

## Charles Tuci

Inducted January 27, 2012

Charles "Chuck" Turci was introduced to soccer when he used it as a conditioning event for his cross country team at Casady. The John Marshall graduate found that the players enjoyed the game as did he. Peter Bittenheim, Casady's soccer coach and early contributor to the creation of OSA, provided Chuck with tips on the game. After leaving Casady to pursue graduate work at OU, Chuck met the captain of the OU soccer team and agreed to be the faculty sponsor as well as playing for the squad. By 1970, Chuck had played for OU for two years and considered his connection with soccer over. But that was not to be.

In 1977 he was asked by Andy Sullivan, president of the Central Oklahoma Soccer Club, to be an assistant coach and a requirement was to attend a rules meeting. After the meeting, Chuck began taking more courses on officiating and eventually became an official USSF referee. His first match was between OCU and OBU as a linesman. The referee didn't show and Chuck accepted the match even though it was his first as a registered USSF referee.

When Sullivan stepped down as Central's president, Chuck accepted the position and thus began a long association with the Frontier Country Soccer Association and what would become Central Oklahoma Adult Soccer League. It was under Chuck's leadership that COASL was founded in 1979, and he became their first president and held various offices through 1987. Working with Don Jones and Tom Iadevaia, Chuck was able to get COASL sanctioned by OSA and the COASL charter accepted in 1980.

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During this time Chuck continued to referee and became a state level referee as well as attaining his instructor license. He also officiated college matches and was the center of the first Oklahoma City girl's high school match. He was elected chairman of the Oklahoma City referee unit in 1981 and promised his wife Alden he would not accept any more offices in soccer. It was a promise he could not keep.

Alden began playing for a women's team, The OKC Blues, and Chuck eventually accepted their offer to be the coach of the team. The Blues won their division that fall and even won the Sooner State Games numerous times. After an injury in 1986, Chuck resigned as the Blues coach but then accepted the coaching position with another team, the Rockets, and guided them to division championships.

In 1987 Ed Michaud contacted Chuck to oversee the soccer games in the Sooner State Game. He managed that event for two years and it drew over 2,000 soccer players. By 1991, Chuck had retired from active playing but continued coaching his daughter Lara and being involved in the NOKC Royals club. Chuck reached out to Wayne Ewing in 1998 and began work on becoming a State Emeritus referee. Ewing, then SRA, requested that Chuck return to instructing and he began the process of becoming a State Instructor, which he attained in 2003. He also attained the position of State Assessor during this time and continues to offer his services at state events across Oklahoma as a mentor and guide.