



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

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## **Interview Transcript: Alan Campbell**

### **Interview**

1. When did you first encounter soccer?

I basically grew up playing soccer. Soccer or Football is very different over there (Scotland), because basically you pick up the game by playing outside. You don't have formal teams when you're younger so there is a lot of kicking the ball around while you are outside and practicing. I got into soccer or football teams when I was about 8 and played up until I was about 18.

2. Were the teams you played for when you were 8-18 years old organized through the schools?

Yes, it was through all of the schools. The schools have a lot of programs there (Scotland). Similar to here (U.S.) they're just basically catching up here I would say though. Austin (TX) is a little bit different than, well with some of the public parks. Dallas is a bit more formal. Same with the East Coast. I think there is a lot more of soccer taking place on the East Coast. But Austin is certainly growing.

3. What has kept you playing soccer and why do you still play soccer?

Why do I still play soccer? To remain myself and keep fit. Ya know I'm so unfit. I enjoy it as well, I enjoy getting out. It's fun to get out and just play. Its someone of a social activity as well.

4. What obstacles have you faced while still playing?

Well when you get into this league in Austin, you get into the old man's league, I always say you can look good on a bad team or you can look bad on a good team. And I err on looking good on a bad team (Romulans). The obstacles you get here are obviously are just the age group. You get varying different standards over here. Some people have played the game before and some people really haven't played the game before. Those that haven't played the game before can very physical, but bad tackles and don't have the skill. So, it's quite a variety of standards that you get here.

5. I see that some of the guys are wearing the Copas (popular Adidas cleats) and some are wearing some pretty flash boots (cleats), wants your stance on the boots?

I don't think the boots make any difference. It's the player ya know? It's probably the better the boots the worse the player ya know.

6. John (Professor of student, teammate of interviewee) said you were the superstar of the team, would you agree with that?

No. I don't have the fitness, but I've still got the ball skills. It's also yard ya know when you play this type of game. It's hard ya know when you play this type of game, just like rugby (interviewer plays rugby), there is a technique and a formation you should be playing. You should always be playing off the ball, looking for work and a lot of this is just punting up the park. It makes it harder. But it's all fun.

7. Did you always play midfield?

No, I used to play full back. When I could uh...the only reason they put me in midfield is because it is out the way, in theory it's cause of my skill not cause of my fitness. You really should be fit to play midfield.

8. Have you heard of the expression soccer is a gentleman's game played by hooligans and rugby is a hooligans' game played by gentlemen?

You see that with soccer or football, even when you watch it on TV, a lot of antics. In this league, there is a lot of people who complain a lot, part of the reason they complain a lot is because they can't get to the ball and they're too old, so you hear a lot of whining. Which is pretty frustrating.

### **Email Questions**

1. How long have you been involved with soccer in Austin?

- involved only in a playing capacity since 1992 - shortly after relocating from Scotland to Austin way back in 1991. In these days I was able to run and pretend to play reasonably well!!!

2. At what levels have you been involved with soccer in Austin (started a club, owned a club, ref, player, coach, etc..)?

- played soccer since a young lad. Growing up in Scotland, soccer was a way of life. Many do not go through the formal process of the recreational soccer (age 5 and up) but are basically given a ball to play outside in rain, hail or sleet (which is more common in Scotland than in Austin). The point here is that people can develop more ball skills since they have opportunity to practice more. Unfortunately kids in Austin only get the chance to play when driven to games by parents etc. When comparing US to Europe you often can see big difference with ball skills, moving off the ball, formations and understanding the game etc.

Anyway probably played every day through high school and also played club soccer from a very young age. 6-7.

3. How has soccer changed in Austin since you've been involved? Is the change good or bad?

- soccer is evolving but in my opinion will never take over from Football. (Rugby is similar). This is driven by perception of game being too slow, lacks scoring and 'razmatazz' of 'Football'. The perception of the game is however changing - initially I believe soccer was seen more as a kids / girls sport and was also impossible to break the perception barrier when moving into high school football. I recall my son playing through middle school and peer pressure pushing him to try Football at high school...

The good news is that with the improving infrastructure, growing leagues like Austin soccer, co-Ed soccer, more diversity and immigration (pre crazy Trump) all coming from different international backgrounds will continue to promote awareness and interest of the game.

It's interesting that perception of the game from outside of US is still in its infancy. The USA professional soccer teams and MLS is helping but still has a long way to go. (By the way Scotland doesn't exactly have too much to be proud of when playing soccer or Rugby - but the fans certainly know how to drink, enjoy and talk a good game!!).

4. What influence have you had on the change?

- unfortunately very little or more pointedly None!! My focus and priority, like many who relocate to the USA was on my career and soccer was more of weekend pastime.

5. What changes would you like to see with soccer in Austin?

- ultimately for soccer to be perceived and respected the same way as Football is today!

6. What impact has soccer had on Austin?

- I actually believe it has significantly attracted many families to Austin which ultimately helped with the continued growth of the Texas economy. Obviously not a primary reason but many families move from East and West coast to live in Austin. It's certainly cheaper, and more attractive but parents with young kids love the parks, outdoor environment and the teamwork potential that soccer can offer.

7. Who is your favorite soccer team? Club? National?

Used to go and watch Glasgow Rangers every week. There was heavy religious element to these games with major rival being Glasgow Celtic. (protestant versus catholic which actually created a phenomenal atmosphere - there's no better game to watch than this. (National team is NOT Scotland and certainly NOT England - like Dutch and Brazilian teams!!

8. Who do you think will win the next World Cup and why?

Would like to see Brazil but realistically Germany will win. They are machines - well trained, coached and exceptional fitness just like the cars they build.

9. Who do you think is a dark horse to win the next World Cup and why?

Don't know but do know it ain't Scotland!!!

10. Who do you think is a must to watch during the World Cup and why?

Brazil - in my opinion they show so much flair, fun, skills which are way above competition. The fans are also wonderful and party / dance and show the same spirit, enthusiasm and excitement as some of the players.