



PHOTO BY JON BRODERICK
Gustavo Velazquez with two futsal players following recent games.

HISPANIC COMMUNITY NOURISHES LOCAL SOCCER CULTURE



PHOTO BY GARY HENLEY

BY JON BRODERICK
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Some time back — Fergus Loughton and Jerry Boisvert, the institutional memory of the Lower Columbia Youth Soccer League, reckon it was roughly 15 years ago — the growing Hispanic community brought with it a festive ambiance to its men's soccer games at the Warrenton fields.

For many of us, La Liga games there with were our first trip to Mexico: Latin music played on car stereos, Latin fragrances rose from picnics, children scampered about their families, chattering in Spanish, while their uncles and fathers played teams that sometimes came from Longview, Washington, to compete on the immaculate youth soccer fields in Warrenton.

Gradually, some of the more confident non-Hispanic players learned they were welcome and found their way onto teams. Wednesday nights in spring and summer were a soccer fiesta.

Ultimately, though, the league become more competitive, more expensive and finally, a



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A La Liga player swoops in for the shot in 2010.