

THE IMMIGRANTS DOMINATE UTAH SOCCER: 1917 - 1930



Turner Love,
West High
School
soccer
player, 1925
(USHS
photo)

There is little evidence of anyone playing soccer in Utah during World War I. German naval POWs, captured in the Pacific when the US entered the war in 1917, and German and Austro-Hungarian aliens who were in the US at the same time were interned at Fort Douglas, and they are known to have kicked a soccer ball during their confinement. The sailors had played while in captivity in the Pacific, before being transferred to Fort Douglas⁸. In the summer of 1917, the sailors organized a *turnverein*, or athletic club, and soccer was a part of that, but there was no organized league play recorded by the Utah Soccer League during the war years, and both Daynes and Schubach Cup play were suspended for the duration. It's unlikely, given the interest in the sport in the preceding decades, that no "forwards darted like flashes" or no teams played in a "plucky" manner and no shots were taken on goal, but if they did, it was in the form of pick-up games on local lots. But nor did it die out altogether during the war. Even in small towns like Richfield and Elsinore, and elsewhere in Millard County, the schools bought soccer balls for the children, which were "immensely enjoyed." At the University of Utah, physical education was made mandatory for all men in April 1917, as soon as the U.S. entered the war, and soccer was part of the program.

A few years later, a "history-making" game in Vernal between Uintah High School and the Wilcox Academy was attended by over 350 students. In the years immediately after the war, many small town newspapers like the *Davis County Clipper*, the *Kane County Standard*, the *Parowan Times*, and the *Morgan County Independent* ran a sports column called "Hugh Bradley Says" that regularly featured news about U.S. and international soccer teams. One column reported that a Scottish soccer star refused an offer of \$50,000 to play, while others in UK were being paid \$25 a day. At the same time, Joe Dimaggio was getting \$25,000 to play baseball.

⁸ Personal communication with Ray Cunningham, 7/16/08

By the time people began thinking about and playing league soccer again, the center of soccer competition had shifted away from the remote mining camps like Eureka and had settled in the Wasatch Front, where it would remain into the present era. Economic and labor troubles kept life in the small mining towns too unsettled during these decades for people to have time to play sports, whereas in the cities, residents could go to their day jobs and then play soccer on the weekends. Daynes Cup competition resumed in the spring of 1920, with Ogden finally putting together a winning team. The Salt Lake Caledonians won the following year, and by 1922 the soccer leagues were back in full force.



Salt Lake Soccer Club, 1922

(Harold O. Turville, bottom row right; George Herbert Clapham, top row, 3rd from right)
[photo courtesy Marshall Henrie]

Another team on the field at this time was the Salt Lake Soccer Club, which won the state championships in 1923 and 1924. Typical of the players on the teams of the period was a recent emigrant from Leeds, England, George Herbert Clapham. Clapham had fought in the trenches in World War I, and came to the U.S. in 1920, where he worked as a baker. Besides singing in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Clapham played soccer, as he had in his native England. For their win, they not only got possession of the Daynes Cup Trophy for those years, they were given pins by the

Utah Soccer Football Union, a predecessor of today's Utah Soccer Association.

Championship pins awarded by Utah Soccer Football Union, 1923. Each team member's name was engraved on the back of the pin.

[photos courtesy Marshall Henrie]



Winter Quarters and Price resumed play that year, as did Park City, as ever striving for a Daynes Cup win. Their hopes were dashed by a new Salt Lake club, Hollandia, made up of immigrants from the Netherlands, who beat the Park City eleven 2-1 in a game played in bad weather but with “a very good turnout of spectators.” The weather was so bad in the fall of 1922, in fact, that play for the Schubach Cup was suspended, with the Caledonians on top of the league.



Salt Lake Soccer Club with Daynes Cup trophy, 1923

(Harold O. Turville, bottom right; George Herbert Clapham, front row, 2nd from right)
[photo courtesy Marshall Henrie]

The following year Ogden reorganized its soccer club and set out to regain championship honors. A new team had entered the competition from Ogden, the Modern Woodmen of America⁹. In games held at Lorin Farr park (where Ogden's rodeo grounds and fairgrounds are today; a large modern soccer complex is nearby), the two teams from Ogden battled it out to see who would play for the spring Daynes Cup. In the meantime both Ogden teams traveled to Salt Lake to play such clubs as the Salt Lake Rangers, the Salt Lake Rovers, the Caledonians, and Hollandia. Ogden was looking to the future as well; A.P. Larson, the Ogden commissioner of streets, was assigned the task of investigating whether Monroe Park in Ogden would be a suitable site for a dedicated soccer stadium. Ogden's Modern Woodmen made it to the finals of the Daynes Cup that year, but lost to Hollandia 2-0 in the final game held at Cummings Field on the University of Utah campus on June 2, 1923. League play finished later that month, when the Ogden eleven were "easily defeated" by the Salt Lake Caledonians, 5-0. Utah soccer even made the 1923-24 edition of the *Spalding Official Soccer Football Guide*. An article by William Service, who was still reporting on soccer for Utah newspapers, described the 1923 season as "the most successful in the history of the game in Utah." Service went on to note that the "Salt Lake Rangers are now using some native-born boys who are playing the game remarkably well."



