

With Dash and Spirit



Haverford College
Plays Soccer!

by William C. Kashatus III



A wind cut across the playing field as the young athletes ran through their pre-game drills. It was April 1, 1905, and spring, as usual, seemed to introduce itself to Boston with a lion's roar rather than the meekness of a lamb. Eager to begin the match, Harvard's players abbreviated their warm-up exercises to huddle on the sidelines of Soldiers' Field and talk strategy. They would need to execute a clearly-established game plan if they hoped to upset Haverford College's more experienced team.

Curiosity-seekers began to gather. Others, more familiar with the sport of Association Football, had already found the most advantageous positions to observe the game from behind the teams' benches. Everyone anxiously waited for the match to begin.

Although most expected Haverford would win handily, Harvard proved to be a worthy opponent. The Cambridge eleven employed effective combination play to press forward on the offense and its defense successfully kept Haverford's attackers at bay. At half-time neither side had even registered one goal.

The game's second half was fast and furious. Haverford's players succeeded in taking the ball down to the Harvard goal mouth several times but it was not until nearly the end of the game that they finally scored. With minutes remaining on the clock, Christy Morris, Haverford's fiery little attacker, slipped through the opposing defense and pushed the ball just past the outstretched arms of Reggio, Harvard's brilliant goalkeeper, for the first – and only – goal of the contest. Haverford Col-

legiate game of modern soccer in the history of the United States by a score of one to zero!

The following day, *The American Cricketer*, the nation's acclaimed English sports publication, lauded the Haverford team's performance, citing its impressive "dash and spirit," as well as its perseverance. This was a group of young men that would simply "not be denied" victory, an attitude that has characterized nearly a century of soccer at Philadelphia's Main Line college. In fact, Haverford College has played a critical role in the expansion of the game throughout the United States.

Today, soccer is the most popular team sport in the world. Nearly every country in Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa belongs to the International Federation of Association Football, the sport's governing body. Every four years an international tournament showcases the best teams representing twenty-four countries. Known as the "World Cup," the tournament commands the attention of millions. Neither the World Series nor the Super Bowl – nor even the Olympic Games for that matter – attracts a larger audience than soccer's World Cup final, which is seen by nearly two billion television viewers world-wide.

Although soccer was not popular in the United States during most of the twentieth century, it is the fastest growing sport in the country, particularly among American youth. Aside from the intrinsic beauty of the game, which has often been described as "poetry in motion," soccer's appeal can be attributed to the simple fact that any athlete with reasonable coordination and agility can learn to play the game, unlike American football or basketball, which require exceptional strength or height.

Soccer originated in England during the 1860s, a derivative of the popular sport of

ball, as rugby players favored, those who played Association Football tended to kick it. To distinguish between these two forms of football, the English began to call one "Rugby" and the other "Association," later abbreviated to "Assoc." and, finally called "Soccer" after the root of that term, "soc." The sport arrived in the United States as early as 1869, when New Jersey's Rutgers and Princeton universities played the first regulation game of soccer (even though historians consider this match the first game of American collegiate football). At the time, the game was more a blend of soccer and rugby resembling what would be today recognized as American football. During the 1870s and 1880s, soccer evolved into more of a kicking game that fielded eight offensive players, or "forwards," and three defensive players, two "fullbacks" and a "goalkeeper." It was a game for individuals during which each forward, when he had the ball, kept it as long as he could, in order to score the goal himself. The fullbacks would end up playing defense only against the individual who had the ball, not against all eight players. By the late 1890s, this type of game lost its appeal and rugby eclipsed soccer as the popular sport on America's college campuses. Only the English-dominated cricket clubs that had organized in several major cities along the East Coast continued to play soccer, primarily as a form of winter recreation to keep players fit for the summer cricket season. By 1900, the game became so popular among Philadelphia's cricket clubs that a league was established, consisting of Belmont, Germantown, Kensington, and Frankford. The popularity of club soccer in the Philadelphia area, as well as the Quaker interest in the game, attracted the attention of students at Haverford College at the turn of the century.

