



Vancouver Island Soccer League
PO Box 38017
794 Fort Street
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President's Award 2014/2015

Thankyou all for being here tonight.

As another year passes us by; another year of acknowledging all our Cup winners, Divisional winners, and MVP's. What I have looked forward to doing in the past 4 years is acknowledging somebody with a bit of a special award, the President's Award. The names on this trophy represent difference makers. From the original recipient; Fred Crossett in 2000, to the past 3years' recipients Moreno Stefani, Bill Murphy, & Adriano Sumberac - all the names on this trophy represent why this League works well and has lasted so many years, and why we have had plenty of local, Provincial, & National success.

This year, this person, same idea. Years of service; mostly with the VISL as a player and coach, but this person also currently coaches kids.

Playing wise, this person has done something that is not so common anymore. They have played their entire juvenile & senior soccer career with 1 organization – even to this day, the affiliations are strong.

The 70's & 80's as a juvenile, UVic in the early 90's, then the VISL ever since.

In advance and prep for tonight, I talked to all the key people to get a history. Besides a little bit of dirt that I like to get and will refer to shortly, all these people confirmed what I already knew – this guy is very loyal, hardworking, determined, passionate, and over all very tough! I personally had the opportunity to see this guy play against my team in the mid 90's. I wouldn't call him Mr. Graceful or Super Smooth by any stretch. If anything, I would have called him a hard working plumber. I and others still recall the battles with the A's; specifically the physical battles with guys like Dimitri & Nick Gilbert. Those types of battles were common then, now they cost you a 5 game suspension. I and others on my team hated this player.....some people still do.....but that is ok in my books. He was the prototype player that you hated to play against but loved to have.

In getting some history, I do something that I find quite enjoyable – I search out and talk to the recipient's spouse. It was a treat this year; it is quite



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obvious that this gal knows how important soccer is to her husband. I found out a lot of info, most of which I will tell you about. It was also obvious that she was cautious in what she told me though.....I guess she didn't want to totally throw him under the bus. In hindsight, she looks back to the 1st year they were dating and recalls a time she needed to pick up this guy from the hospital post ankle surgery. He was all doped up and in a fair amount of pain, but as she escorted him back to the car in crutches – he did insist that they go by Beacon Hill park so he could see his team that was there practicing. They arrived; she waited in the car as he made his way across the gravel field in the dark to say hi to his mates. She was definitely thinking.....what an idiot !

This dedication is just 1 of the examples of what she has seen over the past 14 years they have been together. It has transferred over to his family life as he coaches both kids.

An ongoing inside family joke / bs line that seems to get used every year “next year I am going to step back a bit”. She just laughs about it now and says nothing as she doesn't expect it to change. About 5 years ago, instead of taking a step back he started coaching his kids Liam & Keira – and like I mentioned earlier – he still does. Only coaching about 5 teams this year.

In talking to locals, there was a group of guys he learned so much from and I am sure they shaped him to be the guy he is today. Under Bruce Wilson, Brian Mousley, Norm Pite, Scott Longpre, and Scott Taylor – he has learned the art of charismatic coaching, effective man management, and player rapport.

Scott Taylor is quick to point out that this guy was the team leader in the year 2000. He, and others here tonight, will testify that his team was never that fortunate when it came to getting results; they were actually cellar dwellers for some time. Around 2006, this guy ended up taking over the running of the team. He was able to attract players & sponsors and has improved & expanded the program for the past almost 10 years.

In talking to Dom Butcher & Terry Finnegan, it was quite clear what the lowlites and highlites of this guys tenure have been. FYI, I am not done yet, but in case you have not figured out who I am talking about – it is the “OAK” – Rich Fast of Bays Utd. Highlites – besides the Hallowe'en night game in Sooke with “the fence” some years ago, a highlite would obviously be that he is responsible for elevating the presence of Bays Utd in the past 10 years. Going undefeated in Division 1; of which has only happened a couple times in the past 30 years, was pretty big a couple years ago.



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Pretty sure though, that finally winning a Jackson Cup 2012-2013 might be the biggest highlight. I believe the 1st time a Bays team has ever won the Jackson Cup.

There is no shortage of good stories or interesting times when it comes to Rich's current playing or coaching tenure. I could turn this into a roast, but will just give you a couple fun stories.

We can all agree that Rich has a heart of gold. Moreno Stefani who runs UVic Masters is quick to point out that Rich is a great team guy and a warrior. Moreno talks about a time where Rich came back from an injury and asked Moreno to watch him run and see if he noticed anything funny.....Rich was told not to bother running and that yes he looked funny when he ran! Moreno also pointed out that Rich is one of the most dedicated and fearless players he has seen. He recalls seeing Rich score a goal as it obviously does not happen coming from a defender very often. Well, the look on Rich's face post goal was awesome....a mix of holy shit I scored and where the hell do I run to now type thing.

Steve Cockayne shared some similar ideas saying Rich is the ultimate teammate. He does recall a Tony Grover Final vs Gorge at RAP where Rich executed an excellent slide tackle. Rich was very happy with how it turned out, he then sprung up to his feet fist pumping like Tiger Woods yelling YEAH ! Of note, this was not trash talk, rather his competitive side coming out as he made a good tackle.

I will wrap this up by saying that as a League, we have been very happy that Rich has stepped up to help out with allstar games & travelling teams. Fraser

Sim recalls a trip to the Mainland post Premiere League fallout where we were taking on a Mainland team on a hot summer day. The "allstar" team of 12-13 guys battled their hearts out. There must have been something wrong with the "water" on the way on the bus as guys were puking and in the rear view mirror, all Fraser could see was Rich running around with grocery bags of puke – pinching the corners because of the little holes – trying to keep things somewhat tidy. The kind of guy he is.

Tremendous heart, dedicated, determined a proven leader who has invested so much into this League. This year's President Award recipient, who I invite to come up and share a few words –

Rich Fast of Bays Utd.