

Tom Iadevaia

Inducted January 31, 2004

Tom Iadevaia arrived in Tulsa in 1970 as a SABRE computer programmer for American Airlines. Within a few years, he became one of the founders of organized soccer in Oklahoma. Tom began playing with Tulsa International, an adult team based in Tulsa and continued playing for that squad through the 1980's. Encouraged by his teammates on TI, Tom began the process of developing adult and youth soccer in the Tulsa area. Using the YMCA organizations, a fledgling soccer program was begun in 1973 only to face dissolution when the Y refused to continue its support. Along with Don Jones and others, Tom helped create Green Country Soccer Association for the Tulsa Area. After an initial enrollment of 1267, the organization topped 7000 players within two years.

Not content with youth soccer development in the Tulsa area, Tom began a drive to organize the adult teams to form a cohesive unit that would provide skilled soccer for area teams and not force them to drive to out-of-state venues. From his leadership came the Northeast Oklahoma Adult Soccer Association and a league of 77 teams, both male and female. He also worked with the leaders in the Oklahoma City area in development of Frontier Country Soccer and Central Oklahoma Adult Soccer League programs.

By the end of the 1970's, the Tulsa Roughnecks came aboard the North America Soccer League and Tom was there to develop even more soccer enthusiasm. He worked with Pepsi to bring Pele to Tulsa and the Brazilian's visit drew thousands to the sport.

Tom twice served as chairman of the Oklahoma Soccer Association's executive Board. His first term was from 1977 to 1980 and again in 1985. During his first term, OSA's current bylaws and constitution were created as well as development and implementation of referee instruction and assessment.

Obtaining his State referee badge, Tom was often seen at tournaments as player, administrator, coach, and referee. He obtained his USSF "B" license and coached his son, T.A. and their team, the Tornados, to a regional appearance in Raleigh, NC and the finals in Dallas in 1983. T.A. and his wife Kinberly have two daughters, Abbey and Meghan Rose, and currently reside in Dallas, Texas.

When Oklahoma began varsity soccer in the high schools, Tom was there to guide Tulsa Memorial and took them to a state championship final.

During that time, he was approached by a number of players and asked to organize a team and coach it. He set about forming the Tulsa Futbol Club, TFC, a team he coached for 6 years and led them to an invitation to the Dallas Cup- first Oklahoma team to be invited.

Tom is no longer active in soccer and his wife Gayle, no longer has to answer the many telephone calls he used to receive. If asked about his work establishing Oklahoma soccer, he replies: "It was a labor of love."