

Portland Timbers



Local soccer aficionados may remember the glory days of the Timbers—the 1970s and early 1980s, when Portland was known as Soccer City USA. With players such as Clyde Best, Stewart Scullion, and Peter Withe and coaches Vic Crowe and Don Megson, the Timbers packed Civic Stadium with fans. In its first year, the team made it to the Soccer Bowl, the North American Soccer League's version of the Super Bowl.

The NASL was created in 1968 with the merger of the United Soccer Association and the National Professional Soccer League. As U.S. fans warmed to the sport that was so successful abroad, the league expanded in 1975 to include the Timbers.

Soccer was an instant success in Portland. [The inaugural season](#) included victory in New York against the Cosmos, the NASL's highest-profile team, and the Timbers drew several crowds in excess of 20,000. They ended the regular season with a 16-6 record. Portland scored playoff wins over Seattle and St. Louis on their way to Soccer Bowl'75, where the Timbers fell 2-0 to the Tampa Bay Rowdies.

After two down years, the Timbers had another big season in 1978. They had a 20-10 record through the regular season and won two playoff rounds before losing to the Cosmos in the semifinals.

The Timbers would make the playoffs one more time, in 1981, dropping a best-of-three series to San Diego, 2-1. By 1982, attendance figures had fallen dramatically, and the franchise folded after that season.

In 2001, Portland became an entry in the United Soccer Leagues First Division, a second-tier professional league in the U.S., and took the name of the Timbers. Interest in the club slowly built until 2007, when Merritt Paulson led a group that purchased the Timbers, along with the minor-league baseball team, the Portland Beavers.

In 2009, the Timbers were granted an expansion franchise in Major League Soccer, contingent on construction of a soccer-only stadium. Renovation of PGE Park—now called Jeld-Wen Field—was completed in early 2011 at a cost of \$31 million.

The Timbers sold all 12,500 season tickets for home games during the 2011 campaign, which began March 19 with a 3-1 loss at Colorado.

Written by [Kerry Eggers](#)

Further Reading:

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