

## Soccer fever takes over Alliston as FIFA Team Panama starts training camp

Written By Brian Lockhart

It was an opportunity to see a world-class soccer team in action as the Panama National Soccer team started training at the Nottawasaga Resort & Conference Centre on June 8.

The team will train at the resort until June 25 in preparation for the FIFA World Cup.

Local residents had the opportunity to watch a training session as part of a New Tecumseth Community Event on Thursday, June 11.

The team took to the resort's main soccer pitch for a training centre, with a little pre-practice fanfare as New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross welcomed the team to town.

The Mayor referred to the experience of having a world-class team as "something we won't see again in our lifetime."

Hundreds of local residents turned out to see the team in action and enjoyed watching the skill on the soccer pitch.

The Nottawasaga Resort recently regraded and re-sodded the soccer pitch to meet FIFA standards. A FIFA representative inspected the pitch to ensure it met the governing body's standards.

This includes the type of sod and the pitch grade.

Before training camp, the team held a press conference.

When asked how they were enjoying staying in Alliston, Team Panama goalie Cesar Samudio said he appreciated the resort's natural surroundings.

Through an interpreter, he said he was a big fan of nature and had spent time walking around the resort, where he enjoyed the scenery and the lake.

He also said he was sure the team would play well in the tournament.

The team has some early-morning training sessions and others that start later in the day.

Excitement around town has been growing since it was announced that the team would be staying locally, and now that they are here, many young fans who are also soccer players turned out to watch the session.