Founded in 1833 by a group

of Quakers, Haverford College offered its students a liberal arts education steeped in the Friends tradition. Athletics were considered a part of that education. Even though the college administration made it quite clear that athletics would not overshadow the school's intellectual quality or its Quaker character, Haverford's students managed to divine a proper balance. For them, participation in sports would encourage the values of sportsmanship and provide a release of physical energy from the rigors of academia. Soccer, much like cricket, was quickly becoming the favorite sport of Quakers (see "Cricket, Anyone?" by Tom Melville in the summer 1991 edition of *Pennsylvania Heritage*). Many of Philadelphia's most distinguished Quaker families enjoyed the sport, including the Wistars, Lippincotts, Biddles, and Scattergoods. These Main Line "Blue Bloods," as social historians refer to them, sent their sons to Haverford College because it was part of family tradition. And beginning in 1901, soccer would become another part of that time-honored tradition.

Student newspaper editor Richard M. Gummere, who learned to play soccer in England as a schoolboy, was chiefly responsible for introducing the game to Haverford College. In a 1901 editorial, Gummere suggested that the college adopt soccer as "an alternative [to rugby] for athletically-inclined students who had little to do once the cricket season ended." Soccer, he wrote, "would keep these students in excellent physical condition," adding that it would not compete with rugby, which would "still get the best athletes the college could field." The editorial generated an enthusiastic response from the Haverford students, who organized a team, held practices, and scheduled a season of eight games to be played during winter 1902.

Richard M. Gummere (left) introduced soccer to Haverford College. The team of 1901-1902 included Gummere (seated front row center) as captain and Wilfred P. Mustard (standing center) as coach.

Haverford College's 1902 squad was the first American college soccer team of the twentieth century and the first college team in the United States ever to play the modern day game of soccer. No longer was the game a highly individual competition between a forward and a fullback, but rather a more collective, team-oriented sport, with combination play a major characteristic during the early twentieth century. Forwards now worked together in what was more a passing game designed to tire

the opposition and create scoring opportunities. The "half-back" position was also introduced to defend against this offensive combination play.

On Saturday, January 4, 1902, Haverford opened its inaugural season with a victory over the Germantown Cricket club. The college team would continue to win an additional three of the five games it played that season, including a one to zero upset of the Belmont Cricket club in the final, ice-slickened game of the season. Not only did the victory avenge an earlier seven to zero loss, but it also gave Haverford the unofficial cham-

season in December to join the team.

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Haverford College's athletic director James A. Babbitt (above) and 1904-1905 soccer team with the coveted Manheim Cup (left). The Westtown School (right) provided Haverford and Penn State with many experienced players.

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Gummere appointed himself captain of the team and asked Dr. Wilfred P. Mustard, professor of Latin, to become coach. Mustard had been an All-Canada athlete in soccer at the University of Toronto, recognized for its outstanding soccer talent. Gummere also persuaded some of the rugby players, who completed their

championship of the Cricket Club League – "unofficial" only because the college was not recognized as a member of the league. A more painful rebuke, however, came from the Haverford College Student Association, which rejected the team's request for varsity letters on the grounds that it had not played other college teams. Both matters were addressed in November by the creation of an Association Football Club on campus. The club applied for – and was granted – membership in the

League, but has twice tied the strong and experienced team of Staten Island, once on the New Yorkers' own ground." The *American Cricketer* concluded by wishing Haverford's team members "good luck in their trip to Cambridge to play Harvard on April 1st."

The Harvard game resulted from Haverford's newly-formed connection with the Cambridge college. Richard M. Gummere, Haverford's first team captain, had graduated from Haverford and entered Harvard to pursue graduate

the first game, zero to one, but it won the second match – with the same score – in Philadelphia. Both goals were scored by C. C. Morris, the quick, strong-footed forward. Hardly dismayed by the losses, Harvard instead developed a keen interest in soccer and inquired about the possibility of competing in an annual series. James Babbitt, athletic director for Haverford College, embraced the idea and the following year arranged an organizational meeting for representatives of

