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Headlines

Where Are They Now ... Bryan "Goose" Finnerty



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By Ryan Waldheger

Remember Goose? Most professional indoor soccer fans do. A longtime League standout that played nearly his entire professional indoor career in Detroit while displaying a decade of consistency, Bryan Finnerty was a goalkeeper and a professional sports personality that Detroit was fortunate to have throughout the 1990s.

Now several years removed from a career that spanned from 1990-2001, Finnerty speaks with a wealth of knowledge about the game, the business aspects of running a team, a sports facility or just about anything else that may come up in a conversation with one of the League's legends of days past.

A single discussion with Bryan Finnerty seems entirely revealing, until you realize the savvy, intelligence and determination that he brings to the table. Scratch the surface, and there's enough to fill a book, or at least a post-soccer career resume capable of making others jealous.

Let's start with the basics. First off, forget Bryan. "The running joke around here is that if somebody comes to the front door and asks for Bryan, just take a message because they probably don't know me," Finnerty laughs, as he refers to people visiting him at the High Velocity Sports facility he operates in Canton, Mich., about 20 minutes outside of Detroit. Yes, Goose is a nickname, and yes "Goose" remains Bryan Finnerty.

High Velocity, by the way, is no small endeavor. At 120,000 square feet, the set of five soccer fields and one roller hockey rink is one of the bigger facilities in the area. Finnerty is the "leading owner," and since its opening in 2001 his crew has established an environment where "people drive past other facilities to play at ours." For more information on High Velocity Sports, please visit www.hvsports.com.

In addition to HV, he's established a consulting company that's fairly unique in nature. Sports Facilities Advisory, or SFA for short, is Finnerty's business branch that assists others wanting to open facilities, increase revenues, or improve services at existing locations. Finnerty is the SFA's President, and as is printed on their website www.sportsfacilitiesadvisory.com, "We are accomplished sports facility advisors, business development experts, and passionate sports enthusiasts. We are also committed to helping our clients achieve no less than 10-20 times return on every dollar invested with SFA."

So I asked this indoor soccer guru, who follows the League by website and broadcasts whenever he can, and one-time Detroit indoor soccer standout his expectations for the MISL's new expansion team owned by Hantz Group Sports & Entertainment that will debut in that city next season. His responses were both universal and specific to Detroit, his familiar market.

"I think in recently meeting with both John Hantz and (Team President) Greg Bibb, they have the owner that's committed to it in John, and in Greg they have a guy who has experience in this League," Finnerty said. "Having

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an experienced guy at the helm, like Greg, who has no history in Detroit, will allow this to be a fresh start. And I think people are ready for that. It hasn't just been a one-year absence since the Rockers left, it has been a while and I believe teens that saw the Detroit Rockers as kids, and adults that were fans are ready to get into something new."

Finnerty, who said he eagerly awaits the day this spring when the team unveils its name, colors, and jersey, said that familiarization with the sport in Detroit, combined with that clean break from past failures is exactly what was needed in the market. For that reason, he's not sure that he's pulling for a return to the name "Rockers" that he wore on his jersey year after year. "I'm torn," he admitted.

With his knowledge of Hantz' passion for sports entertainment and his financial wherewithal from following Hantz' past endeavors, Finnerty believes Detroit could have the right combination in the re-growth of the MISL.

"Kudos to (Commissioner) Steve Ryan," Finnerty said. "He's taken what had been, kind of a 'warm and fuzzy soccer league' under (former Commissioner) Steve Paxos, and he's grown the League by shrinking. People complain about teams that are no longer around, but with the owners now joining the MISL, and people like John Hantz and Greg, who I've known for some time, they are hitting it on the bullseye. You can't run a team on a shoestring budget, and you have to be able to offer fans the same thing the first week, the second week and to the third year.

"You have to have the passion. You have to hire the people running your sports entertainment business that know how to do it, guys like Greg. And you have to have the financial wherewithal."

Finnerty, spent less time discussing his playing days. Though, for those that don't know, "Goose" was formalized as a nickname in college, when he set a school-record for shutouts at San Diego State, and led them to the NCAA Championship Game on ESPN, where the team's "Cinderella" run ended with a 2-0 loss to Clemson. The Aztecs had entered the tournament as the 24th seed. Somewhere along the way, Finnerty posted a shutout and a newspaper headline mentioned Bryan "Goose Eggs" Finnerty.

