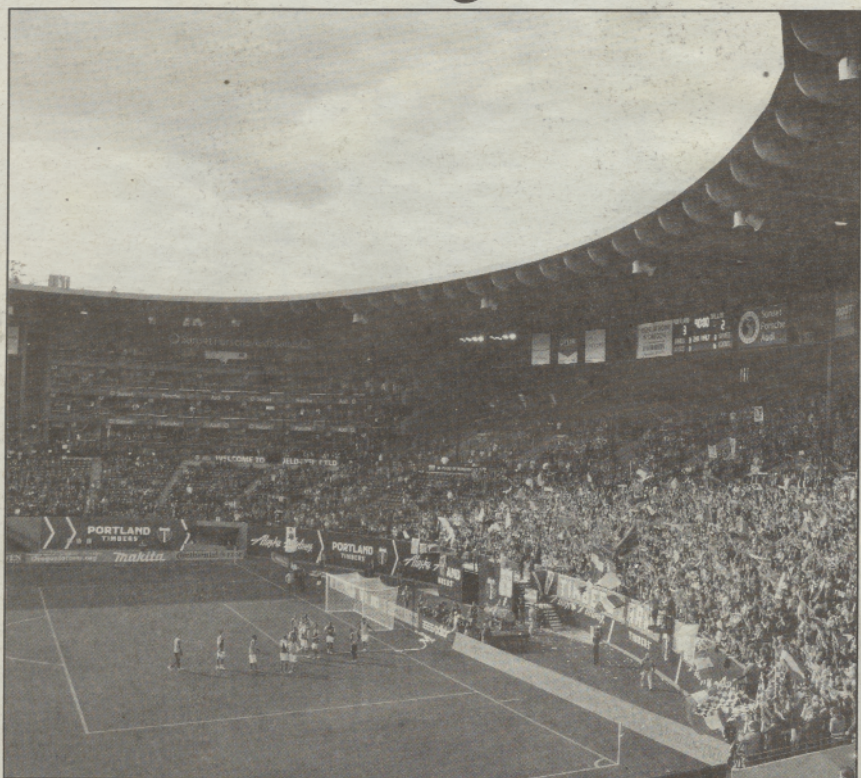


Soccer a 'goal' with soccer city, USA



Brad Heinke The Clackamas Print

The Timbers army celebrates a 3-2 win at JELD-WEN field after the Portland Timbers' game against FC Dallas on April 17, 2011. Attendance for Timbers games has increased greatly since the stadium's expansion in the summer of 2010 and is regarded as one of the most rabid in Major League Soccer.



Contributed by Steven Weldon

Steve Purdy fights for the ball against the Vancouver Whitecaps offense at Merlo Field, home of the University of Portland Pilots on Oct. 17, 2010.



By John William Howard
Sports Editor

It wasn't long ago that nobody cared about soccer. In fact, in much of the country that's still the case.

Hatred of soccer can be attributed to many different factors. Not the least of those is that Americans simply like to be the best at everything. We're basically the only people that play American Football —except for the Canadians but who really counts them? The United States absolutely dominates everyone at basketball. While Japan and the Dominican Republic have made strides with baseball, they still lag behind. Americans are rabid fans of all those sports and why not? We invented them, after all.

That story is different with soccer. Soccer originated in Europe, taking on European rules and ideals, which differ greatly from what the US is used to. Americans are king of the quick-fix. Just think of the microwave oven, drive-thru restaurants and diet pills. Instant gratification is built into our brains and if something isn't exciting right away, we quickly find it boring and return to something else.

That's why soccer just doesn't attract most Americans. Soccer is a long, low-scoring game. There is plenty of drama and action, but little to 'show' for it. Americans like scores that are easy to understand, with numbers in the tens and hundreds that show the flow of the game and make it simple to understand what happened. Soccer can be the complete opposite. Two teams can battle defensively and score in the 90th minute, or a team can put in a goal inside the 1st minute and will be held scoreless the rest of the game.

The 'slow' pace is combined with the idea that soccer players are whiners, fakers and generally over-dramatic. Anybody who has searched on YouTube for professional soccer will know that there are plenty of examples of players bumping wrists and falling to the ground holding their ankles. The truth

is, the sport of soccer doesn't allow time to stop for players to state their case to the officials, so they often have to over exaggerate things in order to get the attention of the referee. Americans dismiss that as softness, opting for the more 'masculine' sport of football, where the players are covered in protective pads from head to toe.

Now don't get me wrong, I love football. I just happen to be from Portland, where we're a little different than the rest of the country.

Portland is a place where soccer has not only scraped a living, it has thrived. Dating back further than the early 1920s, when a local team was rumored to have played sailors from a British freighter, soccer gained a foothold in the area's culture. We're a city where we like things with a distinct European twinge. We like scarves (even during the summer), we like the rain, we like being green and face it: we like soccer.

While the most visible representation of soccer fever is the Timbers, whose jump to Major League Soccer sparked an even larger and more rabid following than before, the soccer movement can be seen at all levels of the game, starting with youth sports.

Over the past decade or so, soccer has become the most popular sport for children to play, eclipsing youth football, basketball and even little-league baseball. Much of that success can be attributed to the simplicity of the sport at the youth level. Soccer involves kicking a ball, while baseball, basketball and football require more practice and more skill to get the basics of dribbling, passing and hitting down.




Add in that football is expensive and dangerous, it rains too much in the Northwest to play baseball year round and basketball requires a hoop to make it fun and you get why soccer has done so well here: It's an inexpensive, low-contact sport that can be played anywhere that there is enough grassy space to kick the ball.

With the large fan base, a strong pool of talent, soccer has made leaps and bounds in the region. In 2002 and 2005, the University of Portland women's program won the NCAA championship and since has produced four current members of the US national team, including star Megan Rapinoe. Even closer to home, the Clackamas Community College women's team took back to back NWAACC titles in 2004-05 and another in 2007, while winning the Southern Region five times since 2002.

Now it makes sense why the University of Portland Pilots are a national women's soccer power. We can understand why JELD-WEN field fills to the brim every time that the Timbers play or the US Women's National Team visits. Soccer is part of our culture here. It's in our blood. It's been built from the ground up and isn't likely to fade any time soon.

Upcoming Events



	Women's Volleyball Clackamas @ Mt Hood CC	Time/date 7pm Friday Nov. 4
	Women's Soccer Clackamas vs Lane Playoff Quarterfinal Opponent TBD	Time/date 1pm Wednesday Nov. 2 12pm Saturday Nov. 5 Time TBA Saturday Nov. 12
	Cross Country NWAACC Championships @ Everett CC	Time/date 3:00pm Saturday Nov. 12

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY VANCOUVER

Come to
Preview Day

5:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 16

Learn about—

- Academic programs
- Application process
- Campus life
- Paying for college

Agenda, RSVP, directions
vancouver.wsu.edu/preview