

AMERICAN FOOTBALL IN COSTA RICA

History In The Making

Chapter I:

Late XXth Century American Football (1996-2000) - **THE MUD ERA**

American Football in Costa Rica was initiated by enthusiasts inspired from watching NFL on TV.

The early players came from bi-lingual private high schools in the central valley of San Jose. Unknowingly at that time, they were creating the basics for American Football in Costa Rica to continue into the 21st century (2009-2012).

Many well-known players from the Costa Rican Federation of American Football - FCFA (2009-2010) and the American Football Federation of Costa Rica - FEFACR (2011-present) played in both leagues. The players who began playing in the 1990's, when the sport was played on mud or dust fields, without pads (full tackle, skin) and in the raw, played both offensive and defensive sides.

Below is a list to the best of my recollection of the original American Football players in Costa Rica.

THE MUD MEN

BULLDOGS:

Alejandro Cruz (2009-2010) retired
Alejandro Castro (2009-2011) retired
Warner Johnson (2010-2012) active
Toby Fields (2010-2011-2012) retired

TOROS:

Mauricio Muñoz (2009) inactive/retired
Fabio Mena (2009-2010) inactive
Scott Doherty (2009-2012) active
Charlton Ortega (2009-2010-2011 Tiburones, 2012 Toros) active
Victor Salazar (2012) defensive coordinator/active

RAPTORS:

Anthony Torres (2011 Tiburones, 2012 Raptors) active

RHYNOS:

Randal Pérez (2011) inactive

Alessey Gallion is an active player with the Sharks, Panama, Panamanian American Football League - L.I.F.A.P.

Approximately between the years of 1996-2004, players played in La Sabana (Central Park of San Jose).

During this transformational period players came and went, but these original men were the core group that eventually formed the 1st 'organized' National Team of American Football in Costa Rica. This team played the 1st formal game in Costa Rica against Panama in the Ricardo Saprissa Stadium on Saturday, July 29, 2000. Costa Rica won! (8-6)

A full page article in the newspaper LA NACION documented this historic sporting event, written by none other than one of the most distinguished sports writers of Costa Rica, Mr. Paco Vargas.

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Chapter II:

XXIst Century American Football (2000-2008) - **THE MODERN ERA**

A.

Post Game (2000-2004)

During these years informal organized games were played every Sunday in La Sabana during the NFL game season.

B.

Dormant Years (2005-2008)

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Chapter III:

XXIst Century American Football (2008-present) - **THE PRESENT ERA**

It wasn't until 2008 when the 1st original teams emerged and played the 1st game season with the FCFA league in 2009.

One of the original teams, the Black Gators, played the 2009 game season. Then, in the off season of 2009, the team name was to be changed to the Jaguars, but this never happened. Entering into the 2010 game season the Black Gators became the Mustangs. After the 2010 game season ended the Mustangs folded. The Scorpions team, which was not formally active, combined players from the former Mustangs team to evolve into the Rhynos team in 2011.

A.

FCFA - 2009

Teams: Bulldogs, Toros, Tiburones, Black Gators, Dragons
Teams played fully organized games with full gear at Centro de Recreación in San Rafael, Alajuela.

Super Bowl of Costa Rica I - Toros vs. Tiburones (23-10)

FCFA - 2010

Teams: Bulldogs, Toros, Tiburones, Mustangs, Raptors, Dragons
Teams played fully organized games with full gear at a Municipal Stadium in Tibás.
Super Bowl of Costa Rica II - Bulldogs vs. Toros (39-36) 3OT

FCFA became inactive after the 2010 game season except for organizing the 1st Tropic Bowl of Costa Rica. The All*Stars from Costa Rica played against Panama in June, 2011.

B.

The 'official' American Football Federation of Costa Rica - FEFACR achieved recognition by induction into the Costa Rican Institute of Sports & Recreation - ICODER and played its 1st National Championship calendar season in 2011.

FEFACR - 2011

Teams: Bulldogs, Toros, Tiburones, Raptors, Rhynos, Dragons
Teams played fully organized games with full gear at Rio Oro Municipal Stadium in Santa Ana.
Super Bowl of Costa Rica III - Bulldogs vs. Toros (35-14)

FEFACR formed the 1st 'official' Costa Rican National Team of American Football and played its 1st tournament against El Salvador and a U.S.A. team.

FEFACR - 2012

Teams: Bulldogs, Toros, Raptors, Rhynos, Dragons
Teams played fully organized games with full equipment at Jorge Cuty Monge Stadium, Desamparados, San Jose.
Super Bowl of Costa Rica IV – Bulldogs vs. Toros (30-07)

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Chapter IV:

XXIst Century American Football (May 2012-onward) - **THE FUTURE ERA**

Super Bowl of Costa Rica attendance has shown a steady annual increase of approximately 25%.

Throughout the years there has been a steady increase of high school Flag Football programs. There are 10 official high school Flag Football teams to date.

Since 2009, Costa Rica has played against teams from Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador and the U.S.A. The league is looking forward to global expansion, having achieved

recognition with the recent induction of the National Team of Costa Rica into the International Federation of American Football - IFAF.

Recollection:

Looking back on the history of the sport in Costa Rica, one may take notice that players played, coaches coached and referees refereed, all for the LOVE OF THE SPORT and continue to do so today.

This is a short historical compilation of American Football in Costa Rica from what I have seen and what I have been a part of since 1996.

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