

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PORTLAND TIMBERS

Player of the year

Timbers' David Horst always delivers his best game — on and off the field

BY JULES BOYKOFF
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Portland is affectionately known as “Soccer City USA” thanks to its fervent support of the sport from the professional ranks to the youth leagues. The Portland Timbers have undoubtedly helped buoy this soccer moniker. Since beginning play in Major League Soccer in 2011, the Timbers have made a significant impact on the local sports terrain. The team sells out every home game. Nearly 10,000 people are on the season-ticket waiting list. The Timbers enjoy the best supporters section in the league: the rambunctious Timbers Army, which features a social-justice wing that volunteers in the community for an array of projects. On the pitch this season, the Timbers have put forth a quicksilver style of soccer that has gained notice across the country. The team is dynamic, offensive-minded and skillful, but it also plays with great heart.

Timbers player David Horst is emblematic of this blend of skill and spirit. After being acquired by the Timbers in the 2010 MLS Expansion Draft, Horst clawed his way into a starting position anchoring the central defense. In 2012 he played the full 90 minutes in 20 of the team’s final 22 matches, and in that stretch he earned MLS Team-of-the-Week honors four times. He will forever be remembered for his game-winning goal against the arch-nemesis Seattle Sounders FC and for his role in the raucous celebration that ensued. A leader both on and off the pitch, Horst has worn the captain’s armband for the club.

In April of this year, Horst broke his right leg

during a match against Houston Dynamo. In the wake of this injury, Timbers Head Coach Caleb Porter said of Horst, “He’s a fighter, he wants to be on the field, he loves this club.” Street Roots recently sat down with Horst to discuss a range of topics, including his almost-completed comeback.

Jules Boykoff: *In 2012 you were named the Portland Timbers Community Player of the Year in honor of your avid civic involvement. Why have you chosen to get so involved in public service in the wider Portland community?*

David Horst: I chose to get involved so much because we are put in a position, we are given an opportunity, to give back to the community that comes out every single week to support us. If you haven’t seen, we get 20,000-plus fans every game, so this is an opportunity for me to give back to those people who support us week-in, week-out. Also, there are a lot of organizations that the team supports through (the community program) Stand Together, so it’s a great opportunity for me to get out into the community and support more causes. You know, I didn’t realize how bad some things were in Portland until I got out there and now it’s made me even more interested in a lot of the causes that I’ve been a part of. It’s great to open my eyes to more of the things that are going on—outside of the city as well — I’ve really enjoyed being a part of that.

J.B.: *More specifically, what are some of the meaningful activities you have engaged in? Also, you*

said you were surprised at some of the things that you’ve seen out in the community and realized that there are some fixes that are needed. What do you mean?

D.H.: Most definitely. One cause that I volunteered at was Schoolhouse Supplies, where they get supplies from a lot of local businesses, and it allows teachers to come in and get supplies for their classrooms. I found out that teachers in Oregon are not reimbursed for the supplies that they buy for their classrooms, which for the whole year could be two or three thousand dollars worth of stuff that they have to spend. If teachers don’t have that money, their students aren’t going to get the best experience in school. And I’ve been told that the drop-out rate in Oregon is quite high. So, teachers need these things. My parents were teachers — both of them physical education teachers — and so to see that kind of thing, you know, it really opened my eyes to that problem. In September, I’m volunteering again with Schoolhouse Supplies for a backpack drive to get backpacks to give to kids.

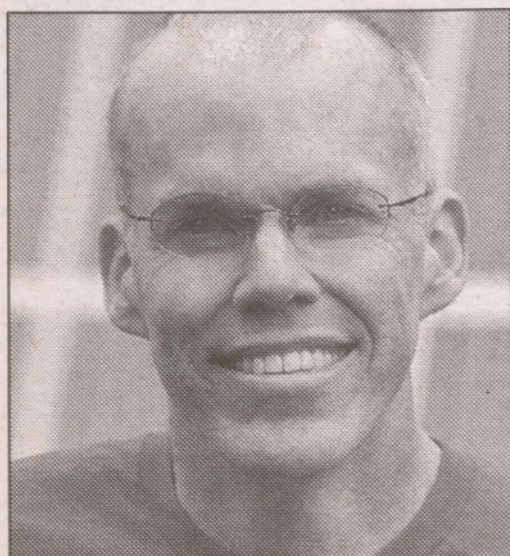
J.B.: *That’s interesting both your parents were physical teachers. Rumor has it your dad was also a football coach, as in American Football.*

D.H.: Yes, he was an American high school football coach.

J.B.: *OK, so you’re a big man: six feet, four inches, more than two hundred pounds. You have the physical*

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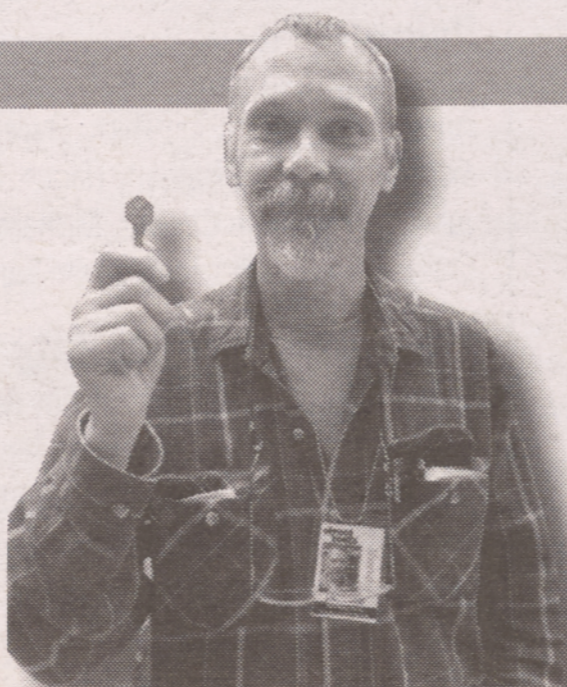
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Changing attitudes

A conversation with activist Bill McKibben about global warming

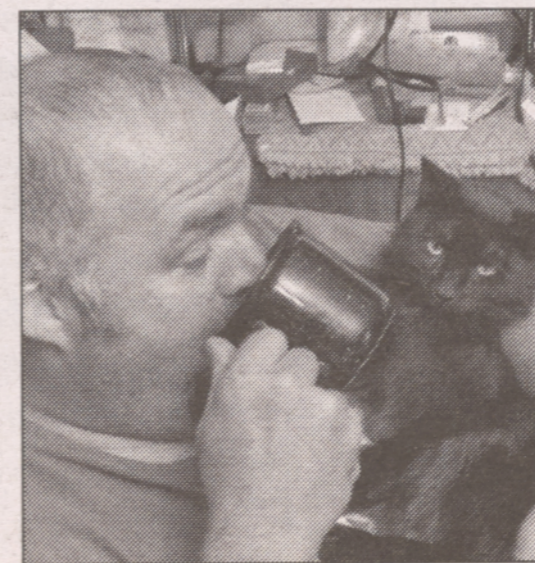
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A day in the life

Vendor Allen Bennett shares his life with a photographer’s lens

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