

OHIO SOCCER ASSOCIATION NORTH

Cleveland's first soccer league was organized in 1906 and became an American Amateur Football Association (AAFA) affiliate when the Association was formed in 1912.

In 1913, a dispute arose between the American Amateur Football Association and the American Football Association, which was affiliated with and subordinate to the Football Association of England. As a resolution, the AAFA became the United States Football Association.

In January, 1915 the Cleveland League was superseded by the Ohio State Football Association as an affiliate of the United States Football Association. The new body merged together all the teams and leagues in Ohio and plans were announced to hold a state championship.

By 1930 Cleveland had become one of the strongest soccer centers in the United States and in 1931, Northeastern Ohio crowned its first National Champion, the Goodyear Wingfoots of Akron. The Wingfoots defeated the Black Cats of New Bedford, Mass., 2-0, at Seiberling field in Akron on June 7 in the National Amateur Cup final.

Soccer in Cleveland experienced a period of decline from 1933 until 1945 but underwent a 'Period of Revival' from 1946 to 1966 under the leadership of Colin Commander and other individuals who contributed to the game for many years.

Cleveland's growth in soccer during this period was mainly due to immigration from Central Europe, where effects of the Great War displaced millions of people. Ethnic clubs from Germany, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Croatia and Serbia quickly formed teams and leagues for their members on both the adult and youth levels. Their energy and the enthusiasm spread this relatively new sport to all segments of the population in the U.S. Eventually, with the rise of professional leagues, soccer became a permanent part of the Cleveland sports scene.

The Early Modern Period of Cleveland Soccer began with Cleveland's hosting of the 51st United States Soccer Football Association's National Convention in 1967. Highlights of the Convention included the election of Colin Commander to the National Soccer Hall of Fame.

When elections were held for the Ohio State Soccer Football Association in 1968 Colin Commander and J. A. Kadar were re-elected to the positions of Secretary and President. Frank Csore was chosen as Vice President, Adam Hetzel as Treasurer and Gianfranco Borroni, Publicist.

During the last 43 years (1966-2009), a number of serious attempts were made to introduce professional soccer in Cleveland for both indoor and outdoor soccer. In the indoor game, the Cleveland Crunch won three National Championships while the City

Stars (no longer in business) won the USL Second Division Championship in 2008. In the indoor game, the Cleveland Force enjoyed many years of successful play but without ever winning the MISL title. The same is true for the Cleveland Cobras who played in the American Soccer League for ten years. In spite of these failed attempt, Cleveland fans and soccer enthusiasts are hoping for the day when the current major league (MLS) will establish a new franchise in this area.

Meanwhile Gianfranco Borroni remains active in the Northern Ohio Adult Soccer Association (OSAN), along with Dr. John Gyekenyesi, who became President of the Lake Erie Soccer League in 1972 and served there for 5 years. John has also served as President of OSAN for a record 20 years, while Gianfranco led the entire USSF Adult Division for eight years. Other long term current members of OSAN Board are Blaz Pesorda, Kalman Toth, Carl Del Corral and Regina Van Vorous. Current OSAN officers Dr. John Gyekenyesi, Gianfranco Borroni and Blaz Pesorda were all recently inducted into the USASA (US Adult Soccer Association) Hall of Fame. The former Federation (USSF) Hall of Fame in Oneonta has been temporarily closed.

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