

PARTING SHOTS

A weekly snapshot from The Daily Astorian and Chinook Observer photographers



A sanderling runs along the beach at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond Jan 8.

JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Futsal: 'It's a much less competitive game'

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"Anything soccer, I get involved in," said Boisvert, who coached both boys and girls soccer at Astoria, and has spent countless more hours coaching area youth in LCYSA camps.

The need for local Futsal seemed to make sense.

"Lately we've had almost no winter soccer teams," for high school age players, Boisvert said. "There's always some kids who are interested, but we never get enough players to form teams.

"Indoors seemed like a nice solution to that, where nobody has to travel, it doesn't cost as much and you only need six or eight kids per team. It's easier than finding 18 kids who want to go out in the rain and cold."

From South America

The name "Futsal" — again, according to Wikipedia — "comes from the Spanish *Fútbol sala* or *fútbol de salón*, which can be translated as 'room football.' It was developed in Uruguay and Brazil in the 1930s and 1940s."

A fact that Boisvert confirms.

"It's a game that came out of Brazil, it's played all over South America, and is only now catching on in the United States," he said. "Indoor soccer is a little bigger and played on a court about the size of an ice rink.

"It's the same basic skills," he said of Futsal. "A lot of pros train that way, and it's really caught on in Europe. Same skills (as soccer), but you're in really tight spaces. A whole court is less than the space of an 18-yard box."



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As the elementary-school-age teams finish up their games on the gym floor below, middle-school-age players get warmed up by playing in the mezzanine of the Astoria Armory.

A Futsal "court" is about the size of a basketball court. There's a goalie, with four field players. There's a few rule differences, but it's basically the same.

Ball control is at a premium, Boisvert said.

"You have to be able to keep the ball on your feet, and it's a faster surface than grass, so skill development is fantastic."

While Boisvert is "mostly refereeing and organizing, helping build the nets and putting lines down," Plechl is "one of the new bloods that have really run with it," Boisvert said. "Andrea (Burch) is helping with the registration and has children who love to play. David has a love for soccer, and he's young and energetic."

Plechl said, "Indoor soccer gives us another good healthy option for indoor activity. Also, we're helping to get things going at the Armory, which is a tremendous space for all kinds of things."

And "The adult league is bringing much needed life to Star of the Sea."

And who plays Futsal?

"So far, it's basically been the rec players," Boisvert said. "Each team has a coach or an organizer. We started in early November, with about 105 kids, then Dave Plechl had some adults come in and they're playing on Thursday nights.

The Armory is "A beautiful facility," Boisvert said. "The floor is very big, so we put a net down the middle and split the floor into two courts. When the bigger kids are playing, they play two games at a time.

"It's a big, wide open space with a high ceiling. Just ideal for sports (such as basketball, volleyball, tennis and roller derby). The



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Nine-year-old Beckett Turner easily palms a Futsal ball after a recent game.



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Tristan Katelnikoff of Long Beach, Wash., shows off his cleatless soccer shoes, used for playing Futsal.

Friends of the Armory are trying to lease it to different people, so the LCYSA went in for two nights a week to see what the interest level is."

He added, "The LCYSA put about \$6,000 into

getting equipment and putting lines down and boards to kick the ball off of. It's something we've talked about doing for a long, long time, to offer indoor soccer during the rainy season."

The potential for growth of Futsal "is pretty phenomenal," Boisvert said. "I think it's a great recreational opportunity. It's a much less competitive game — charging and slide-tackling are out — and it lends itself very well to coed play.

It doesn't mean you can't play it at a high level, he said. It can get really fast, with lots of shots.

"You're always within reach of the goal."

The goal for a Futsal league, he said, would be to have three, eight- to 10-week seasons, fall, winter and spring.

"We're hoping for sponsors. Ultimately, if it's going to happen, the community will hopefully catch on to this.

"Kids seem to have spoken that they want something different. They've got 12 to 15 indoor facilities in the Portland metropolitan area. You can play in all kinds of leagues. It's a good choice in Oregon."



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