



Center for the Study of the Southwest Texas State University San Marcos

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Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Hi, my name is John Mckiernan Gonzalez, I am the Director of the Center for the Study of the Southwest at Texas State University, and I am at 20 00 Dellcrest Drive after having watched France play Belgium and I am interviewing Tom Athey.

Tom Athey: Athey, A T H E Y.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: This is a project trying to give attention to soccer, the history of soccer in Austin and the first question I am going to ask Tom is... When did you first become aware of soccer?

Tom Athey: Probably shortly before I started playing with the River City Rangers in 1984, I really had no exposure to it before that.

Tom Athey: I was almost thirty years old.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: So you were thirty... where were you?

Tom Athey: I was in Austin.

Tom Athey: I had been here for 6 years, and I was, I played a lot of hacky sack, and I got recruited by some guys cause I had foot skills but I knew nothing about the game.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Were you recruited at Zilker Park from hacky sack to the field?

Tom Athey: Yeah.

Tom Athey: Yeah, the Shiners name back then, they'd been together since seventh grade and I was like the rookie on the team when I came in in 84, so I played with those same guys for almost thirty years now.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: So you've been playing organized Soccer from hacky sack since 1984?

Tom Athey: Yeah.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Why'd you start playing hacky sack?

Tom Athey: Well..that's a good question.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: How did you get started playing hacky sack?

Tom Athey: I don't remember,

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: People.

Tom Athey: Probably my brother, my brother is [inaudible 00:01:38] and I think maybe my younger brother had a hacky sack and we just started goofing around.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: So what keeps you playing soccer? I mean hacky sack is much less injury prone.

Tom Athey: I don't want my body to break down and I don't want to get old and fat, I probably should retire, I'm 63 but ...

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Well, You play once a week, what position do you play?

Tom Athey: I've been playing attacking midfield on the right side.

Tom Athey: We play twice a week, we have a lighted field so we've been playing there for 16 years if not

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: St. Louis Church up by?

Tom Athey: by Burnett, St. Louis King of France Catholic School Gym

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: I had no Idea.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: So what do you think has changed for soccer in Austin?

Tom Athey: It's gotten a lot more

Tom Athey: Back in the day no body rule, unless you grew up in like Dallas or a soccer city, no one really knew anything about it.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: So you play with the team, they were called the Shiners back then?

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: And now you play for the River City Rangers>

Tom Athey: Responsively Shiners Beer, Jeff was one of our founders and he used to go to the warehouse every Saturday and they'd let him pick out a couple of cases of mixed beer and yeah.

Tom Athey: And then we went to Tier 11 names who were nobody but yeah River City Rangers now.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: I've been playing against the River City Rangers with the Romulans since maybe 2008.

Tom Athey: Yeah.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: So what has changed for Soccer in Austin? For you?

Tom Athey: Me, The field, a more consistent practice facility and just a lot more people playing, you know and watching youth soccer come up and ethnic kids and all that jazz.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: You're saying you play with your sons now?

Tom Athey: Yeah, when I was 30 he was 6, you know, formally we played mix games and then we all played on the same team.

Tom Athey: Still trying to get that family hat trick, run a game and where we all pre-score in a same game .

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Yeah, I keep on trying to get my brother to visit over this summer so he can play with us and then bring an actual striker on to our team.

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Thank you very much Tom, I'll be in touch. Thank you for your time and... time.

Tom Athey: You're welcome, Thank you!

Mckiernan-Gonzalez: Yeah so...