

Solomon Asekun

Inducted January 27, 2012

Oklahoma's first United States Soccer Federation National Referee arrived in Oklahoma from his native Nigeria pursuing his career as a petroleum engineer. Born in Iperu, Nigeria Sol (as his friends call him) played soccer all his life and in 1960 was a member of the Nigerian Green Eagles representing Nigeria at the national level. While attending college at the Imperial College of Science and Technology at the University of London in England. Sol continued to play and in 1963 was asked to join the camp of the Tottenham Hot Spurs. He had to decline the offer and return to Nigeria to honor his five-year contract with the government.

While working in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Sol met his future wife, Gillian. By 1973 Sol was employed in Tulsa by Amerada Hess and was recruited by East Tulsa Soccer Club to become a referee. As with most Oklahomans during this period of time, parents were enticed to become coaches or referees so their children could play soccer. Never one to back away from developing the game. Sol accepted the challenge of both coaching and refereeing. The transition from player to referee was quick for Sol as he became a referee in 1976 and then a State Referee in 1977. Venturing into the administrative side of officiating, Sol was appointed State Referee Administrator in 1977. He served in that position until he and the family, which now included sons Colin and Peter, and daughter Diane, moved away in 1980. His new employer was Aramco, and his next assignment was a return to Saudi Arabi.

Sols referee career in Oklahoma was highlighted by his obtaining the United States Soccer Federation National Referee Badge while in Oklahoma. He became the first Oklahoman to receive the badge. During his short stay in Oklahoma, Sol also served as a member of the Green Country Soccer Association board and officiated NCAA soccer matches in the region. Another contribution to the development of officials in Oklahoma was Sol's interest in assessment of referees. Working with Peter Aradi (Hall of Fame Class of 2005). Sol began the development of an assessment program to evaluate referees within the East Tulsa club and across the state. During this time, he also provided leadership to many Green Country Soccer Association member Area Referees in training and recertifying their referee corps.

In 1980 Sol achieved his most memorable moment in soccer: "I was the lines man on the New York Cosmos vs The Rest of the World team that was actually an event to honor the retirement of Franz Beckenbauer. Pele came out of retirement to play in that match and I was there on the line."

"I think soccer is one of the greatest games ever played" says Sol "It builds team spirit, character, and respect for ones self and authority." The former SRA of Oklahoma now lives in Florida and enjoys his grandchildren, Eva and Rowan Asekun-Taylor, who live with Diane and husband Phillip in the United Kingdom.