

SASH

HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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An Editorial: The Hall of Fame

One SASH member, when he sent in his membership renewal this spring, wrote a note concerning this year's turmoil at the Hall of Fame. He expressed puzzlement about conflicting reports he has seen in Soccer America and elsewhere. He said that SASH ought to keep its membership informed about what has happened. And he suggested that SASH has a responsibility to throw its support behind Al Colone's side of the dispute at the Hall because of Al's long service to the Hall.

I think that SASH should try to stay completely out of Hall politics. SASH's purposes have to do with studying the history of soccer in the United States, not with trying to manage the business affairs of the Hall of Fame. This is particularly true in this case because the dispute revolved around a side of the Hall's activities far removed from SASH's interests. This was the question of whether the Hall should continue to operate youth and other tournaments itself or whether it should turn the running of these tournaments over to the local Chamber of Commerce. This is an aspect of the Hall's activities about which individual SASH members may have opinions, but which is not the sort of thing on which I think SASH should be taking sides as an official policy.

Adding to this is the fact that SASH's friends in Oneonta include people on both sides of the dispute.

Now perhaps it could be argued that by cooperating with Will Lunn and the other people running the Hall, SASH is taking sides.

A part of my reply to that would be that I think that SASH's responsibility is to the Hall as an institution rather than to any individual, and that we should be cooperating with whoever is running the Hall.

But even further, there is that fact that Al Colone himself wrote to me in March urging that I cooperate with the new administration of the Hall. Al has parted ways with the Hall of Fame, but his vision has taken the Hall of Fame far over the years. He is not a vindictive man, and I think he wishes the Hall of Fame well.

On one important point, I agree with the note writer -- that SASH should be keeping its members informed about what has happened. And having now spent several days in Oneonta, where I had not been since last September, I am now less confused myself about what has happened.

Basically, the dispute centered around concerns on the part of the Hall's Board of Trustees that the Hall's tournament business had become too big, that it was dominating the Hall's resources of money, time and manpower, that it was making the running of the Hall of Fame itself secondary. Al didn't agree with this. He felt that the tournaments were central to the Hall's objectives and that the Hall was selling itself short in the proposed deal with the Chamber of Commerce. Attempts were made to find a middle ground. They failed. The dispute became a very bitter one, and Al and the Trustees decided to part company.

The dust appears now to have settled. The Hall of Fame reopened its museum on June 14. Its offices and its exhibits look terrific. I wish that my friend Al Colone were still involved. But I want the Hall to keep going forward, and I think that SASH ought to be trying to help it to do so.

-- Roger Allaway

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The Double

Last fall, when D.C. United won both the Major League Soccer championship and the U.S. Open Cup in the same week, it was rightly acclaimed for the feat of winning the American version of the "double," the European (originally English) feat of winning the league and cup in the same year.

At the same time, D.C. United also was incorrectly acclaimed by some people as the *first* winner of the American double. Claims like this bring to mind the statement coined several years ago by SASH member Len Oliver that "American soccer did not begin with Pele," a fact that many people don't seem to realize.

Yes, the concept of the double did languish during many recent years, when teams from the top professional league in the country, the North American Soccer League, declined to take part in the U.S. Open Cup. But that doesn't mean that it had never existed.

For nearly 50 years prior to the founding of the NASL, the top league in American soccer was the American Soccer League. And over the years, five teams won both the ASL title and the U.S. Open Cup in the same year. They were Fall River Marksmen in 1924 and 1930, Brooklyn Hispano in 1943, New York Brookhattan in 1945, New York Americans in 1954, and Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals in 1961 and 1963.

Was it possible to win the double prior to the advent of the original ASL in the 1921-22 season? That question is open to debate, and the answer could be yes. It's not completely clear what was the top league in the United States before the ASL, but the strongest argument may belong to the National Association Football League, which operated from 1907 to 1921 and could be counted as a forerunner of the original ASL. And two teams won the NAFBL title and the U.S. Open Cup (then called the National Challenge Cup) in the same year. They were Brooklyn Field Club in 1914 and Bethlehem Steel in 1919.

