

Mr. Dennis Hedges,  
336 Granville St., Richmond.

Interviewed September 28, 1973.

Before WW 2, Richmond had a good soccer team in the Vancouver and District League, which folded during the war years.

1947 - 1948 the senior team was rebuilt from Richmond High School players.

1948 - 1949 Dennis Hedges was active in forming Richmond Senior Soccer Club. It played at Brighthouse Park, in the Vancouver and District Intermediate League.

1952 leagues amalgamated in Vancouver and District area. Richmond moved into Vancouver and District League, Third Division.

1955 - 1956 Richmond had its best team. It won Second Division, Vancouver and District and were promoted to First Division and reached the Quarter Final of the Provincial Cup. They reached the Final of the Imperial Cup. The Imperial Cup is played for by any team in Vancouver and District, which includes 72 teams. Next year the team played in Vancouver and District First Division.

Alderman McMath asked Dennis to start a juvenile soccer league for Richmond boys 10 - 14 years. The initial meeting was attended by Alderman McMath, Jim Carpenter, Bill Turner, Jack Pinder, Wilf Hampson, Bill Smith. A committee set up the Richmond Juvenile Soccer League.

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The Richmond League differs from the rest of British Columbia. The executive collects the money from sponsors, merchants, and organize the league operation so every team is equal. Rather than in other parts of B.C., where a wealthy sponsor can lavish money on jackets etc. of players. Members of the league pay a registration fee.

Sponsor system was set up to finance team. At first sponsors were charged \$125 for a new team, and \$50 per year after. The fee is now raised to \$165 for a new team with \$50 yearly renewal sponsorship guaranteed. Service clubs sponsored five teams a piece as well as other commercial firms sponsoring teams. The league favors continuing sponsorships.

When the League began, two divisions operated, Division Four and Division Six which included two age groups. At the start four teams were in each division.

In 1960, the League joined the B.C. Juvenile Soccer Association and started operating on a yearly basis. Starting with Division Seven, players cannot be eleven years of age before January. Progression is upward to Division One in which boys cannot be 18 years.

Pee Wee League were started, including boys of eight and nine years. Most of the executive believe eight is the right age for boys to start organized sport. He plays in

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a fun league for a year or two and moves progressively up in age group. When he is 11 years, he is in Division Seven. The executive is concerned because parents want to push boys into the League at six and five years. "We're in it for sport, not baby-sitting", says Dennis.

When a boy is five years old the parent should buy a soccer ball and let the family kick it around in a field for enjoyment. Soccer, like other team sports needs the discipline of a coach. At five years, the boys' minds wander. At eight years the minds tend to develop. Because soccer is a team sport, the players must learn positional play, not crowd around the goal.

Richmond Juvenile Soccer League has grown to about 120 teams. This includes affiliated teams playing under B.C. Junior Soccer Association rules, eligible to play for the provincial cup.

House League teams were formed of boys who were not top calibre but wanted to play soccer. Boys playing with boys of their own calibre could enjoy the game.

Not on Tape

1973 - 1974 season has new development. The Pee Wee Division 9, has divided Richmond into six areas, with six schools in each area. All boys are centrally screened. There are three leagues: Premier, Olympic and Islander, with the best players going in the Premier League.

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There are six good soccer teams and six of Olympic standard. The Islander league is composed of the non-coordinated players. It is important to keep the top level of soccer on a high standard.

1964 - 1965 /Richmond Puritan Wanderers won first provincial champs, with Ben Hurd manager, and Larry Skinner, coach.

1968 - 1969 Richmond Juvenile Soccer Division 3 played finals.

1969 - 1970 Richmond Division 2 played in the finals.

1970 - 1971 Richmond was beaten in the finals.

1971 - 1972 Richmond tied for B.C. title with Burnaby's Cliff Avenue Team in the final.

1972 July Northwest Tournament, Portland: Richmond represented B.C.

Because of difference in soccer rules between United States and Canada regarding ages of players Richmond had to drop four players, so played in tournament with only 11 on team. Richmond was beaten 2 - 1 in overtime at final.

B.C. has now adopted age structure used by the rest of Canada, and will use players January 1 birth dates as basis.

Dennis believes playing good soccer is the main objective, not aiming beyond winning the provincial title. He thinks rules should be enforced against raiding other teams. Rules says two players per season only can be transferred.

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Dennis, a Welshman, played soccer for his home team, Barry Town, Wales, in the Southern league.

Dellis Cleland