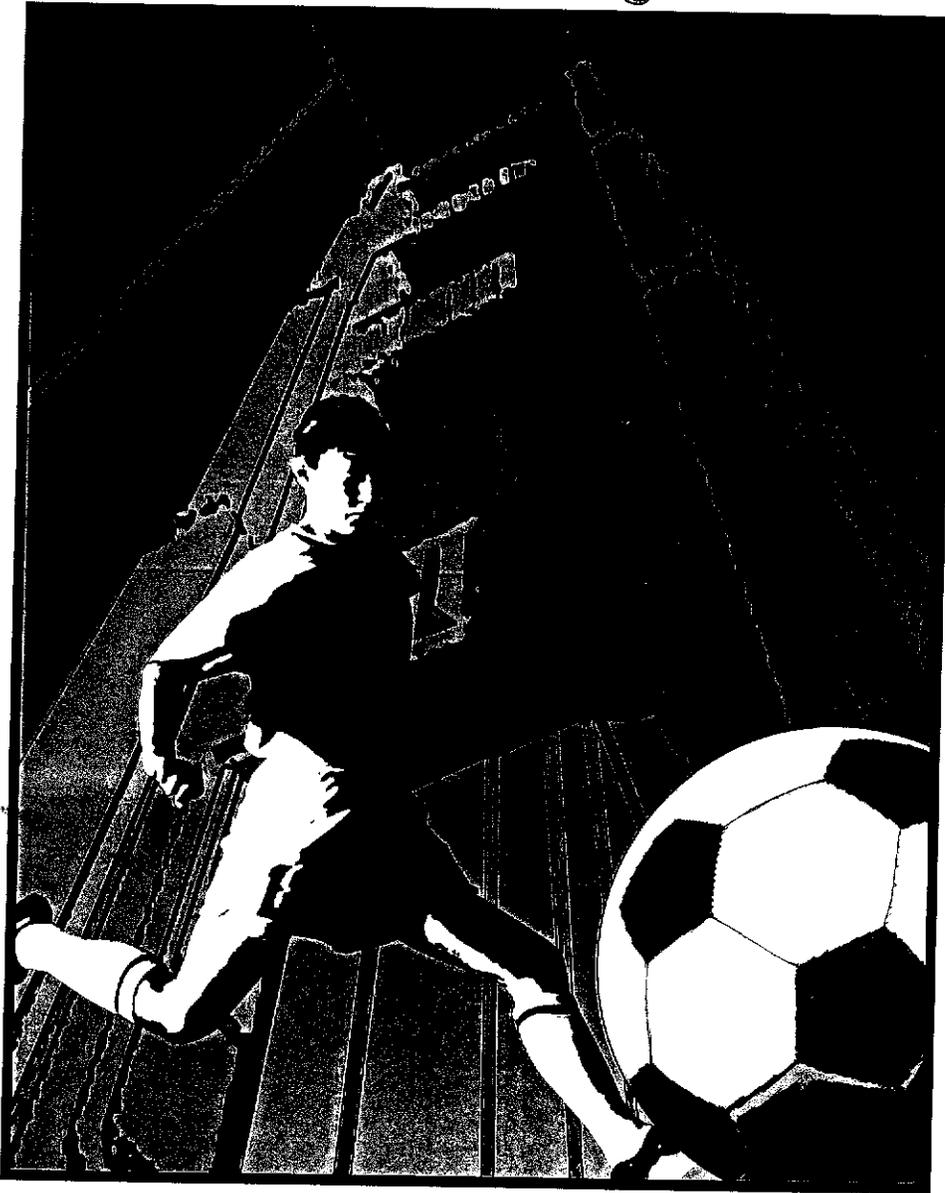


100th Anniversary



San Francisco Soccer

Football League

Celebrating June 8th, 2002
at The Patio Español in San Francisco



SAN FRANCISCO SOCCER FOOTBALL
CHAMPIONS OF THE LEAGUE'S TOP DIVISION 1902-2001
 (Teams in **bold type** are currently active)



1902-03	American British Rifles*	1949-50	Verdi Club
1903-04	Thistle F.C.	1950-51	SFAC
1904-05	Independent	1951-52	S.F. Vikings
1905-06	Independent	1952-53	S.F. Vikings
1906-07	Hornets	1953-54	El Salvador
1907-08	Albion Rovers	1954-55	Hakoah A.C.
1908-09	Vampires	1955-56	Mercury A.C.
1909-10	Thistle F.C.	1956-57	Hakoah A.C.
1910-11	Vampires	1957-58	El Salvador
1911-12	S.F.F.C.	1958-59	AAC Teutonia
1912-13	Pastime	1959-60	S.F. Scots
1913-14	Pastime	1960-61	S.F. Scots
1914-15	Pastime	1961-62	S.F. Scots
1915-16	Olympic Club	1962-63	AAC Teutonia
1916-17	Union Iron Works	1963-64	AAC Teutonia
1917-18	Union Iron Works	1964-65	S.F. Scots
1918-19	Moore F.C.	1965-66	S.F. Scots
1919-20	Thistle F.C.	1966-67	Greek-Americans
1920-21	Thistle F.C.	1967-68	SFAC
1921-22	Union Iron Works	1968-69	Greek-Americans
1922-23	Olympic Club	1969-70	Greek-Americans
1923-24	Barbarian Club	1970-71	Greek-Americans
1924-25	Olympic Club	1971-72	Concordia
1925-26	Olympic Club	1972-73	Greek-Americans
1926-27	Sons of St. George	1973-74	SFAC
1927-28	Burns S.C.	1974-75	Sons of Italy
1928-29	Union Sportiva	1975-76	SFAC*
1929-30	Olympic Club	1976-77	SFAC**
1930-31	Olympic Club	1977-78	Greek-Americans
1931-32	Olympic Club	1978-79	SFIAC (SFAC)
1932-33	Olympic Club	1979-80	El Salvador
1933-34	Olympic Club	1980-81	Greek-Americans
1934-35	Rovers	1981-82	S.F. Swedes
1935-36	Rovers	1982-83	Greek-Americans
1936-37	Rovers	1983-84	S.F. Glens
1937-39	Rovers	1984-85	Greek-Americans
1938-39	Rovers	1985-86	Greek-Americans
1939-40	Union Espanola	1986-87	Greek-Americans
1940-41	Rovers	1987-88	Greek-Americans
1941-42	AAC Teutonia	1988-89	Greek-Americans
1942-43	Union Espanola	1989-90	S.F. Glens
1943-44	AAC Teutonia	1990-91	Greek-Americans
1944-45	AAC Teutonia	1991-92	El Farolito
1945-46	Verdi Club	1992-93	C.D. Mexico (El Farolito)**
1946-47	AAC Teutonia	1993-94	Greek-Americans***
1947-48	Mercury A.C.	1994-95	Greek-Americans
1948-49	AAC Teutonia	1995-96	El Farolito



1997	S.C. Sporting
1998	C.D. Azteca (PSL)
1999	El Farolito
2000	Santiagueno
2001	El Farolito
2002	????

The League's top division has undergone the following name changes:

* First Division 1902-1976

** Major Division 1977-1992

***CPSA 1993 to the present

Summary of Championship Winners 1902-2001

- 16- **Greek-Americans**
- 9- **Olympic Club**
- 8- AAC Teutonia
- 6- **SFIAC**
Rovers
- 5- **SF Scots**
El Farolito
- 4- Thistle F.C.
- 3- **El Salvador**
Pastime
Union Iron Works
- 2- **S.F. Glens**
S.F. Vikings
Mercury
Hakoah
Union Espanola
Verdi Club
Independent
Vampites
- 1- **Concordia**
Santiagueno
Sons of Italy
SF Swedes
American British Rifles
Homets
Albion Rovers
SFFC
Moore FC
Barbarian Club
Sons of St. George
Burns FC
Union Sportiva



San Francisco Soccer Football League- The Centenary Celebration

By Sean Mc Geever

The San Francisco Soccer Football League's (SFSFL) centenary is a timely reminder that soccer has enjoyed a long history in the Bay Area and Northern California. As the 17th edition of the World Cup takes place in Japan/Korea, it is worth remembering that the San Francisco Soccer Football League is an older organization than FIFA (Federation of International Football Associations), the sport's world governing body, and organizer of the World Cup event. Founded in 1902, the SFSFL is, in fact, one of the oldest semi-professional and amateur leagues in the United States. Since its inception, the SFSFL has developed into one of the most cosmopolitan leagues in the country and produced memorable teams, players, personalities, all-star games, and national champions.

