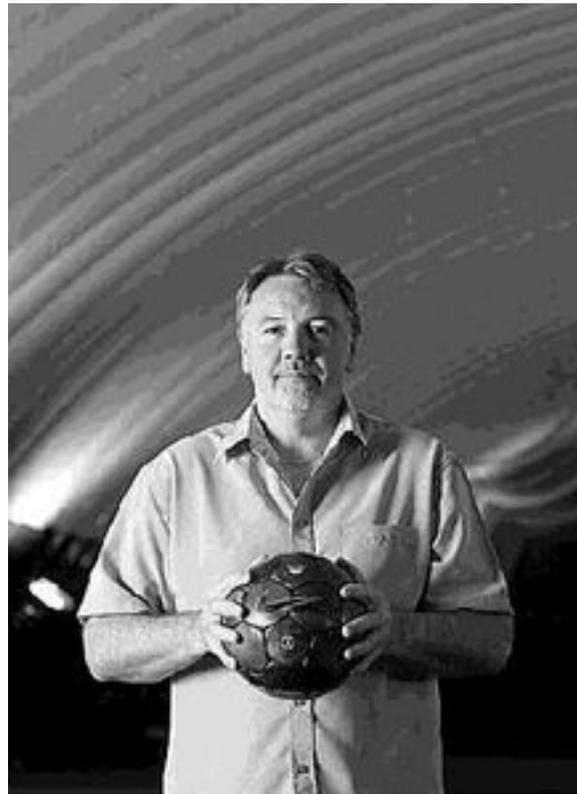


Review of Literature: John McGrane



Veteran defender John McGrane. Julian Baum



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John McGrane is a Scottish born ex-professional North American soccer player. His natural position was a central defender, although he has occasionally played on the wing and started playing soccer as forward. McGrane has played nine seasons in the NASL (North American Soccer League), four years with the Canadian National soccer team, and one season in the Major Indoor Soccer League. After this, McGrane went on into a brief coaching career before starting up two successful indoor soccer facility companies. McGrane is involved in the development of Hamilton's local soccer programs and would love for Hamilton to get international exposure as well. McGrane's love for soccer and interest in the development of the game is evident through his career as a professional soccer player and as a local businessman.^{1,2,3,4,5,7}

John McGrane was born in Glasgow, Scotland on October 12, 1952. His father, John McGrane Sr. played professional soccer until 1966. This same year, upon retirement, the McGrane family moved to Canada to the city of Hamilton, Ontario. It was in Hamilton where McGrane grew up and was spotted by the coach, John Buchanan, of Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. McGrane played for Simon Fraser and won the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) 'Most Valuable Player' award in his first year. As well, he was named a 1975 first team NAIA All American.^{1,2}

It was in his hometown of Hamilton, McGrane began his professional career. His career began by playing for Hamilton City in the NSL (National Soccer League) in 1976. This club was Canada's most professional soccer league at the time. McGrane played from 1976-1981 for the Los Angeles Aztecs in the NASL (North American Soccer League) alongside the legendary Dutch player Johann Cruyff and led by the great Dutch

coach Rinus Michels. He played as a winger, but very soon was converted back to his natural position as a defender due to the various injuries the Aztecs suffered.

McGrane made twelve appearances for Canada which were mostly in World Cup qualifying matches from 1976-1981. In the 1976 Montreal Olympics, McGrane was a starting forward for Canada. Team Canada lost both of their games at the Montreal Olympics .^{1,2}

In the fall of 1981 McGrane moved to Montreal to play for Montreal Manic. He played one NASL indoor season as well as two outdoor seasons for the Manic. In 1983, he moved to Chicago to play for the Chicago Sting in the NASL indoor season and then was sent to the Minnesota Strikers for the 1984 outdoor season. In 1984 the Strikers moved to the Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL) which was and still is the highest level of indoor soccer played in the USA. He played one indoor season for the Strikers that year in 1984. McGrane retired from professional soccer in September of 1985.^{1,2}

It was in 1990 that John McGrane began his coaching career. He was the coach of the Kitchener Spirit in the CSL (Canadian Soccer League) for one season. He then went back to Hamilton and became the head coach and general manager of the Hamilton Steelers of the CSL for two seasons. He retired from professional coaching and managing, and established two companies called Soccer World Systems and SoccerWorldHamilton which owns, builds, and manages indoor soccer facilities in North America and Europe. Soccer World Systems is a chain of indoor soccer facilities which he is now the CEO of.^{1,2,5}

