

---

Mad about football in Cuba

24/06/2014



The news might not have made a splash in the sports press but Inter Campus, who have now been operating in Cuba for 10 years, are happy to announce it.

In Cuba, a country in which it seemed nothing could overtake Pelota, football has become one of the most popular sports among the younger generations. Some of this success is down to Inter Campus, who landed in Las Tunas on the east of the island in 2004. The United Nations recommended it as a good starting point in that it was the poorest and most isolated province in the country. Inter Campus has enjoyed success thanks to its constant work on the pitch with the 240 children who are involved every year in the project.

The team also runs technical and educational refresher courses at all the sites, which - apart from Las Tunas - are located in Holguin, Granma and Havana. Our photographer Franco Origlia attended Inter Campus' last visit to the country. Besides his wonderful pictures, he told us how street football - which is played on every corner and on makeshift pitches - is now many people's main hobby. "When we arrived in Havana with Inter Campus in 2004 and I met my friend Rodolfo Garcia, a famous commentator on Cuban television, he told me that we were crazy, that football wasn't important in Cuba and that no one even knew the laws.

"Upon my return 10 years later, I see Rodolfo again and, on the eve of the World Cup, he tells me that 'Here people go crazy for football.'

"I've seen kids play on the Malecón all day and others in Holguin during a storm on a pitch in

between an empty basketball court and baseball field. I've seen great enthusiasm and interest from the coaches at the FA. At first they were a bit wary of us but now they thank us for our foresight and our efforts in a tricky period. We were like pioneers. When you look back, perhaps we weren't all that crazy."

---