One of the early teams in the league, the Vampires, sported a bat on their jerseys, and (rumor has it) drew first blood in every game! On a more blood-curdling note, screen actor Bela Lugosi who played Dracula in the 1931 Universal movie, once donated a cup to be contested between the top teams in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Fellow actor Victor McLagen was also an aficionado of the game and regularly brought his Lighthorsemen team (replete with brass band) to San Francisco to play exhibition games against the top local sides during the 1930's and early 1940's. San Francisco's Verdi Club may well have been the first semi-professional soccer team on the west coast to have its own cheerleaders, the Verdi-ettes, present at games during the 1930's also. A world cup finalist with Holland even played a few game in the SFSFL during the mid-1980s.

At the national level, the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club (SFIAC) made history in 1976 when they became the first non-collegiate San Francisco-based sports team to lift a national championship when they won the National Open Cup. San Francisco's Greek American club followed with a National Open Cup title in 1985, and then repeated the feat again in 1994. C.D. Mexico joined this exclusive club in 1993 when they won the trophy. In the National Amateur Cup, San Francisco's Glens were finalists in 1979 and 1990. Most recently, San Francisco's Greek Americans and C.D. Mexico have competed in the international CONCACAF Champions Cup, and played against leading professional clubs from Mexico, such as the U.N.A.M. Pumas and Nexaca respectively.

In the Beginning

Football, or soccer, was played regularly in the Bay Area from as early as the 1850's onwards. The sport came to California in the same manner that it spread throughout the rest of the world: immigrants from the British Isles brought it with them. The large influx of people from Europe was such that, in 1852, over 53% of the males in San Francisco were foreign-born. Among the English immigrants, organizations like the Sons of St. George became the focus of their cultural outlook and way of life. Throughout the year, they organized picnics, cricket games, loosely organized games of football, and celebrated their national St. George's Day on April 23. The Sons of St. George later become a force in the soccer league during the 1920s and 1930s. The Irish population concentrated their efforts on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, and there is evidence that their national sports, Gaelic football and hurling, were played in San Francisco as early as 1853.

However, it was the Scottish segment of the community that provided much of the impetus in the development of game. The founding of the St. Andrew's Society was the first step, and led directly to the founding of the Caledonian Club on November 24, 1866. The emphasis of this club was on athletics, and their first "Scottish" games took place on New Year's Day, 1867. This day of sporting activity became an annual event, and has continued to the present day. The Caledonian Club fostered an interest in track and field that led to the establishment of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA); as well as to the founding of the San Francisco Scottish Thistle Club, on

March 18, 1882, for the express purpose of encouraging Scottish immigrants in the Bay Area to get involved in their own community. Thistle Football Club was a natural outgrowth of this and established itself as one of the premier soccer forces in San Francisco over the next 40 years.

By the mid-1880's, much of the activity in San Francisco centered around the Sailor's Institute on Stuart Street, and visiting seamen regularly organized themselves into teams, and played on the nearest available slivers of unused land. In 1889, Edgar Pomeroy, the first great soccer pioneer in northern California, arrived in Oakland from Sacramento. A Scotsman, Pomeroy had the vision to see the potential of an organized soccer league along the lines that had begun a few years earlier in England and Scotland. From his gymnasium class at the YMCA, the "Oaklands" and "East Oaklands" teams emerged, and soccer games were played on a tract of land at 12th Street and Madison.

The other major figure in the development of the sport was Henry "Bobs" Roberts, an Englishman from Manchester who had been involved in the administration of the Football Association in his own country. Roberts now proved invaluable in developing a structured organization. As well as being an able administrator, Roberts had good journalistic skills, and later became a well-known sports writer with the *San Francisco Chronicle* under the pseudonym of "Bobs." Others joined in, such as J.D. Robertson, who became the first Chairman; John McLaren, whose name is forever associated with Golden Gate Park; and "Dougie" Erskine, from the *San Francisco Examiner*.

Between 1898 and 1902, Roberts and Pomeroy laid the groundwork for the California Football League (CFL), and it was finally launched during 1902 with six teams: Independents, Albion Rovers, Vampires, Thistle F.C., Oakland Hornets and the American-British Rifles. The Rifles, an association formed at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, was comprised mainly of Oakland Hornet players. The A-B Rifles emerged as the first champions in 1902-03 but within a few years, most of the players returned to the Hornets. A year later, on September 4, 1903 delegates from the Vampires, American-British Rifles, French A.C., Independents, Albion Rovers, Oakland Hornets, Pickwicks, and Occidentals, met at the Spreckles Building in San Francisco to form a larger association to run the sport throughout northern California. The result was the California Association Football Union (CAFU) that became more generally known as the California Football Association (CFA), and pre-dated the formation of the national association by a year.

Early Days 1902-1910

Following the success of the American-British Rifles in 1902-03, the Scottish contingent made their presence felt as Thistle F.C. were crowned champions a year later. During the first championship season, the California State Cup was inaugurated, and from the multitude of entries, a new team emerged victorious, the Independents. This club was founded by Bill Owen whose only legacy left to posterity is the team photograph which today hangs on the wall of the California Soccer Association-North offices in San Francisco. The Independents dominated the State Cup during the first four years of its existence, winning the trophy four times in a row, and was only displaced by the Vampires in 1906-07. In the meantime, the club made a big impression in the league winning the championship in successive seasons 1904-06. However, their success was fleeting. Following the Hornets triumph in the 1906-07 championship, the Independents quietly disappeared into the mists of San Francisco soccer lore never to be heard from again.

The gradual spread of soccer throughout northern California during the first six years of the C.F.A.'s existence can be gauged by the numerous applications it received for membership. In 1904, Sacramento had a team accepted into the league, but its membership proved to be rather erratic due, no doubt, to the distance and expense of traveling into San Francisco and Oakland. Eighteen years later, a McKinley Park team emerged to capture the California State Cup in the teeth of San Francisco opposition. Their success in 1922 remains to the only occasion that a team from Sacramento has been triumphant in the State Cup.

Administrative problems remained particularly with grounds and referees. Very few enclosed fields existed in San Francisco at this time and the league was not to find a permanent home until Balboa Stadium was opened in 1953. The league led a gypsy existence over the years as soccer grounds dotted the city landscape at the Presidio Athletic Ground; Central Park (8th & Market); Ocean Shore (12th & Mission); Recreation Park (15th & Valencia); Kezar Stadium; Haight Street grounds; Memorial Field (at Hayes and Market-now site of the Davies Symphony Hall) at Civic Center; Ewing Field (now Ewing Court); Crocker-Amazon; Galileo High School in the Marina; St. Ignatius (now Nieves Field); the Polo Fields (since 1916); Beach Chalet; and most recently, West Sunset.

In the early years, the East Bay provided better facilities with enclosed grounds at Freeman's Park (home of Albion Rovers) in Oakland, and at Croll's Garden (home of the Vampires) in Alameda, as well as Neptune Beach in Alameda also. Indeed, the C.F.A. quickly recognized the wisdom of renting Freeman's Park from Albion Rovers for the annual sum of \$15, as this venue proved to be the best means of raising money for the association. Located at 60th & San Pablo, Freeman's Park was more easily accessible for ferry travelers from San Francisco, and hosted many of the prestige league championship games as well as numerous State Cup Finals. When the Vampires defeated the Hornets 1-0 on April 21, 1907, the crowd paid \$223.25 to see the game. The following season an all-Scottish State Cup Quarter-Final clash that saw Albion Rovers overcome Thistle F.C. was watched by a crowd that paid \$110.25. On the other hand, Croll's Gardens, in Alameda was a much harder venue to get to, and crowd attendances suffered accordingly.