On Saturday, April 26, 2008, John McGrane was inducted into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame in Vaughn, Ontario. He was among 10 players and builders who

were selected to be inducted on this day. This honour shows that John McGrane was an outstanding North American Soccer League player and represented Canada well as a professional soccer player.^{1,2,6}

McGrane has appeared in several newspaper articles in the last couple years through the companies he has built and as being a former professional soccer player. His opinion is valued as he has been a part of the local, national and international aspects of soccer. McGrane believes that the business plan which is planned for soccer as well as other activities will be enough to support a 15, 000 to 20, 000-seat Pan Am Games stadium. "We could have some of the best soccer ever played on Canadian soil here in Hamilton," said John McGrane. "You could have a Manchester United, a Chelsea, an Inter Milan playing in Hamilton." If a stadium such as the one in this business plan is built, it could bring some of the best soccer players to Canada and play on Hamilton's own local turf. McGrane believes that simple math indicates that the game of soccer can flourish from the developmental to the professional level in Hamilton.⁸

John McGrane, although retired from professional soccer, is still involved in the local soccer community. As a former national-team player, businessman John McGrane was called on as an advisor in the debate for The White Star Group's hope to build a new soccer stadium. This stadium would start up a soccer academy which would begin to bring in international exhibition games. In an interview McGrane stated, "Hamilton can absolutely host all levels of soccer and would, with the right facility, be a centre if Canada wins the 2015 Women's World Cup." He also noted that Canada came second in the vote to host the 2011 Cup. McGrane believes that Canada has an excellent

chance to win the 2015 showcase. “That would give Hamilton great international exposure,” said McGrane. In McGrane’s interview, he stressed that he is an unpaid advisor and that his only interest is in growing the game. Through this interview, McGrane’s love for the game, as well as his hope for Hamilton’s soccer programs to develop and get international exposure is truly apparent.^{7, 9}

John McGrane has done great things for the development of the game of soccer. He performed at the professional level for many years and was part of Canada’s Olympic Soccer team. Since retiring, McGrane has made appearances in newspaper articles through the soccer companies he has built and the programs being developed for soccer. He has made an impact on the city as Hamilton’s soccer programs and has shown in many ways his love for the game as well as his hope for growth and development in the game of soccer.

Club Career Statistics:

Team	League	Year	Nm	Pos	Games	Goals	Assists	Pts	Citizen
Los Angeles Aztecs	NASL	77	18	D	16	0	0	0	Canada
Los Angeles Aztecs	NASL	78	18	D	30	2	2	6	Canada
Los Angeles Aztecs	NASL	79	18	D	28	0	0	0	Canada
Los Angeles Aztecs Indoor	NASL	79-80	18	D	6	0	0	0	Canada
Los Angeles Aztecs	NASL	80	18	D	32	2	1	5	Canada
Los Angeles Aztecs	NASL	81	18	D	27	0	3	3	Canada
Montreal Manic Indoor	NASL	81-82	4	D	13	3	9	15	Canada
Montreal Manic	NASL	82	4	D	31	0	1	1	Canada
Montreal Manic	NASL	83	4	D	26	0	2	2	Canada
Chicago Sting Indoor	NASL	83-84	5	D	23	3	5	11	Canada
Minnesota Strikers	NASL	84	3	D	17	0	1	1	Canada
Minnesota Strikers	MISL	84-85	3	D	38	0	2	2	Canada

Interview with John McGrane

1. Who introduced you to soccer and how did you get involved in soccer?

- John's father introduced him to soccer when he was a young boy growing up in Glasgow Scotland. Soccer was the main sport being played, so most of the kids living there began playing soccer.

2. Were there sport mentors/heroes that inspired or assisted you? Who? How?

- When John was young, the local soccer team in Glasgow inspired him. And when John became a teenager, he was inspired by specific players who played his position, which was forward at the time. George Best was one of his sport mentors when he was a teenager, and later John had the opportunity of playing alongside him on the L.A. Galaxy

3. What are some of the highlights of your professional playing career?

- John explained that some of the highlights of his professional playing career were some special achievements he accomplished. These achievements included playing in the 1976 Olympic Games, being Rookie of the Year at Los Angeles in 1977, being a World Cup starter for Canada in 1977 and 1981, being voted as the Most Popular Player in 1979 and also being voted Most Valuable player in 1982.