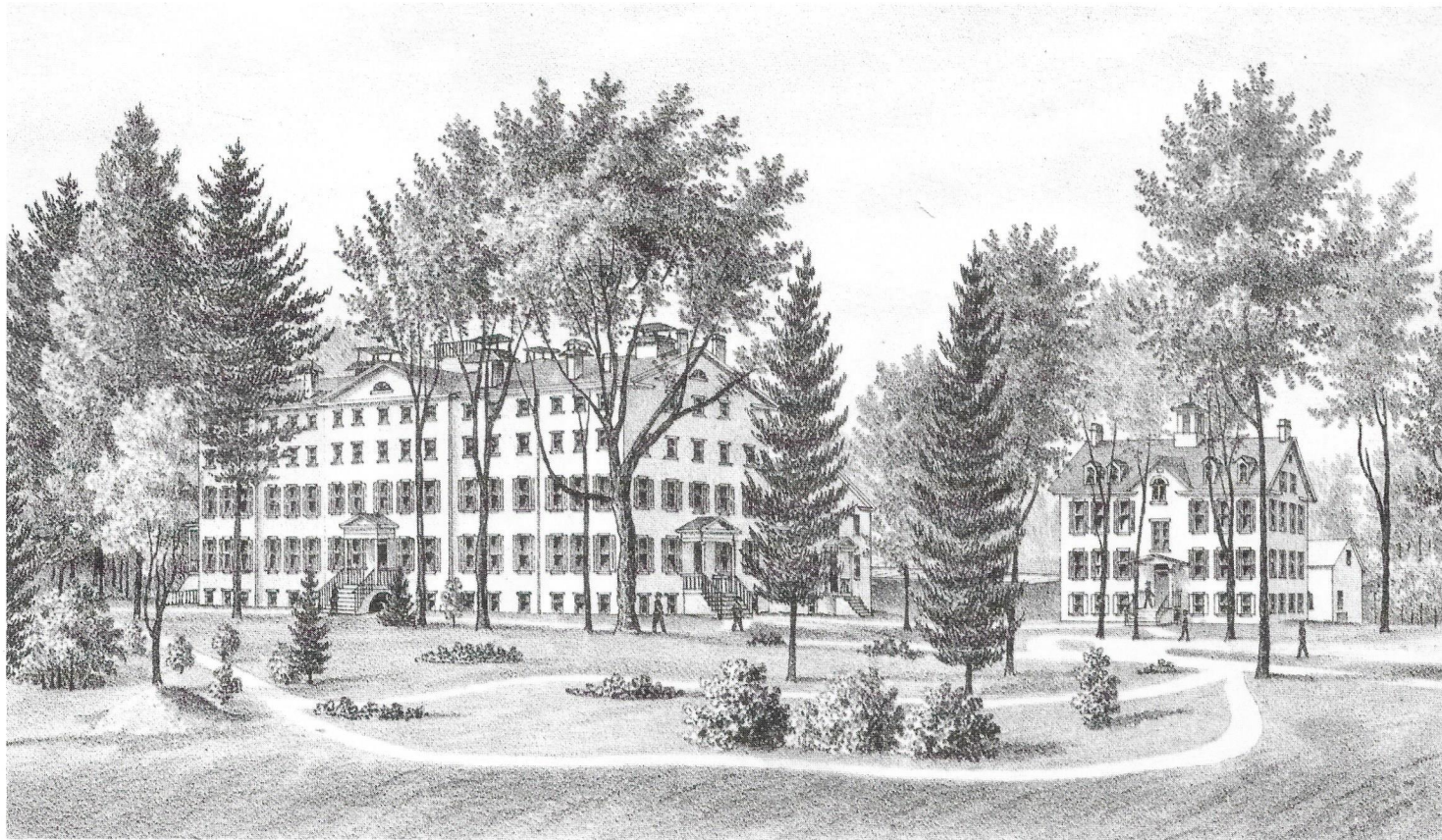
the East Coast's colleges which played soccer. The meeting resulted in the founding of the Intercollegiate Association Football League which included Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Haverford, and Pennsylvania. Yale and Princeton were admitted in 1907.