Expenses generally remained low. A special policeman was hired for cup finals at \$2 for the day, and referees were unpaid except when they handled a cup final. The inevitable shortage of officials was remedied by the founding of the Official Referee's California Football Association Union in 1904. The new union set high standards and demanded that any individual who chose to take up the life of a whistler exercise "competence and impartiality." The growing stature of referees as an indispensable part of the game was finally recognized by the beginning of 1908-09 season, and at a meeting on November 12, 1908 the California Football League agreed to pay officials a fee of \$1 per game. At the same meeting, the C.F.L. codified the issuing of amateur cards to players and teams as a means of stopping more gifted players from playing for more than one team on a Sunday. Although the league had successfully emerged from the mayhem created by the devastating 1906 earthquake intact, the State Cup did not fare so well. The trophy was badly damaged and had to be replaced at a cost of \$200. The Association also managed to survive the financial collapse of the Market Street Bank where part of their funds was deposited.

Expansion of the League

As the first decade of soccer came to an end, the Hornets, Albion Rovers, Vampires, and Burns confirmed the status of the East Bay as the hotbed of soccer in the Bay Area, with only the San Francisco-based Thistle F.C. able to offer any real challenge to their supremacy. This was to change with the establishment of the great Barbarian soccer club in 1906. The Barbarian Rugby and Cricket Club had existed since 1899 after a touring rugby union team from New Zealand played a number of exhibition games in San Francisco. Although the membership of the club was composed largely of Australians and New Zealanders, Harry Eliot, an Englishman, and "Taffy" Phillips, a Welshman, were notable exceptions. Both played rugby for the Barbarian Club, and soccer for the Oakland Hornets; and when other players got involved with both sports, it was suggested that a merger might be mutually advantageous to both clubs. After a contentious vote, the merger was approved by a majority of one, and by virtue of this slim margin the great Barbarian soccer club was born.

From 1906 onwards the Barbarian team graced the playing fields of the SFSFL for over forty years. The "Barbs" were as easily recognizable for their stylish play, as by the distinctive dark-blue shirts emblazoned with a large "B"

they wore. Although they lifted the SFSFL championship only once, during the 1920's, they made their first impression in Bay Area soccer circles when they won the State Championship in 1914-15, and were successful again in 1922-23 and 1924-25. The Hornets now became the Barbarians second-team and showed their mettle as they lifted the Intermediate Cup for three successive years from 1928-31. Despite their years of successes, changing conditions, especially after the Second World War led to one final merger. The Barbarians and Hornets were eventually absorbed by the S.F. Scots, who had emerged in 1930 from Thistle F.C., and who have retained their name down to the present day.

All-Star & International Games

The innovative Edgar Pomeroy was the first to suggest playing "International" games between the top English and Scottish players in the league. Pomeroy had previously taken the Oakland Hornets to play in a series of exhibition games in Sacramento in 1894 to popularize the game there. In 1906, the opportunity to put an All-Star team together presented itself with the visit of the Corinthian Casuals to the United States. The Corinthians were one of England's finest amateur teams and had dominated the English F.A. Cup for a number of years prior to the beginning of the Football League in 1890. They were continually a source of players for England's national team and their status was one of legendary proportions by the time of their visit to the U.S. The Corinthians took on the best that the San Francisco league could muster and easily overcame the local All-Star team. They would return to San Francisco 31 years later during their 1937-38 world tour. In 1908, a California All-Star team visited Vancouver and played exhibition games against individual teams in Portland and Seattle also. The Pacific Coast Association League of Vancouver was so anxious to have a team from California visit that they were prepared to guarantee \$800, offered by a Mr. Con Jones, to cover traveling expenses for the team.

The interest exhibited in All-Star teams was such that the notion of "international" games took hold, and became a regular feature of the league season in the two decades that followed. The preponderance of English and Scottish players (or those from first and second generation families) with leading sides made England v. Scotland a natural fixture, as well as an annual event. These exhibitions usually produced large attendances and, if the date of the 1919 game is typical (played on December 21), took place shortly before Christmas. The ending of World War One hostilities at 11 a.m. on Monday, November 11, 1918 was an event that occasioned such a game. The league program was held over for one week and the following Sunday, November 17, a Great Britain and an American team met in a representative game at the Eighth & Market Street ground. The Britons were victorious 4-2, and the *San Francisco Call & Post* reported the following day that all proceeds from the game were turned over to the United War Work Campaign Fund. Other cities on the West Coast followed suit, and the same newspaper noted that Seattle were 2-0 winners over Tacoma in an inter-city game. Panoramic photographs of these games can still be seen in the offices of the SFSFL and the CSAN.

Changing of the Guard 1911-20

The second decade of organized soccer in the Bay Area brought major changes in the complexion of the league as newly formed clubs energetically challenged the dominance of the older established teams. The Vampires State Cup triumph in 1909-10 (their second) was repeated again in 1913-14. However, after they carried off their second SFSFL championship in 1910-11, ten years were to pass before another founder-member club, Thistle FC, annexed the title. The Vampires State Cup success in 1914 proved, in retrospect, to be the end of an era. From 1910 onwards a changing of the guard was evident as new clubs with widely diverging backgrounds were beginning to make their names. Little is known about S.F.F.C., who succeeded the Vampires as SFSFL champions in 1911-12, except that it was their only success.

During this period Burns S.C. appeared and created a major surprise when they won the State Cup that same 1912 season. Named after the Scottish poet Robbie Burns, the Burns outfit became a permanent fixture in the SFSFL for the next two decades, repeating their State Cup success in 1925-26, and 1930-31. Their only SFSFL championship came in 1927-28.

Pastime is another club about which relatively little information has survived. This team was sponsored by Jimmy Askham and quickly made their presence felt with a State Cup success in 1911. Askham's team followed this initial showing with three consecutive league pennants between 1912-15, the first time this feat had been achieved by any club in active competition. Unfortunately, they faded into obscurity within four years and by 1919-20 were no longer members of the SFSFL First Division.

Two clubs that became dominant forces in San Francisco soccer over the following twenty years emerged during the middle years of this decade. The Olympic Club and the Union Iron Works (UIW) were about as far apart in social and professional terms as one might imagine. The Olympic Club was founded in 1860 for the express purpose of providing young men with an outlet for physical exercise. The first President, Gerritt W. Bell, an athletic-minded Irishman, helped foster the sporting links that have since become synonymous with the Olympic Club name. Under the guidance of their tireless commissioner Edgar Pomeroy, the Olympic Club joined the SFSFL in 1914, and their first official league game took place on October 14, 1914 when they met Burns F.C. The "Winged O's" quickly took flight and in only their second season swept to their first SFSFL championship.

This initial success was to the beginning of many for the Club as they established themselves as the most powerful team in northern California over the following two decades. The team gravitated around charismatic trainer Bill von Poellnitz who guided the fortunes of the club for over 40 years. Six years later, the O's were champions again in 1922-23, and followed this with back-to-back SFSFL titles in 1924-26. Between the first and second championships, Olympic Club won the State Cup twice in successive seasons 1918-20. Sandwiched between the second and third championship seasons was yet another State Cup triumph in 1923-24. Their greatest era of success began in 1929 when they swept to the first of five successive SFSFL championships (1929-34), and added two additional State Cup successes (1931-33). During this period their domination of northern California soccer was so complete that over one three year period they played 72 games- losing only once! By 1935 they had won the championship a record nine times, and the State Cup on no less than five occasions. Only the Greek Americans, in recent years, have surpassed their league championship mark.

