



Hobbies

SKIP'S HOBBY'S A KICK!

By Monroe S. Miller

Tennis promoters are nervous. There has been a decline in the interest in their sport and they think they know why. Soccer. There has been a tremendous upsurge in the popularity of soccer—it's being played instead of football, instead of baseball and softball, even instead of basketball. It has become a year 'round sport and now can lay claim as the largest youth participation sport in America. It has gained favor among boys and girls. It's gained the favor among those of the younger generations; it's the sport they all seem to be growing up with.

Even a few of the older generations have adopted this sport, guys like Skip Wilms. For a person who has always been keenly interested in athletics, Skip's acceptance of soccer as his sport of choice is high praise.

Skip is one of those fortunate people who seems to be good at any sport he plays; he is a natural athlete. WGCSA members know he can play a fiercely competitive game of golf. Most don't know that this man played professional baseball as a member of the St. Louis Cardinals farm system, reaching the AA level of competition.

So when son Bill's soccer team needed some help, Skip volunteered. That was ten years ago. He immediately recognized that this was a great game for exercise, that it was good fun and that it was inexpensive. He was hooked.

At first, Skip helped in locating playing fields and marking them for play. Despite his lack of knowledge of soccer, he was in good company. Few adults were knowledgeable ten years ago. Anyone who knows Skip at all would guess he didn't stay uninformed for long. He started his soccer education by enrolling in a course in Illinois taught by the U.S. Soccer Federation. Upon completion he received an "F" license from the USSF. He completed the organization's "E" and "D" licenses at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The "F" license involved a two-day commitment of time. But the "E" and "D" level required 50 hours of work apiece. All three of them included a written examination. The Federation offers an "A" license, its highest level of proficiency and competence, and Skip has achieved that as well.

Skip became even more serious about his new hobby. After receiving his "D" license from the Soccer Federation, he spent each of the next two winters in Florida attending the National Soccer Coaches Association Academy. Successful completion of these courses, each a week long, allows diploma holders to coach soccer at its highest level, even college and professional. The Academy measures abilities through oral and written exams and from field testing. The field exam includes an assessment of personal playing ability, coaching techniques and knowledge of the subtleties of the game. It is very similar to the PGA program.



Denny, Bill and Skip Wilms.

Although a good and serious player (he was on an all-star SE Wisconsin amateur team that played Portugal recently and the only one on *his* team who spoke English!), Skip's involvement today centers around the coaching of his two young sons, Bill and Denny. Everyone in the family is a soccer "junkie". Nancy Wilms loves the game as a spectator and enjoys watching her family play.

Bill Wilms is going to attend the UWM next fall and will play on their college team. A player since the age of eight, Bill has accomplished much. His team has been the state soccer champions for two years. He has traveled all around the country playing soccer and recently made the pre-Olympic team. His brother Denny seems destined for the same kind of success—his team won the state championship two years ago and is bidding again this year. Along with their dad, they have put away nearly seventy trophies on the shelves at home, and share many memories.

Skip played golf at least twice a week when he was the course superintendent at West Bend Country Club. Nowadays he is lucky to play a dozen rounds a year. Soccer has helped him get away from the pressures of his golf course. He finds soccer an excellent way to burn up physical energy and to relieve mental stress. The coaching gives him enjoyment as he sees kids acquire an understanding of the game, a sense of commitment and a feel for dedication. Even the fund-raising he does—Bill's team spends about \$6,000 a year for uniforms, referees, field rentals and equipment—gives great pleasure in terms of accomplishment. The ten to twelve hours a week Skip invests in soccer are worth every minute.

I've seen him at work with his hobby. His team has played Middleton and Madison area amateur teams many times on a field on the shore of Lake Mendota, not far from my home. I can testify to his enthusiasm and how it infects his young players.

It is classic Skip Wilms, even at play!

LIFE IN THE "PAST" LANE



Fashions changes and so do people—from the bicentennial year are, L to R, Jim Belfield, Al Vrana, Wayne Otto and Deke DeCramer. Where did all of Wayne's hair go?