4. What are some of the greatest highlights in your Olympic experience?

- He said one of the greatest highlights of the whole Olympic experience was probably the way he was chosen to be on the team. He explained process: Thousands try out and 80 are chosen to be on the travelling squad which plays many games and every month 2 players are cut. He made the starting 11 squad which was a major highlight for him. Mr. McGrane also talked about how special the opening ceremonies were, and playing against the Soviet Union and North Korea. He was also chosen at random to be one of the 100 athletes from the Olympic Games to attend a special dinner with Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles. He said Prince Charles was a very intelligent and enthusiastic individual.

5. What do you think was your greatest achievement?

- John first stated that his children are his greatest achievement. He then went on to say that when it comes to sport achievement, his greatest achievement was scoring an extremely important goal at the Giant's stadium in New York against the great Pele and Carlos Alberto. This goal was in his second year of playing professional soccer and showed that he had great potential.

6. What motivated you to reach or surpass your goals?

- John McGrane said that above all, what motivated him surpass his goals was “the desire to be the best.” He explained that if you recognize that will not be the best, than you will not achieve your goals. He also stated that “working hard to stay there is one of the most difficult aspects of being a professional.”

7. What were the major obstacles or pressures that you needed to overcome as a professional athlete? How did you overcome them?

- “Criticism. It is the hardest thing to overcome. You need to have thick skin. If you make mistakes you are glared at by teammates, you have to have strength of character. You also have to recognize (especially as a young player) that you are going to make mistakes sometimes.”

8. What were some of the key factors in the development of your soccer ability? (What helped you develop most?)

- “Inherent ability to do it. A God-given talent.” John explained that once you understand that you have the ability then you know you can do it. His dad was an ex-pro and devoted a lot of time practicing with him and bringing him to watch professional games. He critiqued John often which allowed John to listen and learn from his dad. His father knew what the game was about and was John’s greatest mentor in his life. John explained that he played not only for himself, but for his dad.

9. Did the municipal, provincial, or federal government assist you in your career at all? And if so, how?

- He explained that at the municipal level he was picked to be in All-star games which exposed him and made him more well known when he was younger. John also said being able to play against better competition helped him gauge how good he was. At the regional and provincial level he was able to observe and play against provinces, and it also helped him gauge how good he was nationally. It gave him the chance to see how talented he was and gave him the confidence for his future career.

10. You have played for a few different North American Cities in your professional career; which club or city was your favourite and why?

- John McGrane’s favourite place to play was in L.A. because he had a condo overlooking the Pacific Ocean. He said he was so lucky to be able to live there. He mentioned how Minneapolis was neat and Montreal was a nice place to be because he was immersed in a different culture. He spoke highly of Chicago and said it is a very interesting and big city to live in.

11. We have read that you played alongside legendary Dutch star Johann Cruyff... Is this true? How was that experience for you?

- Johan Cruyff was the greatest player at the time when he played at L.A. galaxy. John described Cruyff as “a general on the field – he never stopped talking.” He said that he learned more from Johan Cruyff than any other individual player.

12. Also, you were coached by a great dutch manager too at the time, Rinus Michels... Did this help improve your game significantly more than the other coaches you have played for?

- Rinus Michels taught Mr. McGrane so much. John says “I owe so much to Rinus – training, preparation – he taught me to be a professional.” John went on to talk about how Rinus Michels is the greatest coach of the 20th century and he implemented the total football system which is widely used by professional teams today. He developed the playing style that Barcelona uses and the coaching that he did in Spain in the 70s and 80s is the reason why Spain won the world cup this past year. “Rinus Michels is the reason Spain won World Cup South Africa 2010.”

13. Do you think Canada’s men will qualify for the world cup finals in the next few decades?

- He said the Men’s program is a disaster and that there needs to be a better program in Canada for soccer players. He doesn’t see Canada qualifying anytime soon.

14. Do you think Canada has a chance at the women’s world cup this summer?

- Mr. McGrane said that the women’s team has the potential to be in the top 4 this summer at the women’s world cup in Germany.

15. Do you see the sport of soccer growing in Hamilton in the future? Has it already?

- “Yes, there is rumour of a professional team coming to Hamilton in the next year or two.” John is part of the PANAM committee and a soccer legacy program to help player development.

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