



Q&A

LANE UNITED'S **DAVE GALAS** TALKS SOCCER AND CIVIC

by Amy Schneider

Lane County loves its soccer, if the packed seats during last summer's World Cup viewings at Oakshire Public House were any indication. Dave Galas is managing director of Lane United Football Club, Lane County's semiprofessional men's soccer team, and he thinks Civic Stadium could serve as Eugene's premier soccer venue.

With Lane United FC entering its second year of play at Willamalane Center, Galas says he hopes the team can eventually expand into the prestigious USL-Pro League, offering the people of Lane County an alternative to the faraway and spendy Portland Timbers games. But first, the team needs a stadium.

How would you describe the Eugene-Springfield community's interest in soccer?

The community has been amazing, and we wouldn't be here at all if not for the community support. We started the club with an idea and a logo and floated the idea to the community, who really got into it. This first season has been amazing — we traveled around the Northwest, which everyone knows is a hotbed for soccer, and we were able to see that the Red Aces [official fan club of Lane United] are already among the best and most animated of the Northwest. So yeah, in our short existence, we've had great support from the community.

What is your vision for soccer at Civic Stadium?

Well, it's sort of in two parts. As a resident of south Eugene, I'm certainly a fan of having something be at Civic Stadium. It was a great community gathering place when the Ems [Eugene Emeralds baseball team] played there. As managing director of Lane United, I have to remove that emotional tie and do what's best for the club. I've done some extensive research as to what makes for a successful stadium, and it really comes down to the location and the involvement with its surrounding neighborhood. And in terms of metrics such as bike-ability, walkability, public transit and the surrounding amenities — they all indicate that [Civic's] location is absolutely prime for a successful stadium.

How much of the property will a soccer field take? Will there still be room for kids to play?

I think the beauty of the design is that it really brings many components together and makes the site a complete entity that serves the community in a lot of different ways. It can also be developed in phases. We can put in a field and restore the grandstands, and we could be playing potentially within 18 months.

The Kidsports fieldhouse would be a great asset from a game-day standpoint, so the Kidsports element is certainly key. We'd like to bring kids in, have them be elbow-to-elbow with professionals. And that's also one of the things we really focused on with our players — getting them involved with the community and with the kids, and that's certainly not going to change. We want to think of it as a visible, accessible site, a focal point for kids being active.

So local kids could play in this space as well?

Yes, that field would be available to Kidsports.