

History of Soccer in Mount Pearl

The first organized soccer program in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland was started by the Mount Pearl Kinsmen Club in the fall of 1969. The Kinsmen Club ran their program after school and on Saturdays. In 1973 Charlie Chaytor and Ed Moyst, with the help of The Kinsmen Club, formed The Mount Pearl Soccer Association (MPSA). The Kinsmen Club turned over their uniforms and equipment to the Association and continued their support for a number of years to make the Mount Pearl Soccer Association program one of the best in Newfoundland.

Charlie Chaytor, the Associations Public Relations Officer at the time states that "the whole idea behind forming the Association was to organize a summer of soccer for the kids. We felt it was not only a good idea but an obligation as well." The only soccer in Mount Pearl before the summer of 1973 was sponsored by the Kinsmen Club and their playing schedule didn't start until September. Needless to say, it was a tad chilly out when the players were finishing off the season. In order to help these athletes develop their playing skills further, they would have to have the ability to play throughout the summer season. Thusly, the MPSA took them under their wing, adding more playing time to the scheduled program that the Kinsmen Club had started.

During the MPSA's first year they managed to register a total of 230 boys ranging in age from 7-16. The cost of registration was \$0.50 for minor players and \$2.00 for senior players. The boys played between 25-30 games based on the division they played in. Very few players ever missed a scheduled game. The first games were played at Morris Academy Field and in the outfield of St. David's Softball pitch. The first ever presentation of awards was held at Park Avenue School Gym. It is interesting to note that Girls Soccer in Mount Pearl came along much later.

The main reason for the success of the Association in the beginning reflects back to the individuals that started it. The first President, Ed Moyst, was one of the main forces in the organization. Charlie Chaytor, who played with the Guards and MC United, was another stalwart with the organization and was the first Public Relations Officer. The first Secretary was Derek O'Grady from Gonzaga and Don Ash, a former Guards player served as the first Vice-President. The first Treasurer, Keith Welsh, served in that position for ten years. Other executive members included an outstanding fullback from Holy Cross, Sam Pretty and Al Symonds from St. Pats. Executive Members were, Gerard Butt, Pat Sheehan, Cyril Ivany, Neil MacLeod, Keith Burt, Wally Barnes, Bob Woods, Tom McGrath, Albert Stanley, Albert Spencer and many others.

Special mention has to be passed on to the many sponsors and spouses of the people who started the Association. Their tireless efforts in fundraising and helping out whenever needed contributed tremendously to the early success of MPSA. The Kinsmen Club of Mount Pearl has been commended for their efforts and support. They were the ones who initiated the creation of very first soccer organization in Mount Pearl. Once the Association was formed, they continued to contribute by being one of the largest supporters for the MPSA.

Prior to having the field on Smallwood though, Ed Moyst and Charlie Chaytor state that there were soccer games in the St. David's ballpark outfield in 1969-1970. Ed states that the "goal posts were just two by two's stuck in the ground...and the kids didn't care". This is not to be confused with the soccer field at St. David's, Charlie Chaytor states that the soccer field was "too small, the outfield down there was a lot larger than that". They had permission to play there for two weeks at the end of their season. Interestingly enough, sometimes there were both baseball/softball games on at the same time soccer games/practices

were had at the St. David's ballpark. Soccer players and Baseball/Softball players alike would form human chains to keep either sport from interrupting the other!

Those who know of soccer in Mount Pearl have undoubtedly heard the term "Soccer Hut". "The original hut" says Ed Moyst, "was built out of necessity. Nobody had the money to build it. The Top Smallwood was one of the best soccer fields in the province, Eastern Canada even, but we had no changing rooms. It was developed with a couple of grants from the provincial and federal government. So much work went into this project... men would go up into the woods and would cut up some trees then we would take [what was cut] to the lumber people, get a credit note, and we would buy building materials.... We had people coming in from St. John's saying stuff like 'Bys, wish we had something like that'...from St. John's!"

Soccer having an early start has sure come a long way. For almost 40 years, the Mount Pearl Soccer Association has proven to be one of the best in the Province. The program continues to be very strong and presently has over 1500 players in their House League and All Star programs. Indeed, they have more than 125 volunteers! These volunteer coaches, managers, executive members, convenors, canteen workers, referees and committee members are the backbone of the association and have been for many years. Charlie Chaytor states that in the early years of the MPSA volunteers were the ones who took care of the maintenance responsibilities; "In the spring of the year we approached all of the parents and got rakes down say a week before soccer started. [The volunteers would help set up the field for the entire season]. The Top Pitch, how many times did we dig that up down there! Always trying to correct the drainage at the bottom of it...". MPSA's volunteers are still as devoted as those parents who were sent out with rakes when the MPSA really needed them. Volunteers were so important to the sports organizations, and continue to be today.

The Association has received tremendous cooperation from our sponsors and the City of Mount Pearl and the Department of Parks & Recreation to ensure the highest quality of soccer is provided to the community members of Mount Pearl.

Sources:

The Mount Pearl Soccer Association Website: <http://www.mpsa.ca/about-mps/>

Ed Moyst and Charlie Chaytor- Former members of the Kinsmen Club and Founders of the MPSA

Jim Bulger- Member of the MPSA