Union Iron Works provided solid opposition to the Olympic Club for at least a decade between 1915 and 1925, and were what would be described in Europe as a "works" team. The Union Iron Works Company had begun business in 1849, and combined with the rapid growth and industrialization of San Francisco over the following 50 years, had become the leading iron processing company on the west coast. The UIW club made a remarkable beginning in the SFSFL by winning the State Cup during the 1915-16 season, and proceeded to retain the trophy for the following two seasons. Its sister club, Union Iron Works-Alameda then captured the State title in 1918-19. UIW combined this success with back-to-back league championships from 1916-18, thus equaling the two league and cup successes achieved by the Independents in earlier years. Their third and final championship came in 1921-22.

By all accounts, Union Iron Works were a closely-knit well-run club with officers elected on a yearly basis. Surviving documentation from the 1919-20 season reveals many interesting facts. Their Secretary/Treasurer was the legendary William Campbell, who fulfilled the same capacity with the SFSFL and the CPL for many years, and became known as the "Grand Old Man" of California soccer. Their home ground was listed at 8th and Market Streets (Old Central Park). Presumably, they shared this ground with other First Division clubs, although their league schedule does list home and away games. Their first game of the 1919-20 season was an away fixture with the Barbarians on October 5. This date, when compared with Olympic Club's first league game in 1914, confirms that the

the mid-1930 when the team finally disappeared from view. As the parent company was so closely tied to heavy industry, it is most likely that the team was a casualty of the depression.

The 1920s and the North Beach influence

The emergence of Italian teams, concentrated in the North Beach area of the city, made a significant contribution to the development of soccer with their dazzling combination of style and skill that served to challenge for the first time the old British style of "push and run" soccer. The first organization to emerge with an undeniable Italian flavor was the Circolo Ricreativo Italiano Virtus founded in June 1917 with clubrooms on Mason Street between Green and Vallejo. In February 1919, the Union Sportive Italiana was organized with facilities at 120 Columbus Avenue, and later that year, a third group, Sporting Club Italia, came into existence located on Powell at the corner of Broadway.

All three clubs prospered during the early years of their existence. However, recognition that strength lay in consolidation prompted the Virtus Club and Sporting Club Italia to merge under the banner of Italia Virtus Club in 1921. At this stage of development, both clubs began to field soccer teams, and while there is no record of their participation in the S.F.S.F.L. during the early 1920's, it is possible that both teams may have played in the Bay Cities League, covering the East Bay, after 1921. Old existing photographs from the period list the Italia Virtus team as "Soccer Champions" in 1924 and Unione Sportiva Italiana as "Soccer Champions" in 1925, but do not specify any particular league to which they were affiliated.

Both clubs were admitted to the First Division of the SFSFL prior to the 1924-25 replacing the outgoing Caledonians and Vampires clubs. To add a bit of Italian flavor to the historic opening day of the season, on Sunday October 5, 1924, spectators at Tobin Field were treated to the sight of Tito Schipa, the well-known Italian tenor, ceremonially kicking off the new campaign prior to the meeting of Unione Sportiva Italia and the Barbarians. Within a year, Unione Sportiva Italiana and Virtus were merged into Unione Sportiva Italiana Virtus, or USIV. The main objective of the amalgamation in 1926 was for the purpose of erecting a modern clubhouse at their present location 1630 Stockton Street. Moreover, the advantages of unification off the field became quickly apparent on the field over the next three seasons as USIV won their only SFSFL championship success in 1928-29. Thereafter, they became a permanent fixture in the First Division schedule during the 1930's. However, the 1935-36 season was their last as USIV. On June 1, 1936, the club finally realized their 10-year-old dream of a new clubhouse, and from the 1936-37 season they became known as the Italian Athletic Club. By 1942, the metamorphosis was almost complete when they became the San Francisco Athletic Club (SFAC).

William Campbell - The "Grand Old Man" Of California Soccer

Bill Campbell is remembered as arguably the most well-known ambassador of soccer and able administrator of the sport in California for three decades between 1915 and 1935. He held the dual positions of Secretary of the San Francisco League and California Football Association simultaneously for over twenty years, and oversaw many changes in the development and structure of the game in northern California during that time. Campbell was born in Falkirk, Scotland in 1874, and an article in the *San Francisco Examiner* published shortly after his death indicated that he had spent some time in the Transvaal (later South Africa) working, or supervising work, in the diamond mines there. By the time he succeeded the original secretary Bill Crawford, he was attached to the Union Iron Works team.

Those who met Campbell remembered him as a rather gregarious man who had a good sense of humor, yet he retained an aura of firmness that garnered the respect of players and coaches alike. Campbell made his presence felt quickly in 1916 as the CFL invested in a their first piece of machinery- a typewriter. Hence, reports and the minutes of meetings, would no longer be handwritten, but would be more easily read from typed script. Campbell also managed

the major reorganization of soccer in northern California that occurred on August 13, 1921 when the California Football League (CFL) was dissolved and replaced by the San Francisco Football League (SFFL) and the Bay Cities League (covering the East Bay). The SFFL began with six charter clubs: Barbarians, Burns, Olympic Club, Thistle F.C., Union Iron Works, and Vampires. A number of clubs from the old CFL league, such as the Alameda Rangers, Alameda Union Iron Works, and Moores became founder members of the Bay Cities League.

The years that followed saw continual progress. Campbell, along with other capable administrators such as Maurice Hudson and J.N. Young oversaw the successful visit by Hakoah Vienna during May 1926 when they toured the United States. A year later, in 1927, a Second Division was introduced to the SFSFL, and by the turn of the decade the SFSFL administered a University League, and International League of San Francisco also. Moreover, this era witnessed the beginning of midweek games played under floodlights.

Much of the goodwill that had developed between the SFFL and the local newspapers was due in no small part to Campbell's personality and friendly demeanor. Indeed, he wrote short previews of upcoming games for the papers, and duly followed up after the games on Sunday with results and reports. In the interim, "The Grand Old Man" had become an affectionate sobriquet for the League's apparently indefatigable Secretary. On hearing of Campbell's death, the *Examiner's* Sports Editor felt that he had lost a valued friend. Campbell was stricken by a heart attack at the age of 61, on Wednesday, November 27, 1935, while taking his customary cold shower in his home at 98 Seward Street. The shower was part of his morning routine. After breakfast, Campbell walked from his home to the Pacific Building where he worked. The day before his death, he had complained about a heavy cold he had caught while watching a soccer game the previous Sunday.

Less than 18 months after his death, it was announced that Bela Lugosi had donated a trophy, to be known as the *William Campbell Memorial Trophy* to be played for annually between the San Francisco League champions and the Los Angeles League champions. The inaugural game, between the Los Angeles Magyars and Rovers, was played at Loyola Field before a large crowd filled with Hollywood luminaries.

Bela Lugosi's interest in the game was a natural one as the sport had gained a firm foothold in Central Europe, including Hungary, prior to World War One. Immortalized for his portrayal of Count Dracula in the 1931 Universal movie, Lugosi was an extremely cultured man and he saw soccer as a means of promoting the vibrant Hungarian community in Los Angeles. He gave financial support to the Los Angeles Magyar team, acted as honorary president of the Los Angeles Soccer League for many years, and never lost an opportunity to encourage interest in the sport especially among youngsters. By 1935, Lugosi's Magyar team has won the championship three times, and usually competed against the powerful Douglas Aircraft Flyers, Hollywood Sheiks, Fox Studio, Lighthorsemen, Viking AC, and the L.A. Scots. Indeed, when the Magyars defeated the S.F. Viking SC to win the State Cup, a newspaper report of the game noted that the Los Angeles side "headed back to Dracula's Castle ... with the State Cup."

The William Campbell Memorial Trophy became an annual event until the 1947-48 when the L.A. Magyars won the trophy. Since the break-up of the California Soccer Association into the CSA-N and CSA-S the trophy has not been played for. It currently rests in the offices of the Greater Los Angeles League- and awaits resurrection!

