

SOCCER

Mrs. Eileen Dawson,
Assistant Recreation Director,
Richmond Municipality.

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Interviewed: October 19, 1973.

1954: Richmond's first Recreation Director appointed: Miss Pat Buckley. Recreation directed by Municipal Government three years later. Various sports raised their own money to operate.

1957: Recreation department now a government agency. Soccer formed as an organization, with Dennis Hedges as first president.

Soccer is divided for playing purposes. October to December: January to March.

1957 - 1958: Division 6 had 12 teams first half of 1957. Division 6 had 4 other teams in second half (1958).

Then soccer grew. In 1973 there are 96 teams, which is fewer than last year.

Original soccer executive were:

Dennis Hedges, President
Jack Pinder
Jim Carpenter
Bob McMath
Eileen Gibson
Wilf Hampson

Soccer teams have always been formed from school areas, although governed municipally. They raised their own money through sponsorships.

1959: First Soccer Day was held at Sidaway School. No school facilities were used for the event and the soccer committee wanted to provide hot dogs for the players. To keep the food hot they borrowed all the neighbourhood hot water bottles, and heated blankets. The rain poured down but everyone had fun at the event.

Another Soccer Day incident happened the year it was held at Thomas Kidd School (which was called South Arm Park area at that time. Attendance was so heavy that the committee ran short of coffee cups, and had to wash them out and re-use.

Other Soccer Days were held at Brighthouse Park and at Minoru Park.

Richmond recreation was built by dedicated volunteers, often including husbands and their wives.

Schools started with only one team. In order for every child to have an opportunity to play, community leagues started organizing. Soccer became autonomous.

1959: Eileen Gibson appointed Recreation Director. She acted as secretary for numerous sports organizations as well, to help them.

Soccer Clinics

Soccer Clinics are held yearly to train coaches, also clinics for managers, and for goal keepers. Some are conducted by Vancouver sports personnel of international calibre. Usually from B.C. Soccer Commission. Referee clinics are also held here yearly.

Soccer Volunteers: number 300 people who give at least 5 hours weekly of their skilled experience to all levels of the game . . . up to the competitive level.

There is a league trophy and a knock-out trophy. First a winner is declared within player's own league, then a tournament is held to declare a knock-out winner. All compete for provincial championships. Larry Skinner, Jr., from Richmond was once runner-up to the (Vancouver Sun's) B.C. Tournament of Champions, April 1965. Lorne Mackie was also runner-up from Nor West team which was beaten.

1969: Division 6 and Division 1 were both provincial champions.

Brighthouse Park has fields for lacrosse, baseball, football and soccer.

1959: Soccer "exploded" in Richmond . . . with the aid of the Recreation Department, Eileen believes.

Soccer Pitches are lined out for the teams. Whitened. Each Saturday, Sunday: Juvenile Soccer uses 28 large pitches, 17 small pitches. Senior Soccer uses 4 more pitches.

Two thousand boys play soccer, between the ages of 8 and 21. It all started, on an organized basis, with 80 boys. Soccer starts at Division 9 with 8 year old boys called Pee-Wees.

Richmond has 2 senior teams on the Mainland League, affiliated with B.C. Soccer Commission.

1957 - 1958: Richmond Juvenile Soccer League was formed with President, Dennis Hedges
V/President, Len Stevens
Treas., Jack Pinder
Secretary, Eileen Gibson

and an Advisory Committee:

Bob McMath
Wilf Hampson
Bill Turner
John Sakata
Jim Carpenter

Knock-out Winner the first year was sponsored by Legion 5. League Winner that year was sponsored by Hankin and Struck. The Municipality put up a shield which won by a team sponsored by Steveston Hotel.
Dellis Cleland.