

Hall of Fame Class of 2008



Front Left to Right: Erich Haller, Martin Misbrener, Mike Sweeney
Rear Left to Right: James Ennis, Tom Hatfield, Albert Kaufman, Andrew Spiranovic, Steve, Son of August Rehling

James Ennis



James Ennis played football in various leagues in Ireland despite the strong influence of Gaelic sports.

Shortly after immigrating to the United States, Ennis was drafted into the United States Army. While stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, he was responsible for constructing a soccer field and starting a soccer league on the base.

Ennis joined and played for Columbus Germania and eventually managed the senior team in its efforts in the Ohio-Indiana League.

He originated the junior Germania soccer team and never lost a match in three years, prompting opposing coaches to eventually drop him off their schedules.

While still managing Germania, and subsequently United and Celtic, Ennis became Secretary/Treasurer of the League, which eventually divided into the Columbus Soccer League, now the Columbus Premier League. Ennis was in this position for over 20 years, retiring in 1998. He continued coaching and managing until retiring from Columbus Celtic in 2000.

In the early 1970s, Ennis started the precursor to indoor soccer, played on a basketball court, and served as Secretary/Treasurer for some seven years.

Ennis organized an outdoor practice (originally with his team only), then in recent years to a select group of players, himself included, from many countries and cultures. This activity continues today.

He was awarded a citation from Hilltop YMCA for starting the youth soccer program in 1980 and won the SOASA Founders Award in 1992.

Ennis also received an Award from the Columbus Premier League for longstanding service in 2000.

Erich Haller



Erich Haller was born on Dec. 2, 1941 in New Schowe, Yugoslavia, and has been married to his wife Erika Haller since 1966. Haller started playing soccer in 1952 in Stuttgart, Germany, before coming to the United States in 1956. At age 15, Erich started playing for the newly formed Reserve team of the Donauschwaben (GBU). When he was 16, he was moved to the Major Division team where he played for almost 25 years, winning championships in the Cleveland Soccer League in 1959 and 1961. He was on the committee that started the Lake Erie Soccer League in 1965, served on the board in the 1970s and is presently the Vice President. As a player he won four consecutive championships in the newly formed Lake Erie league, beginning in 1965. He was also chosen for Cleveland All-Star teams that played against top European clubs and in 1963, he was invited to tryout for the U.S. Olympic team in Chicago.

In 1972, Haller played semi-professionally for the Cleveland Stars (Cobras), who went undefeated in Cleveland for two years. In addition to league games, the Stars also played exhibition games against the 1972 U.S. Olympic team and the Israeli National Team. Haller finished his playing career in the Northcoast League of Cleveland, playing for Donauschwaben from 1982-2000.

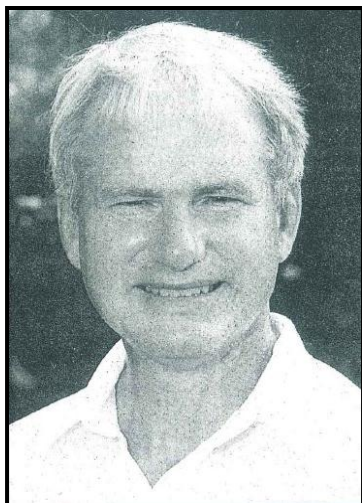
Haller started coaching in 1964, helping with many Concordia Junior teams when junior-level soccer started in the Cleveland area and he became head coach of the Concordia U-19 team in 1969. Coaching junior teams until 1995, Erich led age groups ranging from U-8 to U-19 through various league competitions and tournaments around the country.

For 11 years, Eric Haller held the position of President of the 50 year-old S.C. Donauschwaben, Concordia of Cleveland and is the only Honorary President of the Club. In 1985, he held the position of Assistant Coach at Berea High School and, from 1990-2000, he coached at North Royalton High School, serving as head coach from 1997-2000, earning Coach of the Year honors in the Cleveland Conference in 1998. Haller has also been a high school referee for 23 years and is still active as a referee, player, coach, club officer and league official.

Tom Hatfield



A graduate of St. Edward High School, Ohio University and North Kentucky University, coach Tom Hatfield has a head coaching career that may never be paralleled at North Olmstead High School. A Fullbright Scholar to Mexico in 1968 and India in 1972, Hatfield is one of the founding fathers of soccer in North Olmstead. His teams won 11 Southwestern Conference championships, eight Western Conference championships, were Sectional champions 12 times, District champions 11 times, State Finalist in 1984, 1988 and 1989 and State Champions in 1977 and 1985. Hatfield was twice named the



Greater Cleveland Soccer Coach of the Year and was also named Southwestern Conference Coach of the Year and Western Conference Coach of the Year several times.