The Inter-War Years: Mercury A.C. and Matthew J. Boxer

The 1920's proved to a pivotal decade in the establishment of a new generation of soccer teams due to the influx of immigrants from Germany, Russia, France, and other European countries where the Great War had caused cataclysmic changes. Some of the most famous teams in the SFSFL took their first bows in competitive soccer during this decade: Mercury A.C., Viking AC, Teutonia, and Rovers. The proliferation of new clubs was so numerous

that, by 1927, the SFSFL took the inevitable step and added a Second Division to the league. By 1929 the ethnic diversity of these new teams was sufficient to promulgate an International League of San Francisco, even if it did only last for one season.

The beginning of this "new wave" of soccer clubs occurred with the formation of Mercury AC in 1923 by Alex Beley, Gene Sarabun, and Fred Garbachoff. All three were Russians who had fled their homeland after the Bolshevik Revolution. Until its demise in 1984, Mercury was the longest surviving soccer team in San Francisco still operating under the same name. The Mercury name will always be associated closely with Matthew J. Boxer who joined in 1932, and began an association with the Russian club that would last for over sixty years and end only with his retirement, and death, in 1992.

From the mid-1920's onwards, Mercury developed into one of the most powerful outfits in the SFSFL. Boxer distinguished himself as a player during these years and was a member of the team that ran away with the Second Division championship in 1933-34. By the early 1940's, he had taken over the management of the club and shaped a successful team from a nucleus of youngsters ranging in ages from 13 to 18, along with seasoned veterans such as Fred Albright, Otto Krawets, Louis Silber, and Carl Wolters. The result was Mercury's first SFSFL title in 1947-48, and it repeated this achievement again in 1955-56. The thriving Russian community in San Francisco supported the club's fundraising activities at their Mercury Hall clubhouse. In the meantime, Boxer's administrative abilities were transmuted into the Presidency of the CSA-N. From here, he rose to the national level of administration in the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) becoming Vice President. In recognition of his services, he was elected to the USSF Hall of Fame.

Mercury remained a solid outfit during most of its active career, and was never far away from the top of the First (and later Major) Division of the SFSFL. However, by the late 1960's and early 1970's, their ethnic Russian base was slowly eroded away due to a dearth of talented players. At late as 1980, Mercury AC finished third in the Major Division, but a perceptible decline set in thereafter. Within three years the club tumbled down dramatically to the bottom of Second Division. At the conclusion of the 1983-84 season they were relegated to the Third Division, and finally withdrew from active competition. Nevertheless, the spirit of the old club lives on through Leo Shoomiloff, who is the current SFSFL President.

Viking A.C.

The honor of being the oldest club still operating under the same banner has fallen to the Viking Athletic Club. Founded in June 1923, the club was playing in the SFSFL within three years, and their red-and-white striped jerseys made them one of the more distinct outfits in the league. The 1930-31 season saw them edge out Mercury for promotion from the Second Division. The club remained a solid fixture in the top division and created a major surprise when they emerged victorious in the 1935-36 State Cup competition. By the beginning of the 1940's, a major turning point in the history of the club took place when Derk Zylker, Al Gates, George Post, and Paul Ehram took the best players from a Saturday morning high school league they had organized, and molded them into a youthful Viking outfit.

Derk Zylker, in particular, was well known throughout the soccer communities on the Pacific Coast. A native of Holland, Zylker excelled as a goalkeeper, and player for Holland in the 1912 Olympic Games at Stockholm. After coming to San Francisco, he played for the Olympic Club, and later managed Teutonia. Shortly after becoming actively involved with the Viking Club, during the 1941-42 season, he died in an accident. Nevertheless, both sons carried on the family tradition by playing for and managing the club. Indeed, the family connection with the Viking Club was continued when Derk Zylker's great-grandson made his debut for the club in the early 1990's.

Paul Ehram coached and managed the club during its most successful period taking over immediately after Zylker's death. That season the Vikings won the Intermediate Cup, and the combination of Johnny Sneddon, at

centre-forward, and Hommo Zylker, on the right wing, proved to be a devastating combination. The following season the club finished third in the First Division. The 1946-47 season saw a patchwork team struggle to finish seventh in the First Division, while the Alliance team finished in second spot in their division. The real potential of the Viking Club came through in dramatic fashion when a team composed of First and Alliance Division players upended Teutonia, then League and State Champions, 2-1 to win the John Elliot Perpetual Trophy at the end of that season. The Vikings built upon this success the next season when the First Division team finished in fourth spot, and reached the northern State Cup Final against Mexico. The early 1950's saw an extremely powerful Viking team lift the SFSFL Championship in successive seasons 1951-53, and held the State Cup for two successive seasons 1952-54. The backbone of the team revolved around players such as goalkeeper Ray Stewart, Johnny Harlan, Steve Shotwell, Volkert "Frisky" Zylker and his brother Hommo Zylker, and Ernst Feibusch.

Ernie Feibusch

For practically all of his adult life, first as a player, and later as a coach, Ernie Feibusch has retained an enthusiasm and zest for soccer that the passage of years has not dimmed. More importantly, this enthusiasm was channeled into developing, along with Marty Krumm and Steve Negroesco, the first junior soccer league in northern California for children, begun in 1954 and still going strong today (as well as the CYSA). From this nursery has emanated, over the years, due in no small part to his legendary coaching style, some of the best soccer talent to be seen in the local leagues, and even at state and national level.

Mr. Feibusch was born in Germany in 1924 and left the country with his family a couple of years after the Nazi's rise to power. Following his arrival in San Francisco in July 1937, he quickly established himself as a no-nonsense half-back with the Viking Club. He saw active service during the latter stages of World War Two, and on a bombing raid over Germany his plane was stricken by enemy fire, but luckily came down just inside the Swiss border. After the war, Ernie's teaching qualifications led him to a post at Lowell High School. Here, he combined teaching with soccer coaching, and in a short time made the Lowell name one of the most feared in the City High School Championship for over thirty years. Although he retired from his teaching post at Lowell a few years ago, he still remains active in the running of the Viking Club.

Otherwise he will, doubtless, be found in the vicinity of a soccer ground somewhere in the city shouting encouragement, or otherwise, to his high school team. Such is a brief description of one of northern California's most influential figures, and it is doubtful if anyone has done more in the cause of soccer in recent times, or deserves the sobriquet "Mr. Soccer" more than does Ernie Feibusch.

The 1940s and the Rise of Teutonia

Eight young German immigrants founded the Teutonia Football Club in August 1923 and the team became one of the most famous names in the history of the SFSFL. Teutonia's team colors were unmistakably distinctive. White shirts, black shorts, black socks, and a large black "T" on the left breast of the jersey. George Kestler and Peter Korbus had long associations with the club as players and managers, and the founding of a Second Division for the 1927-28 season gave Teutonia their chance. In their first season, they rocked the soccer community in northern California by eliminating the reigning SFSFL league champions, Burns F.C. from the State Cup. Over the next two seasons, they narrowly missed promotion to the First Division, and then competed in the ephemeral International Soccer and won the championship.

Teutonia made their debut in the First Division at Ewing Field on October 5, 1930 and hammered the Sons of St. George 5-0. Success in the MacGregor Intermediate Cup (1932-33 and 1934-35) helped to bolster their growing reputation. In the decade that followed, Teutonia were rarely out of the top three in the First Division, but were never

quite able to break the stranglehold of Olympic Club and Rovers, the two most dominant teams in San Francisco during the 1930's. In the State Cup, the story was the same. The redoubtable Germans regularly reached the final stages of the competition but seemed to falter when the trophy was within their grasp.

A.A.C.'s breakthrough occurred in the 1941-42 season when they finally won their first SFSFL title. With a management team of Kestler and Korbus, the German side was led by phenomenal goalscorer, Hans Specht. After this, Teutonia went on to win another four league titles in an eight-year span, and continued to pursue the State Cup. The Los Angeles side dominated this competition during the early 1940's and held the State Cup for five consecutive years, as well as the William Campbell Memorial Trophy four years running. Teutonia finally broke the Scottish stranglehold in 1945-46 when they brought the Campbell Memorial Trophy north to San Francisco. The 1946-47 season proved to be the finest in the club's history as they finally captured the State Cup along with a fourth SFSFL championship. They accepted an invitation to visit Salt Lake City in July 1947 and play two exhibition games against Athletic Club Germania as part of Utah's Centennial celebrations. Teutonia were victorious in both contests.

