

## Wisconsin Soccer Hall of Fame – Class of 1991 Bios



### **Guenther Behre, Player/Coach, Bavarian SC**

Guenther Behre came to the United States in June of 1953 to the Town of Milton Junction, WI. Guenther started playing soccer for the Racine Soccer Club major team in the Fall of 1953. The Bavarian Soccer Club also showed some interest in Guenther and they came to Milton, WI to convince him to play for the Bavarians. Guenther decided to join the Bavarians in the Fall of 1954 and has been a member ever since. In 1956, after a game at the Bavarian Inn, he was asked what he did for a living, and when he replied I am a compositor, he was offered a job interview at the Milwaukee Journal. He retired from the Journal in 1995.

Guenther started playing club soccer at the age of 14 years for SV Goettingen, Germany and came to the US at the age of 18.

With the Bavarian Majors as player and several years as player/coach and seven consecutive State League Championships (1960-1966). During that time Guenther also changed the Majors from playing the WM system to the 2 forwards as points (Al Hospel and Richard Schweinert) and the defense to a stopper (Gunter Delflieze) and a sweeper (Bob Gansler) system. That change turned out to be very successful for the Bavarians. The Major team also participated in the Midwest League on Saturdays in the '60's, being sponsored by Pabst, as the Pabst Blue Ribbon Bavarians.

With the Bavarian Majors, Guenther got the opportunity to play against several Bundesliga and amateur teams from Germany during the 50's-70's.

Guenther enjoyed 17 years as a Major team player and in 1970 his soccer career with the Majors ended when he dislocated his right knee. He played a few years later with the old timers and participated in games in Germany, Switzerland and Brazil. And for the oldtimers, the trip to Brazil and winning 4:2 against Sao Paulo in the Morumbi Stadium, was the highlight.

Guenther served as vice president for Toni Kreidl, Hans Bisswurm and Al Hospel and as president from 1988-1998. He was inducted into the Wisconsin Soccer Hall of Fame in 1991.

He currently is in charge of Buildings and Grounds for the United German Societies and the Bavarian Sports Center.

It takes a lot of dedicated members to run our soccer club and Guenther made many, many friends over the years. To name them all would not be possible, but it starts with "A" and ends with "Z" or from "Apitz" to "Zaiss".

He is very pleased when he sees all the kids and coaches, that keep up the passion and the tradition of soccer, enjoying the game of soccer.



### **Mario Carini, Player, Verdi SC**



**Frank Geibl**, Player/Coach, Milwaukee Sport Club



**Ivo Jugovic**, Player/Coach, Croatian Eagles



**Jerry Panek** (b. Poland), Player/Coach, Polonia SC



**Ivan Pavlovic** (b. Yugoslavia, State Serbia), Referee, Serbian SC Milwaukee



**Willi Wessels**, Player/Coach, Bavarian SC, 1991

Willi was born in 1937 in Germany and started his soccer career with the SV Rotthausen 1912 Youth Soccer program. He immigrated to the USA in 1957 and settled in Milwaukee, WI where he joined the Bavarian Soccer Club's Major Division. During his 50 plus years of dedicated service to the Bavarian Soccer Club he spent 17 years with the Major Division as a player and 23 years coaching, both Major Division and Youth teams.

Willis's Soccer Highlights include the following:

- He led the Bavarian S.C. to 7 consecutive Wisconsin State Championships from 1960 to 1966.
- He was selected to numerous State All-Star teams and was named State League MVP in the 1960's
- He played numerous International games against professional Bundesliga Clubs such as.... MSV Duisburg, VfB Stuttgart, Bayern Muenchen, Werder Bremen, IFK Saarbruecken, HSV Hamburg and Borussia Dortmund.
- He made 10 Soccer trips as player and/or Coach to Germany, Switzerland, Brazil, Canada and Mexico

- Coached the Bavarian Majors for eight years, winning four State titles
- Coached the Bavarian U-14 to U19 for nine years winning numerous titles including Region II. And qualifying for the National Final Four in 1977 in Houston TX.
- He also coached the Whitefish Bay High School Blue Dukes for eight years, winning 3 State and 5 Conference titles in the 1980's. He was also elected Coach of the Year in the 1980's.

Willi was more than just an outstanding and highly respected soccer coach, he was a teacher and a mentor to many of his youth players who came from all walks of life. He taught them the basics of the game, the respect they needed for each other; for the opponent; for the coaches; and for all officials. He constantly reminded them of the importance of camaraderie which was the core ingredient of a successful team. Many of his players went on to play in the Wisconsin Major Division; some went on to the North American Soccer League (NASL), the Milwaukee Wave and other Indoor and Outdoor Professional Soccer Teams. A few made it to the USA Olympic team and some even to the U.S. National team and the 1990 U.S. World Cup team.

Willi is proud of his 50 year dedication to the Bavarian Soccer Club; his Honorary Membership of the Bavarian SC since 1971; his wife's membership since 1971; and his daughter Rita's dedication as President of Bavarian Soccer Club for eight years .

Camaraderie played a very big part in Willi's life, and his fellow players, members and friends who witnessed it after ever game at the Bavarian Inn. Many of his former teammates embraced it and incorporated it into their own lives. This is a lesson learned that will never be forgotten.

Willi and his wife Gerda currently live in Mequon WI.

