



Long-Established Maryland Teams

Baltimore Soccer Club

One of the longest soccer tenured franchises in the early days of the MSSA was the Baltimore Soccer Club. Do not confuse this franchise with another Baltimore Soccer Club which existed from 1918 to 1923 coached by Hall of Famer Buddy Miller who were a dominant team that won five straight Rowland Cups while playing in the Greater Baltimore Soccer League. In those early days, there was not the infrastructure that exists today of teams affiliated through specific leagues as members of the State Association. Clubs played as independents, through professional or amateur leagues and some as youth or recreational. The original Baltimore SC was formed as a youth club called the True American Soccer Club winning a state junior title in 1921. The following year they formed as an adult team, Canton SC, and played in the semi-pro American Soccer League. In 1933, the ASL went full professional and Canton played in the Metropolitan Division. Canton changed to Baltimore Soccer Club in 1937. Their claim to fame was reaching the finals of the National Challenge Cup (US Open Cup) in 1940 where they met Chicago Sparta. The home and away ended in draws, 0:0 and 2:2. A deciding third match was to be played in Chicago but neither team could raise the funds to arrange it and it went unplayed. For years, US Soccer had not declared a winner for 1940 but policy change in the 1970's had both sides as co-champions. This brought Maryland its first national champion. In 1947, the franchise was sold to Trenton, New Jersey and the team moved after thirty years in Baltimore.

Baltimore Kickers

In 1953, two old German soccer players named Eddie Thau and Werner Jurgensen decided to form a German soccer program. The mission statement for the new organization was to promote German culture and brotherhood through playing soccer and hosting social events. The new organization was named the Baltimore Kickers. The team went through some average seasons early on but in 1955 local soccer icon Paul Trautner was recruited to coach the side. He turned them into winners. The Kickers played in the very competitive Baltimore Open League and later the Maryland Major Soccer League. Their first state title was the Stewart Cup in 1958. In 1969 the Kickers achieved the cup double winning both the Rowland and Stewart Cups. They lifted the amateur title twice more in 1979 and 1995. Throughout the years, the Kickers program sponsored senior as well as youth teams and served as ambassadors of Maryland soccer playing goodwill games against visiting German teams. Two other notable figures in Kicker's history are the husband-and-wife team of Fritz and Anna Steffen. Fritz was the main team's coach from 1973 until the year of his untimely death in 2000. Anna was the long-time soccer manager taking over in 1957 and holding the job until 2010. The Kickers also boast others who contributed to the game in Maryland such as Bill Lauritzen, Alfred Zeller, Matt Franhoffer and Carlos Stecco, all of whom were inducted in the Maryland Soccer Hall of Fame. Except for a two-year period from 2017 to 2018, the Kickers have fielded a team every year since 1953 which in 2024 makes sixty-nine years.

Camp Springs Women's Team

From the early days of the MSSA, women have played soccer, but no organized teams or leagues were formed because it was considered "unladylike" to participate in a sport like soccer. By the 1970's, attitudes were changing. At Taney Junior High School in Prince Georges County a group of young ladies approached their Phys-ed teacher, William "Doc" Blandford, to organize and coach a girls' soccer team. That started in 1971 under the Camp Springs Boys and Girls Club with players between the ages 14 to 18. The group continued to compete as Camp Springs Women's Team dominating the state's Hagen Cup, winning the competition 5 times. From 1975 to 1980, the club's

overall record was 123 wins, 8 losses and 15 ties with 22 league championships and tournament wins playing mostly in the Metro-DC area. In 1980 and 1981, they competed in the Woman's Challenge Cup in Miami and then Seattle taking home silver medals. The side played well into their forties and fifties. Even today, some of the players participate annually in the US Adult SoccerFest, a tournament for older generations, winning its first gold in 2000 in the Over-40 bracket, tallying 9 gold and 12 silver medals in several age categories. In 2015, they lost their beloved coach "Doc" Blandford to Alzheimer's and lost two teammates, Laurie Lemire and Denita Patterson, to cancer. The players continue to compete in their memory and are a shining representative of Maryland soccer.

JA (Jamaican American) Raiders

In 1977, George Kennedy, joined the Jamaican American Social Club and immediately revamped the sports program which included forming a competitive soccer team playing in the Maryland Majors Soccer League. George would go on to coach this team for thirty-five years and lead it from the fourth division to the first division. The JA Raiders will always be known for their physical but competitive play especially at their home field of Clifton Park. They have their share of important games and are still competing today, their forty-seventh year of existence.

Christos FC

A new club came onto the soccer scene in 1997, many consisting of former players from the University of Maryland Baltimore County. The late James Haislip named the side Christos FC as they were sponsored by Christos Liquors in Linthicum. Now in their twenty-seventh season, they turned into one of the more successful franchises in the state. League champions in Maryland Majors and thereafter in the Maryland division of the Super Soccer League. Their state resume is impressive with 9 Rowland Cup titles and 11 Stewart Cup; another 11 in the Over-30; 6 in the Over-40; and 2 Over-50 championships. Along with many USASA Region I titles in those categories, they also have several notches in the national championship belt. The Over-30 side won the first set of titles taking the Gerhard Mengel Cup three years in a row between 2012 to 2014. The open team made it a national cup double in 2016 with the National Amateur Cup and the Werner Fricker Cup, the National Amateur Open Championship. Christos would lift the Amateur Cup once more in 2018. In 2017, after defeating second-division Richmond Kickers in the Lamar Hunt US Open Cup, the club received national attention in their fourth-round tie against Major League Soccer's DC United. The pro side was able to defeat them but only after Christos scored the opening goal before an overflow crowd at the Maryland SoccerPlex.

