

Bernard (Bernie) Fagan (1949-2023)

By Michael Orr

Bernie Fagan, was a successful collegiate soccer coach at Warner Pacific College, and a professional soccer player for the Portland Timbers. His camps for children have been a mainstay on Portland's youth soccer scene since 1983.

Born Bernard Fagan on January 29, 1949, in Sunderland, England, he played in the youth team at Sunderland AFC, the professional club in the city of his birth. While in his early twenties, he played at Northampton Town and Scarborough in England before moving to North America to further his professional career. A tryout with the Vancouver Whitecaps led to Fagan's signing with the Seattle Sounders in 1974. From 1975 to 1977, the defender was a member of the Los Angeles Aztecs; he played indoor soccer for the Detroit Lightning in 1979-1980.

In 1980, Fagan was signed by Portland Timbers' owner Harry Merlo and became a fixture in the Rose City's soccer culture. Over the next two years, he had thirty-one appearances for the outdoor club in the North American Soccer League and thirteen games and five goals for the indoor club. He was a well-liked member of the team, both on the field and in the community. When the Timbers folded in the fall of 1982, Fagan got involved with the Fred Meyer company to start a soccer camp for children.

The Fred Meyer Soccer Camps began in 1983 and have continued to the present; the name was changed officially to the Bernie Fagan Soccer Camps in 1986. College players under Fagan's direction have coached thousands of children and contributed to the explosion of youth soccer in Oregon in the late twentieth century.

In 1982, Fagan was hired as men's soccer coach at Warner Pacific College in southeast Portland. Coaching stars such as Brent Goulet, Fagan led the Knights to fame on the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics level and helped establish Portland as an important city in collegiate soccer. In 1990, after seven strong years at Warner Pacific, Fagan moved across the Willamette River to coach the women's team at Portland State University. In 1998, he moved back to Warner Pacific, where he was head coach until 2014. Over his career at Warner Pacific, he finished with a record of 264-195-38 overall with a conference record of 163-92-14.

Fagan founded Oregon Soccer Academy (OSA) in 1997. OSA is a premier youth club that focuses on soccer skills and personal development. From 1986 to 1995, he was the director of Oregon Special Olympics Soccer and was director of the National Special Olympics Soccer from 1989 to 2008.

Active in the youth and collegiate soccer communities in Portland, Bernie Fagan has been a vital part of Oregon soccer culture since 1980 as a player, coach, and administrator. He passed away on December 30, 2023.

Sources

"Bernie Fagan." *North American Soccer League*. www.nasljerseys.com/Players/F/Fagan.Bernie.htm.

The Oregon Encyclopedia

https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/fagan_bernard_bernie_1949_/