

# Chelsea Fans Gather In Palo Alto For Team's Tour



**Chelsea supporters in Palo Alto — Matthew Burbidge, Andy Burbidge, Starla Rose, Clare Reid, Rebecca Reid, Beth Wild, Callum Reid, Mark Reid and Chris Axon show their colours during their team's tour in the US. — Photo: Leah Lubin**

## By Leah Lubin

SOMETIMES, LIVING here in the US I feel like I am back in England. And last month, in Palo Alto, California, this feeling was magnified when English Premier League club Chelsea met Mexico's Club America for the football Disney Friendship Cup, and approximately 47,000 fans gathered right here in our neighbourhood.

Chelsea, as part of their pre-season tour of the United States, played their first game at the new Stanford Stadium on July 14. The challenging match, sponsored by the Walt Disney company, gave Chelsea a chance to show off their new players and win by a score of 2-1.

A Chelsea spokesperson told us: "We are deeply committed to US soccer, and particularly impressed with the growing fan support from the Bay Area."

## HOSTING

Hosting the fans is Kasim Sayed, owner of the Rose & Crown, a British Tudor style pub in downtown Palo Alto. For three days, the fans gathered and celebrated. "To support them from so far away, and have them play in my back yard is awesome," said Starla Rose, point person for the Pacific Coast Blues, which is in the process of joining the other five "official" Chelsea Supporters Clubs in the US.

Here from England, Catherine McDonnell tells me that she hasn't missed a game in 16 years. Also here is Chris Axon from Bath. He tells me that he posts two to three opinions every day on the Chelsea website.

Andy Burbidge, from southwest London, in the US over seventeen years and chairman of the Midwest Blues, tells me, "I can't even remember my first game I was so young. I know what it means to follow a football team. It's part of your identity. It's the best thing ever."

So, until Chelsea comes again to play in Palo Alto, we'll miss their fans spirit and

cheers that made us part of the Chelsea "Blues," if only for the weekend.

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