To accommodate rugby – then the most popular sport on American college campuses – the new league scheduled games during the winter and early spring. Practices began in December, following the rugby season, and games com-

Haverford's early squads: the 1911 team posted a record of three victories, one loss, and one tie. Harvard posted a similar record, but Haverford was awarded the league's title because it averaged more goals and because it defeated Harvard four to zero. Haverford's 1911 squad has been praised as "the best" of the early soccer teams because by that time the league had been sufficiently developed so that the competitions and the teams were more evenly matched than in earlier years.

Westtown and George schools that each class had its own team. Because most of them had played the game as young boys, Haverford students genuinely understood and loved soccer. Both their individual and collective experiences allowed them to make "winning" the standard at Haverford. Even if they did not participate in collegiate soccer, their knowledge of the game allowed them to enjoy it. For the novice, however, soccer seemed tedious because it did not appeal to the American

and demonstrate the skill required to play competitively. The first of these teams, the Pilgrims, a collection of outstanding players representing the best amateur teams in Great Britain, arrived in 1905. During their two month's tour, the Pilgrims traveled from Boston to St. Louis playing club teams. They soundly defeated the only college team they played, the University of Pennsylvania, by a score of ten to zero. The following year the Corinthians, an English club



menced in January and continued into early spring. The matches were often hampered by inclement weather, if not cancelled. It was not uncommon to compete in the midst of winter storms or through the freezing rains of early spring. Regardless of weather, Haverford College always seemed to do well – so well that it captured four national championships (1905-1906, 1906-1907, 1907-1908, 1910-1911) in the first six years of league competition!

Considered to be the best of

The success of soccer at Haverford College can also be attributed to the support of students during a period when a sport could flourish or vanish – without a trace – depending on the student body's acceptance and interest.

During the period between 1902 and 1926, Haverford's students became soccer zealots. Many of them came from the Westtown School or the George School, Quaker boarding schools where they had grown up with soccer. So popular was the game at the

taste for high-scoring contests. A one to zero or two to one match was considered soccer at its best and three to zero, a rout. As more Americans came to comprehend the complexity and subtlety of the game, soccer began to attract other colleges and universities and, ironically, Haverford College's golden era as a "soccer powerhouse" began to decline.

America's interest in soccer grew rapidly during the first two decades of the twentieth century. European teams traveled to the United States to

team, toured the United States and Canada. They, too, enjoyed predictable success against a combined Harvard-Princeton team, which they trounced, eleven to one, and bested Haverford, six to zero. While the Haverford eleven may not have left much of an impression with their soccer skill, their conduct certainly captured the attention of one Corinthian player who complimented the collegians for their "sportsmanlike spirit." Hardly discouraged by their losses, and having seen soccer at its

best, America's colleges were eager to improve their performance.

Slowly but steadily, college soccer began to generate greater enthusiasm than rugby, which had become a roughhouse sport by the teens. Although serious consideration was given to eliminating rugby altogether on campuses across the nation, the sport gradually yielded to soccer's burgeoning popularity. A significant obstacle was removed in 1914 when the soccer season was changed to the

team in Olympic games, in 1924, soccer had finally gained respectability in the eyes of college students throughout the nation.

Haverford had been the leader among American colleges in nurturing interest in soccer by demonstrating the skill, perseverance, and sportsmanship it took to play the game competitively. The college captured its fifth national title in 1915, a sixth two years later, and its seventh and final title in 1926 after defeating Harvard, one to zero, and

talented student athletes than Haverford.

Between 1914 and 1925 the balance of soccer power in the Keystone State shifted to the University of Pennsylvania. Under the leadership of legendary coach Douglas Stewart, Penn's soccer team won six Intercollegiate Soccer Association championships. Stewart's enthusiasm for the sport was infectious and soccer became a cult among the Ivy League university's students. By the 1930s, even the University of Pennsylvania's teams could not

from 1911 to 1913 and laid the foundations of Penn State's soccer program. Although Penn State had to finance its team's trips to Philadelphia — where it played all its early games — by the 1930s, most college teams from around the nation thought little of traveling to Centre County to play one of the best squads in the collegiate ranks. For eight consecutive seasons, from 1933 to 1940, Penn State was victorious in sixty-five matches and tied only five times, winning a national title four times in the



