

Apr 14, 2026 - Education

# FIFA funding expands Miami blind soccer youth program



Martin Vassolo



Children practice blind soccer drills at Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Photo: Martin Vassolo/Axios

Miami World Cup boosters announced new funding for a [blind soccer](#) program for Miami youth.

**Why it matters:** The World Cup is receiving about [\\$53 million](#) in taxpayer funds from Miami governments, and organizers say they want the tournament to leave a lasting legacy through community events and programs.

**The latest:** Local organizers announced a \$250,000 gift to the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired to expand its blind soccer program, which teaches over 100 kids and young adults how to play the Paralympic sport.

- The money comes from the World Football Remission Fund of the FIFA Foundation.

**How it works:** Blind soccer utilizes a ball with noise-makers inside of it and is played on a specialized enclosed field. Players are blindfolded to level the playing field.

- Children in the Miami Lighthouse Academy play blind soccer on a specialized mini-pitch at the school during physical education.
- During weekends and the summer months, teens and young adults across Miami-Dade play as well.
- Miami Lighthouse received a \$90,000 grant from the Children's Trust last year to help launch the program as a one-year pilot.

**What they're saying:** Oseas De Leon, a senior technology specialist at Miami Lighthouse and a member of the [USA Blind Soccer Men's National Team](#), told attendees Tuesday that many blind children are left out of physical education classes.

- Blind soccer, he says, helps build confidence and leadership skills.
- "Now we have a beautiful soccer pitch. We have amazing coaches, and we are creating that for our children."

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Source: <https://www.axios.com/local/miami/2026/04/14/fifa-funding-expands-miami-blind-soccer-youth-program>