The club went through a transitional period in the early 1950's but rebounded to win the State Cup in 1954-55. By 1957-58 they had captured the U.S. Open Cup "North," title, and a year later they were San Francisco League Champions again. This marked the onset of another "Golden Age" during the early 1960's. The German team won two consecutive SFSFL league crowns between 1962-64, edging out the Greek Americans on both occasions. The 1964-66 campaigns were memorable ones also as Teutonia and the Scots battled for the SFSFL championship all the way to the finishing line. During the final weeks of the 1964-65 season, the German team lost a vital game, and gave the Scots a two-point advantage that they did not relinquish. The following year was even more heartbreaking as they finished on 20 points with their Scottish rivals, but lost the league title on goal difference.

The 1965-66 season proved to be a pivotal one for Teutonia as their strength began to ebb away over the next 4-5 years. They had a narrow squeak with relegation at the end of the 1969-70 season, yet were Open Cup "North" winners in 1967-68, and retained the U.S. Amateur Cup "North" between 1968-70. A year later, the German side had a disastrous season, finished in joint second-last place with S.F.A.C. on 11 points, and by the difference of a single goal, Teutonia were condemned to a play-off with Club Peru. They lost, and were relegated to the Second Division. Teutonia never recovered from this setback. Although the team finished 3rd in their first season in the lower division, they were well out of contention for promotion, and the following season, 1972-73, proved to be their last. In that final game, Teutonia closed their continuous career in SFSFL league football as they had begun it- with a win. In this case, they triumphed 2-1 over the Incas. An attempt to resuscitate the club during the late 1970's resulted in a four-year tenureship in the Fourth Division between 1976-80. However, the effort was neither successful nor sustained.

Rovers, Union Espanol, and the Verdi Club

The introduction of a Second Division in 1927 brought to the fore a number of teams whose stars shone brightly from a time in the San Francisco soccer firmament, but whose time was destined to be of a shorter duration. Nevertheless, for the period in which Rovers, Union Espanola, and the Verdi Club were active in the league, their imprint was quite astonishing. Rovers proved to be the most successful of the three. The team was founded in the Fall 1926 by a group of local high school players: Frank Woods, Walt Farmer, Bill Petrie, Tom Wicklow, Alec Graham, George Cooper, and were coached by the veteran player, Harry Roberts.

Rovers quickly found their feet, winning the University and Club League in their first season, and followed this in 1928 by taking the Second Division Championship. Now in the First Division, the young team found the competition stiffer, yet still managed to capture the California State Cup in 1929-30. During this formative period, Rovers provided a taste of things to come by winning the Annual Five-a-Side Tournament five years in a row (1927-32). A reserve team (1930) and an alliance team (1935) were organized to help develop talent, from which Al Finlayson and Ted

Cordery emerged. These two players proved to be a deadly combination for the club over the next ten years as Rovers firmly established themselves as one of the top teams in San Francisco, and proved to be the Olympic Club's nemesis in the league. After finishing second to the "Winged O's" three years in a row (1931-34), Rovers finally lifted the John O. Bellis Memorial Trophy in 1934-35, and retained the championship for the next four years running through 1938-39. During this period, the club swept to a second State triumph in 1936-37, and had the honor of being the first winner of the Campbell Memorial Trophy the same year. They retained the Campbell Trophy for a second time in 1938-39, and were SFSFL champions for the sixth time in seven years in 1940-41.

From this point on, however, their fortunes began to wane. Many of their personnel were drafted into the armed forces after the U.S. entered the Second World War and never quite recovered afterwards. While the team returned with a State Cup win in 1949-50, it proved to be their last trophy, and they disbanded after the 1954 season ended. Players such as Al Finalyson, Alec Graham, and the Wicklow brothers, and Ted Cordery had long and distinguished careers in the SFSFL. Cordery continued his career in the administration of the game, and was elected to the USSF Hall of Fame in 1994, two years before his death. Frank Woods preceded him in the Hall of Fame having risen to become U.S.S.F. President.

The rise of Union Espanola was extremely swift and significant also as the club were destined to become the pathfinder team for the growing Latin community in San Francisco. The club was founded in 1926 and entered the new Second Division of the SFSFL in its first season of competition. Espanola won the division handily in 1927-28, and gained promotion to the top division when the cellar team in the First Division was unable to field a team against them in the play-off game. During the 1930s, Union Espanola became a mainstay in the top division based on a nucleus of Andy Boido, Bill Roby, George Souza, Dave & Pete Ruiz, as well as Charlie Souza. Indeed, when the Mexican All-Stars took on the San Francisco All-Stars at Seals Stadium over the 1938 Labor Day weekend, all of the above players were in the roster.

The Espanolas made history at the end of the 1939-40 season by recording their first league title, and repeated the feat again two years later, in 1942-43. In between, they won the Intermediate Cup in 1940-41. After returning to active competition in 1946-47, the club gained promotion back to the First Division a year later without losing a single game. Despite coming close in the league and State Cup on a number of occasions, further success proved elusive. In the ensuing years Union Espanol suffered in the competition for players from Mexico A.C. (founded by a group of students from Mexico City in 1927), Club Peru (founded in 1926) and El Salvador (founded in 1949) and dropped out of the First Division. The club continued on until the late 1960's at which point it withdrew from active league participation. A tangible legacy of the club remains as the Patio Espanol on Alemany Boulevard and includes a trophy room detailing many of the club's accomplishments.

The Verdi Club made a sensational debut in the San Francisco league in 1933 after being accepted into the Second Division. They went neck and neck with Mercury until the end of the season when they missed promotion to the First Division by one point. However, a visit to Los Angeles over the Christmas period to play an exhibition game against top Latin side Juventus helped to establish the legendary exploits of the club. The team chartered a coach on one of the Southern Pacific trains in order to accommodate the fifty members who made the trip. Led by the mercurial Ardizzone, who scored three goals in an unforgettable encounter, the San Francisco outfit shocked their hosts by winning 4-3.

This was merely a prelude to their memorable unbeaten run to the State Cup final, sweeping aside the Maltese, USIV, Teutonia, all First Division sides, before downing Los Angeles side Western Pacific in the semi-final. For the first time, a second division team reached the final of a state competition, and the Verdi Club proved to be tough opposition against the powerful Douglas Aircraft eleven before the Los Angeles side prevailed 2-0 and 4-2 over the two games.

Easily recognizable in their distinctive green and gold colors, the Verdi team was an outgrowth of other existing Italian teams, and will forever be linked with John Ardizzone, the Gambucci brothers, George Campi, and Mario Pieretti. Another memorable feature of the team was the Verdi-ettes composed of girlfriends and wives who were on hand to cheer the team in every game they played.

The following season, 1934-35, the Italian side won the Second Division outright, and spent the remainder of their SFSFL tenureship in the First Division. Adding the skillful German players Hans Specht and Carl Schneider, the Verdi Club regularly vied with Rovers, Olympic Club, Teutonia, and Mercury for the league title. The team were back in the State Cup final in 1944-45, but were unlucky again, this time against the dominating Los Angeles Scots. A year later, the green and gold team was finally crowned San Francisco league champions for 1945-46. By virtue of this triumph, the Verdi Club returned to Los Angeles again on May 18, 1947 to contest the Campbell Memorial Trophy with the Hungarian Magyar team. As on previous occasions, the home team proved too strong for the San Francisco side that narrowly lost a thrilling encounter.

