted Dan Lader to close it at 4:2. Christos will now head out to Michigan in August for the Championship of Regions as they look to keep the national title in Maryland while seeking their fourth title in the competition. The Bays took the Gerhard Mengel Cup in 2019 at the Championship of Regions.

Christos along with several other Maryland sides represented the state in other cup competitions during the Region qualifiers. In the Amateur Cup, Christos lost to Vereinigung Erzgebirge 1:0 in extra time in the quarterfinal round. All Star United was defeated by Steel FC in the 1st round. In the Werner Fricker Cup, Region finalist Clifton Elite FC eliminated first Columbia FC and then Christos in the quarterfinals. In the Gerhard Mengel Cup, Fighting BOBs/Yinz Legend were eliminated by Ironbound Alumni who were stopped by Christos in the semifinal 6:1. The Baltimore Kickers were sent home by West Chester United in the first round of the Over-40 Cup while Christos made it to the semifinals to be edged out by the Renegades. Christos also sent a team to the Region's U-23 Championship for the Gus Xikis Trophy where it was ended by eventual champion LISFL United in the semifinals.