



■ Standards FC captain Deon Cloete slips past his marker.



■ Imtiyaas Barodien from Beacon Spurs gets fouled by Leeston Michaals from Holy Cross FC.



PICTURES: FUAD ESACK

■ Kevin Brown from Standards FC, left, goes in for a challenge against Jade Sacks from Norway Parks.

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Tournament gets tougher every year, says organiser

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Sunday was also quick to note that they came up against a well organised Southampton side in the semis.

"We did well under the circumstances with the players giving their all.

"However, they got burnt out as the tournament progressed," he said.

"In fact, we suffered a serious setback when two of our players got red-carded in the game before the semi-final, which meant we went to that match with only 13 players.

"We wanted to win it badly but Southampton proved to be quicker on the ball," he said.

Despite going down in the semis for the second successive year, Sunday said they have learnt valuable lessons from the competition.

"We did our best despite the odds. We also realised that our endurance levels, compared to other teams, were not where they should be.

"We competed against stronger teams, which means we need to equip our players to deal with that kind of opposition," he said.

"On the other hand, we competed with a weakened squad due to injuries and suspensions and that means we need to a bigger pool to draw from so that, when a tournament like this comes around, we bring in an 18-player-strong team that can beat anyone," he said.

● In other action, Leeds Lentegeur bowed out in the last 16 after losing 2-1 to Avendale Athletico while Standards won the plate section, thanks to a 3-1 win

over Stephanian Ottery.

The shield went to Beacon Spurs who beat Woodlands United 3-2 on penalties following a goalless draw.

In its fourth year, the tournament saw 36 teams battling it out over three days at Portland Sports field and Don't Mess With Texas went on to win the competition after beating Southampton 3-2 on penalties, in the final.

Chairman of the tournament's organising committee, Noel Taylor, said the response from clubs before, during and after the tournament was overwhelming.

"We have already received great feedback from a couple of clubs thanking us for hosting this successful event," he said on Monday, the day after the final was played.

"With the build-up when we started on Friday, I noticed that it was going to be difficult to determine the end results as the standard was very high.

"With the tournament growing, it became more competitive, clubs became stronger and, according to our stats, there were not many goals scored, which resulted in most matches being decided on penalties," he said.

Taylor also noted that there were a number of challenges, in the process, too.

He said moving to an alternative venue and working on improving the standard of refereeing are among the things they have noted.

"Overall it was a great soccer weekend and with only one injury recorded and was dealt with in a very professional manner.

"I thank the whole of Fulham Tournament committee for a job well done," he said.

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