

Same old story for UT soccer

By DAN COUTURE

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It is Alfred Erler's dream to see soccer funded as an intercollegiate sport at the University of Texas, but until that becomes a reality Erler will operate as he always has—without much money.

Erler has been the Texas coach for three years and during that time he has witnessed what he called an extraordinary rise in soccer's popularity in Austin.

"No doubt about it," Erler said. "The Austin YMCA has a little league soccer program right now, as do other organizations in town. And Dallas is really where it's booming."

In Erler's three years as coach of the Texas team he has seen two other major Texas colleges, Southern Methodist and North Texas State, initiate funded intercollegiate soccer programs.

SOME OFFICIALS at the University have suggested it would cost \$100,000 to begin an intercollegiate soccer program. Erler doesn't quite agree.

"It all depends on what you want to do. One can spend \$100,000 if one wants to. Right now you could probably get away with tuition and fees scholarships. Right now that would be very attractive," Erler said.

To be a funded sport, the program would have to be approved by the Men's Athletics Council and the Board of Regents. Erler has taken steps to bring the matter before the Athletics Council, but action on the proposal has been tabled indefinitely.

Meanwhile, Erler and his team have opened the season. They went on the road Sunday and tallied a 1-1 tie against Texas-Arlington.

TWENTY-FOUR players were taken to Arlington Sunday for the opening game. Most likely 18 will be on the traveling squad to Colorado next week for a series of matches against the Air Force Academy and Colorado College.

Since his squad operates with a budget of slightly less than \$2,000 for the season, Erler has gone to outside forces for more money.

"We've been selling shirts, bumper stickers and soliciting donations," he said. "We're still about \$1,000 short and it seems like we'll be going on borrowed money."

Air Force and Colorado College are expected to be among the top western teams this year and Erler is looking for a better season for Texas.

A YEAR AGO, UT finished in the final four of the Texas Collegiate Soccer League and, in the four-team finals, lost 3-1 to eventual champion Houston.

"We have some new players who should help," he said. "There are only a few schools giving scholarships so the demand for players isn't that high. Some of the athletes contact me. And I call some of them."

Erler said Texas' main weakness a season ago was lack of offense near the opponents' goal.

"Game after game we'd play all the time in the other end of the field, but we'd lose 1-0," Erler said. "I think that won't happen again. We've got some good players."

AMONG OTHERS, Erler will count upon freshman Norman Reid of Jamaica and freshman Michael Harrison of Jamaica on the forward. Harrison will join Peru's Augusto Brocca and Austin's Pablo Taboada on that line.

"Our forward line lacked a way to get the ball in the goal," Erler said. "Pablo's improved over last year and Harrison will really help us. He has good ball control. Last year, to some extent, we outplayed some of the opponents, but we didn't outscore them."

Texas' lack of scholarships prompted the loss of George Zelin-ski, who played at Texas a season ago but accepted an SMU scholarship.