By the time the Verdi Club captured a second league championship in 1949-50, their star was already in eclipse. John Ardizzone's retirement at the end of the 1946-47, after 22 years of playing actively, was clearly one of the factors. By the mid-1950's unable to replenish old legs with younger players, the Verdi Club withdrew from the league never to return again. Following his retirement, John Ardizzone became a mainstay as league secretary from the remainder of his life, and died in 1980. Fred Gambucci remained an active member at the Verdi Club also until his death in 1992. During their heyday, the club also had the foresight to concentrate their activities at a clubhouse built on Mariposa Street that still stands today. Opened in 1934, the Verdi Club building is a tangible reminder of their existence and remains the home of the San Francisco Soccer Football League offices.

The War Years and the California "Split" 1940-53

By 1940, the playing grounds available to the SFSFL had changed dramatically. Old Central Park, Ocean Shore and Tobin Field disappeared during the 1920's. As a result, Park Stadium (Polo Fields) was used on a more regular basis (games had been scheduled there as early as 1916). Over the next fifteen years, Memorial Stadium, Ewing Field (in 1938), and Recreation Park also made way for planned construction. On the other hand, the Beach Chalet fields in Golden Gate Park were developed and opened by 1936, and Crocker-Amazon began to host games also. For the duration of World War Two Crocker-Amazon was commandeered by the armed forces, as was Beach Chalet at the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. Both were eventually returned for Park and Recreation use. In the interim, the SFSFL spent a few years at Galileo High School, and this venue proved to be a popular spot, with health crowds at the Sunday games. However, it was only with the opening of Balboa Stadium that the SFSFL finally had a venue dedicated exclusively to soccer. The push for a stadium was spearheaded by a determined group led by Matt Boxer, the Korbus brothers, and other league officials. Mayor Christopher formally opened the stadium in August 1953 and it has remained the home of San Francisco League soccer for almost 50 years. In recognition of Matthew Boxer's services to soccer, the facility was renamed Boxer Stadium in 1995.

Inevitably, the war caused many of the teams to suspend operations, and the SFSFL operated at a reduced level of activity until the 1946-47 season at which time teams returned with full player rosters and two divisions again. The league got back into its stride quickly, and the season ended with a San Francisco All-Star team hosting Hapoel Palestine (now Hapoel Tel Aviv) in May 1947 at Kezar Stadium. Prior to the game in San Francisco, Hapoel were unbeaten on their tour. However, the All-Stars stopped the visitors dead in their tracks by winning 4-2 on a pair of goals each from Tommy Roberts and Al Finlayson.

Two years later, in June 1949, the All-Star team distinguished itself again when they defeated the National Open Cup champions from St. Louis, Joe Simpkins, 5-4 in a thriller at Kezar Stadium, and garnered a reputation as

"champion" killers. The Simpkins club was a formidable outfit, boasting five players who were to play in the U.S. national team at the World Cup the following year, and who sensationally beat England 1-0. This contest was a personal triumph for H. Derk Zylker, the Vikings attacker, who had been snubbed by the national Olympic side a year earlier despite scoring two goals in the Chicago trials. He scored the opening goal against the St. Louis club, and had a hand in the other four. The All-Star games continued throughout the 1950's and into the 1960's with the visit of top professional clubs from all over the world, such as Manchester United, Liverpool, Bayern Munich, Glasgow Celtic, Manchester City, 1860 Munich, Nurnburg, Leon, Sporting Cristal, Benfica, Flamengo, West Ham, Rot Weiss Essen, Eintracht Frankfurt, and even England's Under-23's, to name only a few.

The year 1949 was notable also for the most significant change in the administration of soccer in California as the California Soccer Association split into north and south entities. The California Soccer Association-North (CSAN) would now administer from San Luis Obispo northwards, while the California Soccer Association-South (CSAS) covered from Bakersfield southwards.

The aftermath of World War Two wrought changes in a manner similar to what had occurred after the Great War ended in 1918. A new wave of immigrants from Europe and Central America meant new blood and new teams. Indeed, the popularity of the sport increased over the following 15 years, with the addition of a Third Division. At least one-third of the new teams who applied for membership were of Latin extraction, such as the Peruvians, Pan Americans, Columbia AC, Azteca, and the very popular Guadalajara club, and they began to make their mark during the 1950s. El Salvador, founded in 1949, was the first as they wrested the league championship from the Viking Club in 1953-54, and repeated again in 1957-58. That same season saw another new team Nicaragua, from the Second Division, lift the Intermediate Cup, followed in 1954-55 by Union Espanol. In the U.S. Open Cup, Mexico were California North winners two years running 1954-56, and they lifted the Gallo Cup during the same period also.

The 1950s proved to be a very successful period for San Francisco's only Jewish club Hakoah A.C. Founded originally in 1926, the team made its first impression by winning the Intermediate Cup in 1949-50. By 1953-54 they had progressed to Open Cup North winners, and won their first championship in 1954-55. The Jewish side repeated the feat in 1956-57 and lifted the Gallo Cup that same season. Thereafter, the club remained a fixture in the league for the next twenty years, while contesting the Benny Goodman Cup with Hakoah Los Angeles on a regular basis. However, they were never quite able to match their achievements during this brief interlude in the ten years immediately after the war.

Another team who took their first bow during this period was the Sons of Italy. Under the guidance of Mario Moro, the Sons became a fixture in the top division, winning a championship in 1973-74 to challenge to the supremacy of SFIAC, and who contested the Columbus Day Cup with their great Italian rivals on an annual basis. But the most significant team to emerge during the 1950s was the Greek Americans who were destined to dominate soccer in Northern California over the following 30 years.

The Quest for the Open Cup

As the time of the Joe Simpkins visit to San Francisco in 1949, USSF President Walter Geisler had promised California representation in the U.S. Open Cup if the All-Stars put on a good show. In the wake of their success, by 1953 the Open Cup was contested with a California North winner. However, none of the early entrants, Mexico, Hakoah, or SFIAC were of sufficient strength to break the stranglehold of the ASL east coast teams who dominated the tournament from its inception in 1912. A perceptible shift towards the west coast began in 1958 when the powerful Los Angeles Kickers won the first of two national titles. Over the next ten years, the final featured a team from California on eight occasions. The San Francisco Scots came close in 1962 but lost narrowly 2-3 to the New York Hungarians. Despite this good showing, another fourteen years would pass before another local team reached

the Open Cup Final. In 1976, San Francisco's Italian Athletic Club narrowly defeated New York's Inter Giuliana 1-0 to lift the Dewar Cup and give the city its first ever non-collegiate national team sport title.

The basis of SFIAC's success was their legendary coach Steve Negoesco, coupled with a remarkably talented group of players whose nucleus was the University of San Francisco (USF) team he steered to two NCAA titles between 1974 and 1976. While Negoesco's record as a high profile college coach is well documented (four NCAA titles), his contribution to the SFSFL is rarely referenced. Originally from Romania, Steve Negoesco survived a concentration camp during World War Two. After coming to the Bay Area, he played for the Vikings, Hakoah, and Olympic Club among others and, during the early 1950's, he worked closely with Ernie Feibusch and Marty Krumm in establishing the Viking youth league and CYSA in order to develop home grown talent.

After Gus Donohoe (of Olympic Club fame) stepped down as USF coach in 1960, Negoesco built a college team that won its first NCAA title in 1966, and included a young man, Lothar Osiander, among its ranks. By this time, he had taken over coaching SFIAC also, and within two years had brought the SFSFL championship to the club for the first time since 1950-51. Over the next ten years, the Italian side was crowned champions four times, three with Negoesco at the helm. As Open Cup California North winners for the first time in 1973-74, the club was eliminated at the western regional finals, but returned in 1975-76 with a team bolstered by his championship winning USF side. The mix of players provided a resilient and explosive team, and included Theo van der Heyden, Mal Roche, the Sagastume brothers, Tony Graham, Ollie Hunter, Tony Igwe, and the brilliant Andy Atuegbu. After wrapping up the SFSFL title, the Italian side battled their way through to the National Open Cup final for a meeting with Inter Giuliana. A single goal from Andy Atuegbu was enough to seal victory against the New York Italians and make history for the San Francisco side.