1, Taylor; 2, Binnie; 3, Dransfield; 4, Elliott; 5, Parker; 6, Smith; 7, Turnblom; 8, N. Devree; 9, McKay; 10, Pedlar; 11, Drysdale; 12, Wakeford; 13, Heikens; 14, Bruin; 15, Quick; 16, Turner; 17, S. Devree

⁹ The Modern Woodmen of America is a fraternal benefit society, like the Elks Club or the Eagles.

Ogden soccer team, 1922

Later that summer, Thomas Cahill, secretary of the United States Soccer Football Association, visited Ogden. At the time, various groups nation-wide were trying to establish an American professional soccer league that would compete with European and South American leagues, and could be affiliated with FIFA, the world governing body of professional soccer. The U.S. Football Association, the American Soccer League, and Cahill's U.S.S.F.A. were among many groups trying to scramble to the top of the professional soccer heap in the U.S., and the resulting controversy, acrimony, and disharmony created by this fight caused FIFA to wash its hands of the Americans. This set American soccer back years. Fortunately, none of this affected Utah, where semi-professional league play continued unabated, among people who just loved the game and wanted to play.

And play they did. By the time Cahill had come and gone, teams all over the Wasatch Front were practicing for the fall league, and hoping to win the Schubach



Cup. Four teams signed up for the fall league, three of them from Salt Lake: the Salt Lake AFC, the Rangers, and the Caledonians. Ogden was the only team out of the Salt Lake valley to join in the competition. Play began in September, but as always, the weather was a factor; several times, games had to be postponed because of storms or deep mud on the fields. Even into November, the various teams continued to play benefit games such as a contest between the Caledonians (usually called the "Callies" in the newspaper accounts) and an all-star team. Schubach Cup finals were held in Ogden in December, with the Callies emerging victorious.

By this time a new team had entered the annual competitions, the Vikings of Salt Lake City. Composed mostly of Norwegians, the Vikings would become a powerhouse in the 1930s, and are one of the only two clubs formed during this period that are still in existence. Also in 1924 a new voice emerged for soccer in Utah, Harold O. Turville. Born in Nottingham,

Vikings, 1922. Peter Ecker, back row left; Marthinus Strand, back row right [Willard Hansen photo]



England, in 1888, he came to Utah in 1913 and went to work for the Pullman Railroad Car company. In Utah, he found a soccer community that was thriving, but needed his home-grown skills as a player and organizer. "Literally born to soccer," he had already garnered a large number of soccer medals playing for

Harold O. Turville



the Hyson Green Olympics in England, so he quickly became a positive force in Utah soccer. Turville led the Salt Lake team to seven championships, including three state titles, as an outside left wing, and was selected to play for the US Soccer Football Associations' national all-star team in 1928-1929. Besides his services a player, Turville was a superb organizer and booster of soccer as well. He organized the Salt Lake Junior High School Soccer League, and coached a championship team at Jackson Junior High for years. He served as the secretary of the Utah Soccer Union for twelve years, until he relocated to Oregon in 1934. But it was as a writer for the old *Salt Lake Telegram* that Turville left a mark that endures to this day. For almost ten years, he wrote long, detailed analyses of local games, bringing a professionalism to soccer sports writing in Utah that has not been equaled since, even in

modern times. Turville died in Oregon in 1942, but was nominated for the National Soccer Hall of Fame in 1975, and enrolled in the Utah Soccer Hall of Fame in 2007.

One thing Turville wrote about was the 1924 Olympic games, which increased interest in soccer in Utah. It was the first time that a US national soccer team had participated in the Olympics and articles appeared throughout the spring about the team's progress. In Utah, the local soccer leagues played benefit games to raise money for the team, selecting teams from all the various clubs, which were then named the Corinthians and the Olympians. The US team advanced in the first round by defeating Estonia, but were then beaten by Uruguay, the eventual gold medalists. In other national news, four Utah soccer officials also joined the US Football Association of Referees around the same time. These four, by joining the national association were touted as "...the greatest step in the advancement of the sport that would be taken in the state."