Indeed, it might even be said that the American double predates the founding of the U.S. Open Cup. Before there was the U.S. Open Cup and the organization that runs it (originally called the United States Football Association, now called the United States Soccer Federation), there was the American Cup, run by the American Football Association. And one team won the NAFBL title and the American Cup in the same year. That was West Hudson in 1912.

Whatever the case concerning those pre-ASL teams, it is more than certain that D.C. United was not the first team to win the American double. It also is certain, however, that people interested in American soccer history owe a debt to D.C. United and the other MLS teams for their part in the revival of the U.S. Open Cup.

The 1997 competition got underway in June (actually, the preliminary rounds began last fall) and the teams involved come from many levels of American soccer: MLS, the A-League, the USISL Pro League, the USISL amateur division and the U.S. Amateur Soccer Association. Bethlehem Steel and Fall River Rovers would be proud.

1930

We should have known better than to think that by its research several years ago, SASH had stamped out the myth that the United States' fine performance in the 1930 World Cup was a result of using a team of imported British professionals. This myth is too strong to die. It is a demonstration of the saying that "a rumor can circle the globe while the truth is still putting on its pants."

The place where the myth has resurfaced this time is in the book *Gooool!* by Andres Cantor, the Univision soccer commentator. Writing about the 1930 World Cup, Cantor says: "In those years, American clubs customarily used foreign players, especially Scots. The almost immediate naturalization process allowed the United States to use these players on its national team. As we'll soon see, the results they obtained that time around may be surprising."

It is true that the American Soccer League of the 1920s did include many English, Scottish and Irish players, particularly Scottish. It is not true that these players were rushed onto the U.S. national team after only a brief time in this country.

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Here is a brief synopsis of what SASH's research found in 1994:

Of the 16 players on the United States team in the 1930 World Cup, 10 had been born and raised in the United States. The other six were:

Andy Auld, born in Scotland, who came to the United States in 1922, at the age of 21, with no previous professional soccer experience.

James Brown, born in Scotland, who came to the United States in 1927, at the age of 17, with no previous professional soccer experience.

Jimmy Gallagher, born in Scotland, who came to the United States in 1913, at the age of 13, with no previous professional soccer experience.

Bart McGhee, born in Scotland, who came to the United States sometime before 1915, as a "young teenager" according to his son, with no previous professional soccer experience.

George Moorhouse, born in England, who came to the United States in 1923, at the age of 22, after having played two games for Tranmere Rovers in the English Third Division.

Alec Wood, born in Scotland, who came to the United States in 1921, at the age of 14, with no previous professional soccer experience.

This is not the sort of "almost immediate naturalization" process that Cantor refers to. These six players had been in the United States for an average of 10 years apiece. But don't blame Cantor. This error didn't originate with him. It's been around for a long time, and has been cited as though it were fact in many other books.

Membership Notes

The SASH membership meeting and symposium held in Oneonta during Hall of Fame Week both drew small attendance but nevertheless produced good sessions. There was considerable discussion among those there about programs that SASH may undertake in the future.

Like those attendances, SASH membership also is down, but a lot of that drop may be attributed to the confusion in people's minds as to what has been happening with the Hall of Fame and with SASH. Perhaps that will settle down as people realize that we are still here. In any case, that membership drop is one reason why we are sending this issue of the SASH newsletter to last year's members who did not renew as well as to those who did.

The results of this spring's SASH election were announced at the meeting. Roger Allaway was re-elected as president, Jack Huckel was re-elected as secretary and Ray Bernabei was re-elected as a director, all without opposition.

Finally, for those of you confused by the "Fall 1997" at the top of the last newsletter, my apologies. That was my error. It should have said "Spring 1997." That's the sort of error that happens when you try to be your own proofreader. I hope there aren't any similar errors in this issue.