Soon after his arrival in Detroit, Coach Brian Tinnion, who remains a friend of Finnerty to this day, said, "There are five Brian's here, you figure it out." With that, the name of "Goose" was there to stay.

Finnerty totaled more than 24,000 minutes in the League (1990-2000 with Detroit, 2001 with Buffalo), and still ranks among the top-10 all-time leading goalkeepers in NPSL/MISL history in nearly every category in both the regular and postseason. He was named the League's Player of the Week nine times and appeared in four All-Star Games.

His personal highlight: "Probably when we won the NPSL Championship (in 1992)," he said. "We had reached the semifinals the year before. Now we were in the finals against Canton and down 2-0. We came back to win three in a row and the championship." The clincher was a 14-8 win in Detroit, before 6,662 fans on April 29, 1992.

"That was the pinnacle of success, and we never got back there," he said.

"As for the present, and being a local indoor soccer mogul of sorts in Detroit, Finnerty has high hopes for the incoming Detroit team. Only recently did he meet Bibb, and quickly learned that he believes the two share this common belief. "Putting people in the seats is not just about winning and losing," Finnerty said. "You have to connect with the community. Players have to become role models in their communities. Once fans have access to these players, most of them, they fall in love with, whether they meet them at camps, at schools, around town. People here generally don't have access to the Detroit Tigers, Red Wings, or Lions.

"With the committed, passionate, and financially-backed ownership, and people they have running the team and the right mix of good people, not just good players, I believe the MISL's new Detroit team will do well here."

Ryan Waldheger is the Manager of Sports Information Services for the Major Indoor Soccer League.

Current Articles



MISL Disciplines St. Louis' Omid Namazi

Jan 11, 2006 - WESTPORT, Conn. (Wednesday, January 11, 2006) – The Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL) announced today that it has suspended and fined St. Louis Steamers head coach Omid Namazi five additional games after reviewing Namazi's improper and unacceptable actions that followed the referee's decision to issue the head coach a red card, late in St. Louis' 7-6 overtime win over the Philadelphia KiXX at Philadelphia's Wachovia Spectrum on Saturday, January 7, 2006.

Namazi's overall six-game suspension was mandated by the MISL Policies & Procedures Manual, in Section 17.9, which details the consequences of improper physical contact with a game official.

Omid Namazi and the St. Louis Steamers have the right to appeal the disciplinary action taken by the MISL.

Cougars Bring Fans To Their Feet With First Win In Club History

Jan 08, 2006 - **Stockton, CA** — The California Cougars had reason to crack open the bubbly because the expansion team sealed their first-ever season victory over the Chicago Storm in an overtime thriller 5-4 on Saturday night. In the greatest of coincidences, for the 1-11 Cougars, it was the team's first televised game of the year on Comcast SportsNet West.



Before an excitable crowd of 4,243 at the Stockton Arena, that included MISL Commissioner Steve Ryan, the Cougars led 4-3 late into the fourth quarter.

Chicago scored the game-tying goal at 11:33 in the fourth quarter that sent the game into overtime.

The overtime quarter brought the fans to their feet as the Cougars finally kicked the game winning goal at 6:08 in overtime.

"Redemption!," said Defender Bill Sedgewick after being asked how he felt after scoring the game winning overtime goal. "I take sole responsibility for Chicago tying the game and I felt tears of relief when I made that final score."



MISL Players of the Month (December) - Vorberg, Schmidt, Dusosky

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Players of the Month

It was a clean sweep for the MISL's reigning Champion and only undefeated team, the Milwaukee Wave. Goalkeeper Nick Vorberg, defender Matt Schmidt, and target forward Todd Dusosky were honored by the MISL on Tuesday afternoon.

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- ⚡ KiXX Acquire All-Star Defender Vlatko Andonovski
- ⚡ Blockbuster Swap Sends Ball to Cougars, Maher to Chicago
- ⚡ MISL Players of the Week (8) -- Phillips, Walton, David
- ⚡ Cougars Host St. Louis Tonight at the Stockton Arena
- ⚡ Wave Host Exhibition Vs. PASL All-Stars For Milwaukee's Youth Today
- ⚡ MISL Players of the Week (7) - Phillips, Wakefield, and Reiniger
- ⚡ Philadelphia Native Steve Wacker Has Contract Extended For The Rest Of The Season By KiXX

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