Play for Daynes Cup in 1924 was held throughout the spring and early summer, between the Salt Lake Rovers, the Salt Lake Rangers, the Caledonians, the Vikings, and the Ogden city team. Despite valiant efforts by Ogden, once again a Salt Lake team took home the cup. For the next year, several more teams were planning to enter the race, including ones from Magna, the Arthur smelter, Park City, and even one composed of members of the Wasatch Mountain Club, but it was a newcomer, the Utah Copper team from Bingham, that ended up winning the Daynes Cup in 1925. At the same time, a series of articles appeared in the *Ogden Standard Examiner*, written by Ogden soccer star Albert Dransfield, who had been a standout on the Ogden championship team in 1921. These articles offered advice and training tips for anyone who wished to be a soccer player, such as "follow the rules of sensible living every day," but "don't diet." He also advised that "a lemon without sugar is valuable to all players," and sleeping with the windows open to get plenty of fresh air. Of course he also offered tips that were more specific, such as dribbling and trapping a tennis ball for practice. Some of the articles in the eight-part series dealt with "Hints to a Captain," "How to coach," and "How to shoot." The *Standard-Examiner* editorialized that soccer should be taught in the schools in Ogden, in part because "it has a longer season than rugby, and fewer injuries result. ... In it you can get your shins kicked, but a kick now and then may only serve to give the blood better circulation."

No results were listed in the fall Schubach Cup series, and the next year Ogden citizens were debating whether to even enter the Daynes Cup competition for the spring of 1926. Soccer enthusiasts prevailed, however, and during the spring the Ogden team traded victories back and forth with the powerful Bingham team, sponsored by Utah Copper.



Just before the finals, Ogden Captain Oswald Liptrot, threatened to switch to the Bingham eleven, expressing “dissatisfaction at the conduct of the [Ogden] players regarding practice games.” Liptrot’s threat must have worked, for the Ogden team shaped up and he was listed as their captain for several more years. Ogden also recruited a star player from Seattle, Bill Coleman, who was the leading goal scorer in that city’s soccer league. Neither Liptrot nor Coleman nor any other player helped Ogden in the Daynes Cup contest, however, as the Utah Copper team from Bingham once again dominated the tournament, despite good runs by both Ogden and the relatively new Vikings team from Salt Lake City. By the end of June, the Bingham team was so far ahead that a meeting of all soccer leagues in the state was held and it was decided to suspend the rest of the season owing to the hot weather. A team of all-stars from the league was chosen to play Bingham. The all-star team included Liptrot from Ogden, H.O. Turville from Salt Lake City, and two players from the up and coming Vikings of Salt Lake. The teams met in Salt Lake on July 4th in a friendly game, which resulted in a 2-2 tie.

For the fall season, one new team, the Salt Lake Sparta, entered the league. Sparta is a common name for soccer teams in Europe, and little is known of the team’s Utah origins. There is still a Sparta club in Salt Lake

City, but it has no connection with the older team. Another change was the Ogden team, which became the Ogden Blue Pines. Sponsored by the Ogden grocer Scowcroft & Sons, the team was named for one of their



Ogden Blue Pines, 1930

brands of coffee. The name change did them some good, for they quickly took over the Schubach Cup competition, and in September beat the championship Bingham team by an impressive four goals to one. Their elation over this victory only lasted a month, before they were beaten for the first time all season by the Vikings of Salt Lake. The final game was between the Blue Pines and the new Sparta team, who had beaten Bingham on their home field, “a feat which has never previously been performed by any club.” Unfortunately, no record exists of who won the Schubach cup that year. After a win by the “clever” Caledonians in the Daynes Cup competition in 1927, Ogden went on to dominate the spring series for the next three years, 1928-1930. Their main opponent during these contests was the rising star of Utah soccer, the Vikings, of whom more will be heard later.

Soccer grew in popularity in Utah throughout the 1920s, and even made inroads with the “fairer sex,” as women were commonly referred to. Part of this could be attributed to the American tour of the Dick Kerr’s Ladies team from England, who came to the U.S. for exhibition matches

against US professional teams in 1922. Even though they didn't come to Utah, their tour, during which they played against US professional men's teams and scored more goals overall than anyone, was a feature in the local newspapers the whole time. A short article in the *Southern Utonian and Beaver County Press* that same year noted that "American women explain the fact that Great Britain maintains more than fifty women's soccer football teams by saying that there are more women than men in Great Britain, whereas the United States, where given time or football [soccer]." At the Women's Athletic Union soccer team as early as games were a regular programs. "It is new to it an interesting and put lots of pep into it." the *Daily Utah* newspaper, soccer was women's PE classes. week was required to be team, and in 1932 a on the southwest corner dedicated with an area soccer games and practices. Soccer at the University of Utah did not survive the Great Depression, however, and despite the interest, women's soccer at a collegiate competitive level did not take hold at the University nor anywhere else in the state for almost fifty years.