The following season, Steve Negoesco stepped down to concentrate solely on his USF team, but his achievement with SFIAC proved inspirational to others. Within three years, a young and talented SF Glens side reached the final of the National Amateur Cup before losing narrowly 1-0 to Datagraphic. Six years later the national focus switched back to the Open Cup where the San Francisco team in contention for a title was the Greek Americans.

The 1960's and the Rise of the Greek Americans

The power brokers in the SFSFL during the 1960's were the Scots, Teutonia, SFIAC, and the Greek Americans. Initially, the Scots were the most dominant as they built a powerful side based on players from the British Isles. During an eight-year span between 1958 and 1966, the Scots claimed five league titles to Teutonia's three. However, they were less impressive in other competitions. At the national and state level, the Los Angeles Kickers were the dominant team, while at the local and state level the Greek Americans were becoming a force to be reckoned with. By the end of the decade, the mantle had passed to the Greeks who, over the next thirty years, would prove to be the most enduring and successful semi-professional team in Northern California and the West Coast as evidenced by their unsurpassed record in league, state cup, and national cup competitions.

The Greek American club was founded by brothers John and Jim Raily as a diversion for young Greek immigrants who had settled in the Bay Area after the war. The Greeks first attracted attention in 1952 when they won promotion to the First Division with 43 goals from Cypriot Mike Nicolas. After one season in the top division, the club was demoted back to the Second Division. This setback proved to be a turning point as the club made the decision to henceforth recruit the best available players for the team. The arrival of John Davison and Bob Hughes, two Scotsmen, from Canada, was the beginning. Another Scot, George Cruikshanks, was added the following year after the team narrowly missed promotion again.

The Greeks returned to the top division again in 1960-61 where it has competed with distinction for over forty years. The Greeks first challenged the supremacy of the Scots in the Open Cup, defeating them twice in three seasons; but

they had to wait until 1966-67 to lift their first SFSFL title. After that breakthrough season, the Greeks went on to become the most dominant team in the history of the league, amassing a staggering 53 trophies: SFSFL (16), Northern California National Open Cup (15), Northern California State Cup (11), California State Cup (4), National Open Cup (2), and National Over-30 Cup (2). During one period between 1986 and 1989, the Greeks were undefeated in 55 consecutive games, a remarkable achievement.

A key to their success seems to have been the uncanny ability to find proven goal scorers. During the 1960's it was former English professional Tommy Dawkins who led the front line along with Kirk Apostolidis. A decade later, Sammy Sabankaya, Johnny Moore, Theo van der Heyden, and Mal Roche had taken over the goal scoring duties. During the 1980's, Scotsman Gerry Findlay, Honduran international Salvador Bernardez, and Andy Atuegbu gave the Greeks the edge they needed in the league and in the National Open Cup.

Indeed, it was the Findlay-Bernardez-Atuegbu spearhead that propelled the Greeks to their National Open Cup triumph in 1985. Under coach Lothar Osiander, they overcame Concordia and the Scots, followed by San Jose's Inter A.C. At the western regional finals in Phoenix, Arizona, they eliminated the Hollywood Stars, and Seattle's Washington Eagles, to set up a meeting with Mean Green from Texas in the national semi-final. Andy Atuegbu scored one of the goals as the San Francisco side ran out 3-0 winners. In the final, Bernardez and Iranian winger Ishmael Rhaimipour grabbed the goals against St. Louis side Kutis S.C to give the Greeks a lead that they did not relinquish as the game ended 2-1 in their favor. For Andy Atuegbu, the day proved to be a special one as he collected a second National Open Cup medal, one of the very few players to do so with two different teams.

The Greek American team returned in 1994 to claim a second National Open Cup championship. On the way to the final, the San Francisco side ousted the San Jose Oaks 3-2 and Flamenco United 5-2 before narrowly overcoming L.A.'s Exiles 1-0. In the semi-final, the Greeks rolled to a 3-0 victory over the Philadelphia Flames. Lothar Osiander proved to be a lucky talisman for the team again as he faced former U.S. national team coach Bob Gansler's Milwaukee Bavarian Leinenkugel in the final. The Greeks were comprehensive 3-0 winners on two goals from Mike Deleray and one from Derek van Rheenen. Their triumph was timely in more ways than one as it proved to be one of the last editions of the tournament under the original Open Cup format. It was also the third consecutive year that a Northern California team has captured the Open Cup title. A year earlier, San Francisco's CD Mexico were the winners, and in 1992 it was the San Jose Oaks who took the cup.

Towards the Millenium

The 1970's saw the emergence of Concordia, the Sons of Italy, the Glens, as well as the Swedes to challenge the established order. Concordia, in particular, built a strong team based on solid organization. Their teams were never easy to defeat, and they proved the point by winning a league championship in 1971-72. The club was founded in 1961 by a group of younger German immigrants. Among them was Reinert Thoms who played and managed the side, and who has now become one of the most influential administrators of the game in Northern California. During the 1980's and early 1990's Paul Mangini and Andreas Wolf led the team in the newly created Major Division (from 1977). In the case of the Sons of Italy, the shrewd coaching of Mario Moro propelled the Sons of Italy into a tangible force that the more powerful clubs could not ignore as their 1974-75 championship attests to.

The emergence of the Irish-American Glens during this period was based on the coaching of Irishman Neil Hagen coupled with a talented crop of young players in a manner similar to that of the Rovers fifty years earlier. Founded in 1961 by Dr. Michael McFadden, the club was one of a number of Irish sides that had emerged during this period. They began to prosper after Irishman Neil Hagen took over the coaching of the team. With an emphasis on youth, Hagen developed a side that featured the talents of Tom and Steve Ryan, Jim Boyle, Tom and Tim Harvey, Brendan Spiers, and Sean McNulty among others. The result was promotion to the top division by the end of the decade. The Glens went on to national prominence by going to the Amateur Cup Final in 1979 where they lost 0-1 to Georgian

side, Datagraphic. The Irish side returned to the Amateur Cup Final again in 1990, but was on the wrong end of another 0-1 result.

In the interim, the Glens overcame a major setback to capture their first SFSFL championship in 1984. The untimely death of Hagen in 1981 left a void that might have been the end of other clubs. Sean Shannon stepped into the spotlight and quietly remolded the team into a championship-winning outfit by bringing in players such as Paul Mitchell and Mal Roche. Their 1984 title was the first ever by an Irish side, and they returned again for a second in 1990. By the mid-1980, S.F. Celtic helped to bolster the Irish presence in the league.

As the 1990's progressed, it became evident that a new force El Farolito had risen to challenge the dominance of the Greeks. El Faro gained successive promotions to the top division in the space of five years. By 1991-92, the club was SFSFL champions and had reached the final of the Amateur Cup. The following season, El Faro retained the title as Club Deportivo Mexico, but their destiny was in the Open Cup also. With coach Salvador Lopez and deadly marksman Jose Angulo aboard, Mexico outdueled defending Open Cup holders San Jose Oaks 1-0, and swept through the regional final to a semi-final meeting with the Milwaukee Bavarians. Angulo's goal kept the game at 1-1. With the game in overtime and the San Francisco side down to nine men, Angulo broke through on his own twice to give his beleaguered side a memorable 3-1 win, and earn the "tres goles" moniker. In the final, CD Mexico swept aside Philadelphia's United German-Hungarians 5-0 to record their first national Open Cup title.

A final change in the structure of the game in northern California occurred in 1993 with the formation of the California Premier Soccer Association (CPSA). The development of a "super league" composed of clubs from the SFSFL, PSL (Peninsula Soccer League) and the SJVSL (San Joaquin Valley Soccer League) was the brainchild of Concordia's Reinert Thoms whose model was the Bundesliga from his native Germany. Representing the SFSFL were CD Mexico, Greek Americans, SF United, and Concordia, and it was the Greeks who took the first two CPSA titles 1993-95, followed by CD Mexico (as El Farolito) in 1995-96, and again in 1999 and 2001.

With a century of history behind it, the San Francisco Soccer Football League can feel justifiably proud of its achievements! May the next one hundred years be just as interesting as the first one hundred years!