

How Dr. Kenneth Cooper helped train the Brazilian soccer team to World Cup Victory

Dr. Kenneth Cooper helped train the 1970 Brazilian soccer team starring Pelé, which won the World Cup, and the 12-Minute Cooper Test he developed to measure fitness became a global standard.

1968-1970

After hearing Dr. Cooper speak at the 1968 Conseil International du Sport Militaire (CISM) in Fontainebleau, France, Brazilian soccer fitness coach Claudio Coutinho, enlisted Dr. Cooper to create an aerobic training program for Brazil's players.



Dr. Cooper worked with Brazil's team showing their performance would improve in three areas:

1. Play better in the second half of each game due to improved endurance
2. Reduce injuries, most of which occur when athletes are fatigued
3. Aerobic fitness would prolong their professional careers

The players logged 20 miles per week running, at about a seven-minute pace.

They racked up six consecutive wins to reach the final against Italy, the defending champions, who were thought to be unstoppable. The teams were tied at the half, but Brazil surged ahead to win 4-1 dominating the second half to become the 1970 World Cup champion. The magic of that team is legendary and overnight Dr. Cooper became an icon in Brazil.



Even today there are signs on Brazilian streets and promenades that mark distances for the Cooper Test. Brazilians called this "doing the Cooper," and for them, the test was synonymous with a regular workout.



For many years, the international governing body of the sport of soccer, FIFA (The Fédération Internationale de Football Association, which is French for "International Association Football Federation"), required official referees to run 2,800 meters (1.75 miles) and linesman 2,400 meters (1.5 miles) in twelve minutes to participate in international competition.

1994 World Cup

In preparation for the 1994 World Cup, FIFA sent referees to Cooper Aerobics Center for testing and training. The center later hosted 55 referees and linemen as their home base during the tournament.

You Think It's Hard to Play Soccer? Just Try Becoming a World Cup Referee

By Eric S. Norton
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

With drops of sweat sliding down his face, Luc Matthys pants across the finish line, having completed four sprints and one 1.7-mile run in his bid to participate in the upcoming World Cup championship.

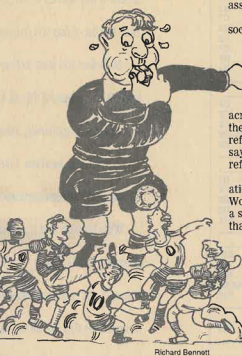
It's a grueling workout considering he doesn't even play soccer.

Instead, the 42-year-old from Belgium is gunning for a spot on the officiating crew for the sport's premier event, which begins tomorrow. And this time around, landing one of the 46 coveted positions proved nearly as tough as making one of the national teams.

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association, the sport's governing body, spent three years scouring the world's soccer fields, scrutinizing a pool of 80 candidates. The federation videotaped the contenders and then, with the help of a computer, plotted the referees' paths to see how well they kept up with movement of the soccer ball.

The pool, narrowed to 55, was invited to a seminar at the Cooper Aerobics Center, a sprawling facility in Dallas traversed by running paths, where FIFA put the best, including Mr. Matthys, to the test. He and others, including one hopeful from the U.S., gathered at a local track to run two 50-meter sprints and two 200-meter sprints to clock speed. To test endurance, they had to run 2,700 meters—or about 1.7 miles—in 12 minutes or less to make the cut. There also were hours of classes over four days on topics ranging from "the correct perception of a foul" to "the importance of correct training and nourishment with regard to characteristics of the American climate."

But it's all worth it, say the chosen few who are considered the elite of soccer officiating. "This is the pinnacle. This is mecca," says Eugene Brazzale, of Australia. Adds Mr. Matthys, "It's just an honor to be here."



Richard Barnett

If the allure escapes most Americans, it's probably because soccer isn't as wildly popular here as it is in Europe. Moreover, being an official for, say the Super Bowl, is decidedly less selective. The nine Super Bowl officials are picked based on their calls—which are graded—during the year. Outside of standard physical and stress tests, they must run, or at least trot (anything but walk), a half mile and go through an agility test, which consists of running around plastic cones. There is no time limit for this.

"These people do not have to run long distances" during games, says Jack Reader, the National Football League's assistant director of officials. Not are they considered stars, as are soccer officials elsewhere, with the local media following them around the globe, monitoring their progress to the 1994 World Cup. Mohammad Panahi of Iran says he was featured in newspapers and magazines across his nation when he was chosen for the trip to Dallas. In other countries, "the referees are as famous as the players," says David F. Will, chairman of FIFA's referee committee.

Vincent Mauro, the U.S. Soccer Federation's director of officials and a 1990 World Cup official, recalls walking along a street in Italy with a fellow referee from that nation. "People would stop him and get his autograph," Mr. Mauro says. "Ladies would kiss him."

And being a referee wasn't bad for business, either. The day after a high-profile match, "people would be lined up outside his door to buy [insurance] from him," Mr. Mauro says.

Yet reaching this exalted status today is tougher than it was then. FIFA has raised its standards for officials and lowered the age limit to 45 from 50, trying to avoid an embarrassing repeat of the 1990 World Cup officiating. During the matches in Italy, out-of-shape officials became exhausted halfway through games and began making mistakes.