Hatfield helped found the Greater Cleveland Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association and the Ohio Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association. A Class of 2000 St. Edward Hall of Fame inductee, he was also an inaugural inductee into the Ohio Scholastic Soccer Coaches Hall of Fame and was inducted into the Ohio Youth Association North Hall of Fame in 2003.

In his 18-year head coaching career at North Olmstead, Hatfield's teams had an overall record of 282 wins, 59 losses and 29 ties. In his last 14 years, Tom's winning percentage was .900. While serving as assistant coach, North Olmstead was State Champion in 1996 and 1999 and State Finalist in 2000. He remains Director of the NOSO Cup youth soccer tournament and is an active member of the Ohio Youth Soccer Association North.

Hatfield is the holder of a USSF B license and has coached at every level from recreational, to state cup championship teams to ODP.

While coaching at North Olmstead, Hatfield was President of the Ohio Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association and the Greater Cleveland Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association.

Albert Kaufmann





Albert Kaufmann has been involved with soccer in the Cleveland area since coming to the United States in 1953 from his native Germany. His contributions are wide ranging and include the adult amateur, youth and professional branches of the game.

Upon his arrival in Cleveland, Albert organized the Heights Juniors Soccer Club which later, in 1957, merged with the German Americans who were at that time one of the dominant clubs in the Cleveland Area Soccer League. The German Americans became the Cleveland Kickers in 1968 and were a charter member of the Lake Erie Soccer League. The Kickers reached the third round of the Open Cup in 1969 and continued to produce outstanding

teams in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990's, and into the 21st century.

Kaufmann was manager of the team during much of that time and the Kickers were finalists at the regional tournament of champions in 1996 and in the final four of the National Amateur Cup in that same year. In 2000, the Kickers defeated the Bush Soccer Club of Missouri in the regional Amateur Cup Finals and were finalists in the regional tournament of champions in 2002. For his efforts with the Kickers, he was named Manager of the Year for the Lake Erie Soccer League.

Kaufmann also helped organize an over-40 GFS Akron team that won the National USSF championship in Hawaii.

On the youth level, the Kickers obtained the charter of the East-West Soccer Club and under Kaufmann's leadership won the NOSO Cup, one of the oldest youth tournaments in the Midwest, in 1992. The team was called the Ambassadors. Later the Ambassadors merged with the Whitecaps and became a strong program in Northeast Ohio's youth soccer scene.

The Whitecaps Director, Mike Sweeney, and Kaufmann revived professional soccer in Cleveland in 1997 when the Caps were founded. Kaufmann was Vice President and Director of Public Relations for the Caps.

Kaufmann's interest in Cleveland's pro soccer efforts went back to his earlier years in northeast Ohio when he helped sign players for the NASL Cleveland Stokers in 1968, including Bend Messing and Dietrich Albrecht.

Martin Misbrener



Martin Misbrener started playing organized soccer in 1953 for the Atus Weiz Austrian youth team, before moving to Akron, Ohio, in 1955 at the age of 15. He graduated from Akron St. Vincent High School in 1959.

Misbrener started to play in the American Soccer League in 1957 with the German America club of Akron and later in the Lake Erie Soccer League with the German Family Society Eagles in the Major Division of the Lake Erie Soccer League. He also served as coach and manager of the GFS Team and was Sports Director for the GFS. Fifty-one years later, Misbrener is still active in the LESL in Cleveland. Misbrener also played for over 25 years in the Greater Akron League with the GFS senior teams, winning many titles. The peak of his achievements with the senior teams came in 2003 when Misbrener coached the Akron Arsenal over-40 team to a Veterans Cup national title in Hawaii.

In addition to his adult coaching and managing activities, Misbrener coached eight years at Coventry High School, eight years at Green High School, two years at Manchester High School and was the assistant at Walsh Jesuit High School in 2002 when the team was an OHSA state finalist.

August Rehling



Steve Rehling, Son of August Rehling



Gus Rehling managed many men's soccer teams for approximately 40 years at FC Kolping. He held the title of President of the Kolping Sports Club from the early 1960s through the mid-1990s. During this time, Kolping grew from a single men's team to as many as three men's teams, two women's teams and 24 youth teams. He also served for many years as the Cincinnati area Vice-President for SOASA. Teams Rehling managed won three Region II TOC titles and competed in many National Amateur and U-30 competitions.

