

SOCCER

Alderman R.A. (Bob) McMath,
634 Francis Road, Richmond, B.C.

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Interviewed October 17, 1973.

Bob played soccer as a youth on the Lower Mainland, and played overseas while in the Canadian Army.

After W.W.2, he returned to Richmond, wounded, and couldn't play soccer. Then he met Harry Minns, about 1948, who invited him to play on the team. McMath put on a lacrosse kidney patch but couldn't stand it, so resumed soccer without protection. He played senior soccer until 1955. Won league cups, won Packingham Cup for the Fraser Valley once or twice. It was a fun team, and the players did a lot of heavy training. Jim Carpenter was coach and manager part of the time. Jim Wilkie was coach last few years.

McMath coached juveniles at that time.

To start soccer had a four team league, but so many kids came out . . . the teams which represented Richmond's development at that time were Richmond Legion, Brighthouse Vets, Bridgeport Firefighters, and Steveston.

McMath then coached another team which included George May, Clive Richards and a fellow named Marshall.

In 1954 - 55 McMath coached another team of 12 year olds for two years. They played in the Greater Vancouver Juvenile League.

1956 the League was started properly with Dennis Hedges' help. Six teams the first year. McMath had a team in this league which he coached four years. The mothers used to appear at Cup finals screaming at the kids to play opposite to the way they had been coached. . . . mothers reacted against their kids playing soccer in the rain. Coaches told them mud was "medicine for the skin" and the kids wouldn't catch cold if they jumped in a tub.

Richmond Council - since McMath a member, the municipal staff lays out the playing fields, properly limed (using whiting now instead of lime because safer). . . the lines are renewed once every season. To-day the coaches just coach the kids. There are volunteer referees with coaches handling the job and parents who "drop off" their kids at practice fields also helped.

Because of the number of kids interested in playing, increased yearly, the need for building new playing fields, increased. On Minoru Park there are three soccer fields. Around every high school is a community park, and a soccer field there.

At McRoberts School, 50 acres in park and school

combined. Hugh Boyd School and park when finished will have 40 acres. Richmond has the highest rate of sports participation of any place in the province, despite the need for an indoor pool and ice rink.

Coaching clinics are run yearly for Richmond, arranged through the Recreation Department.

Soccer Day

Richmond has its own Soccer Day, usually in April. Each division is a year in player age. Two final teams which result from divisions competing, play for the Cup in their division. Three judges move around watching the boys play. At end of Soccer Day, they pick a Soccer Boy who is the best soccer player, and award a big trophy.

Provincial Championship

Richmond starts off winning here with a soccer team drawn to play against team with some other town or city in B.C. and keep on playing until only two teams left in each division. Then next go into a Tournament of Champions, a two-day affair sponsored by the Vancouver Sun. Several Richmond teams have won the provincial championship. One won it twice. Last year it was played in Victoria, the previous year at Swanguard Stadium, Burnaby. You need an enclosed park and large stadium for it.

McMath relates an incident at finals two years ago with Division 3 against Burnaby team which Richmond won 3 - 0 and the crowd attitude change re player with long hair.

McMath took ribbing because he often scored the first goal, but against his own team. Caused by McMath slicing at the ball. Then team played serious game, and always won.

Incident:

Playing in final for Fraser Valley Cup, at Mission . . . ball only five feet in front of goal, one fellow slapped the ball, sent it over top of the goal posts and team nearly cried. So Richmond lost that game.

A good game of soccer is beautiful to watch with deadly accurate passing and close passing plays. Properly taught skills by good coach, and kids who want to learn make wonderful result.

"Banana kick" of noted Brazilian soccer man Pele when team played German team at Empire Stadium proved Pele's skill. Soccer is a game of skill, speed, agility, and lots of brain work. Size of player doesn't matter in soccer. This differs from football players.

Program in Richmond

To give every kid a chance to play who wants to play and keep that up for three or four years. Those really interested go on from there. Russell Buchanan is a Richmond player who now plays professional soccer in England.

Costs

To play soccer, isn't expensive. Costs \$125 to \$150 to outfit a team initially; \$50 a year from then on. This is much less than football outfitting. Insurance is necessary on soccer players, but injuries are few.

Dellis Cleland

SCHOOL BOARD

MR. R. A. MCMATH - 634 Francis Road, Richmond, B. C.

INTERVIEWED: March 6, 1975

unknown
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Term of Office - 1951 - 1956 incl.

Reason for Serving

Past president of the Legion for 3 years prior, and chaired some public meetings - a number of people suggested it would be a good idea for him to run for School Board, so he did.

Other Members of School Board

Harold Smith
Phil Buswell (now deceased) - chairman 1951 - 52
Mrs. Sara King (now deceased)
Bill Burnett
Jeff Horner
Fred Errington (now deceased)
Van Baggen (now deceased)
Dr. R. Talmey
Jim Patterson
Roy Scott
Mrs. Maude Steves

Secretary of the Board

Wallie Gibbs in 1951
Art Bassett started in 1952.

Main Problems of School Board then

- finding enough accommodation for growing number of school children
- transportation

Richmond High School

- School Board acquired a nine-acre site
- By-law for the proposed school turned down before Mr. McMath came on the School Board.

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School Board Operation

- Met every two weeks
- Committees were:
 - building
 - negotiation
 - transportation
 - maintenance & grounds
- Met when necessary.

Population & Transportation

- Bridgeport area, 1/3 of population attending school (highest in B. C. then)
- Transportation problems:
 - school bus policy explained
 - parents expressed concern at a general meeting, board stated number of buses were not going to be increased, thus parents worked for new by-law to place schools within general walking distance of pupils - passed with 86% approval
- Accommodation required
 - low cost of converting activity rooms at R.M. Grauer & Garden City Schools to classrooms
 - schools provided with covered play area, special design explained.

School Park Site Combination

- Explains new policy of activity room, washrooms, and kitchen used for both school & community purposes
 - i.e.- Tait Park in Bridgeport area
 - South Arm area
- Legal problems of expropriation of property for school and park site -

The school act and the municipal act changed when Mr. McMath on council --explains procedure leading to this change which resulted in school-park combination with school board and council approval.

Double Shifting

- In 1952 double shifting decreased; different schools had varying time of opening. Buses ran more hours and education was the same as before double-shifting.

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Teacher Hiring

- List brought before school board by the inspector, from the approved list the teachers were hired for the following term
- A problem arose due to the graduate teacher never being told of qualification placed on their records by the Normal School. Not all were accepted by the inspector.
- B. C. Teachers Federation attended meeting, resulting in a major change - the graduates were told of their marks.

Relocation of Hamilton School

- Talks of reasons for abandoning old school which was situated on curve of Westminster Highway (the original Trites School).
- A new school constructed on a municipal park on Gilley Ave., which the municipality was to acquire.
- Children would not have to walk on a dangerous curb.
- A community centre for Hamilton area.

Cost Cutting to Taxpayers

- Both the municipality and school board had equipment making separate trips - result of combining school & park sites, municipalities acquired all equipment for maintenance of grounds
- Higher level of service for a lot less cost
- Talks of night schools.

Parent Teacher Conferences

- Introduced. Once a month the school closed from 2 - 4 p.m. Parents invited to discuss their child's progress with the teachers.

A. L. DYBALL