"Things always got out of hand in the latter part of the game," says Andreas Herren, FIFA's chief spokesman. FIFA had a hint that things might go wrong: At a training seminar three months before the matches began, about half the 43 referees flunked a fitness test. For this year's World Cup, when the 55 referee candidates were given the fitness test at the Cooper center, only two failed, and both were eliminated.

Many of the chosen referees started as Please Turn to Page B12, Column 4



Dallas welcomes the refs



ALAN PEPPARD

A motorcade of limousines, a platoon of interpreters and Mayor Steve Bartlett shaking a lot of hands might signal an OPEC or U.N. meeting. But that's not what the commotion was about Tuesday evening at the Cooper Aerobics Center.

Nope, it was a gathering of 55 referees and linemen from around the world who plan to officiate World Cup soccer in Dallas this summer.

Hank Kronbach from Stetson Hats was there to pass out 55 hats to refs from far-flung spots like Gabon, Tunisia, Mauritius, Denmark, Scotland, Bahrain, Russia, etc.

The officials will spend this week at the Aerobics Center undergoing a battery of tests that will eventually pare the group down to 22. Those 22 will reside at the Guest Lodge of the Cooper Aerobics Center for the entire six weeks of World Cup activities.

World Cup visitors

Dr. Kenneth Cooper and the sprawling health and fitness estate he built on North Preston consistently receive visitors and clients from around the globe. This month, the Cooper Aerobics Center is home base for 46 international soccer referees.

Dr. Cooper has long been associated with international soccer. The Brazilian team credited him with helping them win World Cup '70 in Mexico, and the Cooper Test (a 12 minute run) is used everywhere by FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) to measure soccer team fitness.

In March, FIFA brought 55 referees to the Cooper Clinic for testing and training. As guests of the Guest Lodge, the European-style hotel on the Cooper campus, the World Cup '94 referees are utilizing Cooper services many local residents don't even know about. They can dine-in—away from fans—at one of two heart-healthy restaurants. They have membership privileges at the famed Cooper Fitness Center, so they can unwind at one of the 25-year swimming pools, keep in training on a mile-long outdoor track, or work using other facilities of the 3,500-member, state-of-the-art health club. And, they can consult with Dr. Cooper and other staff members about exercise and fitness or visit the adjacent Cooper Clinic for any medical needs.

All over the world, Dr. Cooper is known as the "Father of Aerobics." His 11 books have sold more than 20 million copies and have been translated into over 40 languages. When Aerobics was published in 1968, he knew it would be an awkward word to translate. Sure enough, translations became a challenge. "In German it came out 'Aerogundstein,'" which means



The Cooper Aerobics Center welcomes The World Cup '94 referees with cowboy hats and Southern hospitality. Pictured from left to right are: El Hilal Rharib of Morocco, Dr. Cooper of the Aerobics Center and Yousif Al Ghatani of Bahrain.

motion training," said Dr. Cooper. "In Russia they call it 'aerobika.' I think the French translation takes the cake—'oxygène à la cante.' In Brazil they couldn't translate it into Portuguese, so if you go there now they might ask you, 'Have you done your Cooper?' to find out if you have been jogging."

While Dr. Cooper may be best known internationally for his books and scientific research proving the health benefits of exercise, the Cooper Fitness Center is also known and emulated around the world. In Japan, a 700-acre aerobics fitness club has the Cooper stamp of approval. Developers from other countries ask often for assistance in similar efforts. While Dr. Cooper declines requests for franchising, he proudly acknowledges the Dallas center's success.

"Since 1971, over 10,000 members and visitors have used our computer terminals to log in their exercise data," said Dr. Cooper. "Those people have now run 11 million miles as cyclists over a million and a half miles. They have over a million and a half hours of exercise classes and over a quarter million miles logged in swimming."

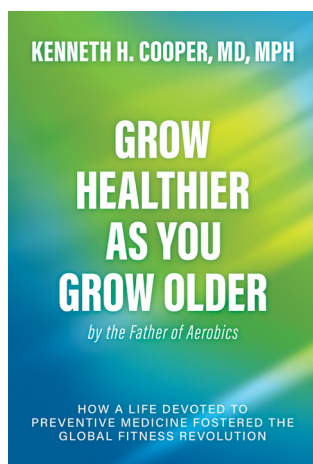
Locals who wonder what it is behind the big Cooper gates that brings visitors from far and wide can take a look. Tours of the Cooper Fitness Center and the entire campus are available by calling 214-233-4832 or 214-239-7223.

2013-2018



Dr. Cooper continues his relationship with Brazilians having traveled to Brazil 21 times. Professional referees and linesman would return to Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas to train and meet in Cooper Hotel with Dr. Cooper spending time with them.

2026



Claudio Coutinho's daughter, Dr. Claudia Coutinho, remains close with Dr. Cooper and visits Dallas often. Below is a photo taken of Claudia with Dr. Cooper in his office at the launch of his latest book *Grow Healthier as you Grow Older* which recounts his time in Brazil and their World Cup Victory.

"Legends of Brazilian Soccer, College Basketball, and the NFL Have Been Put Through Dr. Kenneth Cooper's 12-minute Run."

- Mark Dent

Runner's World (January 22, 2018)

Summary: This article verifies that use of the 12-Minute Cooper Test is of international scope, particularly in the field of soccer.