Haverford's "Association Football Team" of 1915-1916 with the Intercollegiate Cup (left). College president Isaac Sharpless (above) believed in sports—as long as they did not interfere with students' education. Haverford versus Cornell in 1926 (facing page).

autumn months, despite the potential conflict with rugby. Nine new teams entered the college ranks, nearly doubling the number. Most of these new teams were organized in the Midwest, nearly half of them in Ohio: Ohio State, Baldwin-Wallace, Ohio Wesleyan, and Wooster. By 1917, soccer was firmly established in the East, growing popular in the Midwest, and had been introduced to the West Coast where teams had been formed at Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley. When the United States entered its first

Yale, two to zero, during an unforgettable Thanksgiving holiday trip to New England. Although it was instrumental in the reorganization of intercollegiate soccer on the East Coast, helping to found the Intercollegiate Soccer Association in 1926, Haverford College would never reclaim its national standing. The larger and more representative league that had been established would eventually include teams from throughout the nation, many of which had more ample athletic budgets and a much greater pool of

longer compete with those of the Pennsylvania State University, the country's emerging soccer powerhouse.

Penn State, which fielded its first team in 1911, built its soccer program on Haverford College's traditional pool of talent: Quaker boarding schools. Westtown was so successful at soccer by the 1910s that it competed on even terms with many college teams. Attracted by that talent, Penn State recruited one of Westtown's best players, Walter Savery, to become a student-coach. Savery served

half-dozen years the award was given by the Intercollegiate Soccer Association. The achievement remains one of the most impressive records in the nation's intercollegiate soccer history.

Despite its inability to compete with larger and better funded university soccer programs, Haverford College continued to field several highly successful teams during the 1930s and 1940s. Coach Jim McPete compiled a record of seventy-two wins, twenty-nine losses and twenty-four ties. His successor, Jim Gentle,

accumulated a record of forty wins, twenty-five losses and three ties to maintain the college's winning tradition. Gentle's 1938 team scored thirty-two goals in eight games, eleven of them by outstanding forward Frank Mears. Ray Mullan, who coached from 1942 to 1946, holds the honor of fielding the only unbeaten and untied soccer team in Haverford's history. The 1945 squad defeated Johns Hopkins, six to zero, to capture the Middle Atlantic title. Three of those

replaced Mills as coach in 1971. During his tenure, Mills witnessed only three losing seasons, compiling a record of one hundred and twenty-nine wins, ninety-four losses, and twenty-one ties. During this time Haverford became a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division III, a membership that would allow the Quaker college to compete with schools of similar size and athletic resources. Haverford's most competitive rival in the

history, Dave Helsen, who mulated nearly six hundred victories, a total unmatched by any collegiate soccer program in the country. The current program is headed by Joe Amorim whose 1991 squad, with sixteen wins, eclipsed the school's record for the most victories captured in one season. But what is most remarkable about the program is the excellence it demands from its student-athletes in the classroom, as well as on the playing field. That standard has hall-marked Haverford as one of the leading liberal arts colleges

ing illustrations to accompany this piece.

FOR FURTHER READING

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goals were scored by freshman Evan Jones who tallied a season total of thirteen goals in just eight games.

One of the most successful soccer coaches in Haverford's history, Jimmy Mills, a colorful Scotsman, headed the college's program from 1949 to 1970. In 1956, Mills served as the soccer coach for the United States Olympic team. At Haverford, his strongest teams competed in the early sixties and were led by All-Americans Gyula Kovacsics, Hal Taylor and one of the most outstanding goalkeepers in the college's

Middle Atlantic Conference's Southern Division remained Swarthmore College, a Quaker institution also located on the Main Line. The heated rivalry began in 1921 and still inflames the passions of students and alumni alike.

Today, Haverford College continues to build upon its strong tradition in intercollegiate soccer. Since April 1, 1905, when Haverford College defeated Harvard University in the first modern-day intercollegiate soccer match in the United States, the little Quaker college has accu-

in the country, in addition to its being able to boast of a soccer tradition that remains unsurpassed by any American college or university. ♦

William C. Kashatus III of Philadelphia, a regular contributor to this magazine, coaches soccer at Haverford College.

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