Rehling's influence on soccer over the years has been tremendous for the Cincinnati area. In addition to his input at Kolping, Gus also served as President of GCASL for an unknown number of years. He helped grow the men's league into the organization it is today. He is a SOASA Life Member and Kolping Society Life Member.

Rehling arrived in Cincinnati on Christmas Eve in 1952 and in 1953, he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Rehling was a member of the Kolping Society for over 50 years. As president of KSC, he also oversaw the introduction of youth soccer at the club in the early 1970s.

Rehling helped organize and chaperone trips to Germany for three teams over his years there (two U-18 boys teams and one men's team). The primary team he managed, FC Kolping, won the 1987 Regional II TOC open division, as well as the 1998 and 1999 Region II over 30 Championships.

Andrew Spiranovic



Andrew Spiranovic was born in Croatia and came to the United States in 1951 at the age of 10. In 1957, he joined the American Croatian Soccer Club and progressed to the Major Division, where he played for nine years and won numerous championships. Once Andy stopped playing, he took over the position of coach and manager of the Croatian Men's Soccer Team. During his tenure as coach, President and Vice President of the American Croatian Soccer Club, which spanned 40 years, they won numerous championships.

In the 1972, Spiranovic started a junior program in the Croatian Club. He coached many youth teams for 25 years. In 1976, his U-14 boys team played in the US finals in St. Louis. His teams won numerous tournaments in the State of Ohio and Canada. From 1990-1994, he coached St. Joseph High School's soccer team, during which they won their district finals.

For years Spiranovic was instrumental in keeping the Croatian Soccer Club one of the best and most successful clubs in the Midwest, producing quality players at all levels. He was one of the founders of the United States and Canadian Croatian Junior Tournament, which still exists and is thriving. In 1969 and again in 1989, he was instrumental in bringing Dinamo Zagreb to Cleveland for exhibition games.

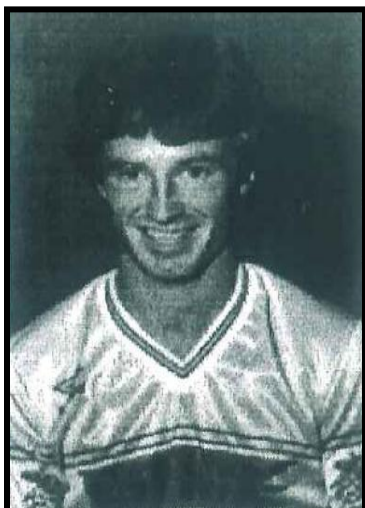
Spiranovic was one of three people who started the Lake Erie Premier League for Advanced Youth Players and he served as Vice President of the league for six years. In 1981, he took a position with the Lake Erie

Senior League as Registrar and still holds the position today. In 2006, he was appointed Cup Commissioner for Ohio Soccer Association North.

Spiranovic continues to stay involved in soccer in Northeast Ohio. He is currently President and Manager of Segota Select Soccer Club. Under his Presidency, his U-18 Boys team took first place at the Cocoa College Expo in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Many players coached by Spiranovic have gone on to play soccer in college and several that went on to play professional soccer. He continues to be instrumental in keeping soccer growing and thriving in Northeast Ohio.

Mike Sweeney



Mike Sweeney first came to Ohio in 1984 as a member of the Cleveland Force, with which he played four seasons. He then returned to Cleveland with the reincarnation of professional indoor soccer as a member of the Crunch.

Sweeney retired from professional soccer in 1994 after his native Canada was knocked out of World Cup qualifying by Australia. His international career saw him make more than 100 appearances for Canada, including the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic finals and the 1986 FIFA World Cup finals in Mexico, and he was inducted into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame in 2002.

Sweeney joined Albert Kaufmann and the Cleveland Kickers in 1992 and played with them until 2005. During that time, the Kickers represented Ohio North several times in the Champions Cup and the Midwest regional tournaments, including representing the region in the National finals in St. Louis in 1996.

From 1992-95 he coached at Case Western University and from 1997-98 he operated the Cleveland Caps semi-professional team playing in the USL Division 3.

Sweeney is currently an executive board member for US Club Soccer, a position he has held since 2003. He is also an active member of the USSF Board of appeals, the jurisprudence arm of the Federation. In 2006, he served as the youth club representative to the USSF Developmental League assisting in the formation and long term plans to promote a more professional youth system for Major League Soccer and the US National teams. He is currently a member of the marketing committee for the Federation's Developmental League.