

# In the Spotlight: Soccer FANatic

**M**any people say soccer is not just a sport, it is a way of life. This could not be more true for Chris Rumbelow. Originally from England, Chris visited America in 1978 and because of soccer, moved to Madison permanently in 1980. He has since become the president of Madison United Soccer Club, founder of the Madison Soccer Hall of Fame, and father of two children, both of whom are also passionate soccer players.

Madison United is the biggest adult soccer club in Madison. Their teams provide players, ages 18 and older, an arena to continue playing soccer for as long as they desire. They pride themselves as being the "Soccer club for your whole adult soccer career." This is not only true for current players, but for their alumni as well. "We are in touch with our 500 alumni who are literally all over the world. This year the club turns 40 years old so hopefully we will bring them in and have a big gathering," said Chris. He explained that the greatest aspect of Madison United is that players are not simply part of a team, but a whole club: there are always other teams to watch and support. He loves KEVA Sports Center because it allows them to do just that, "You finish your game, you grab a couple of pitchers of beer and watch your buddies play... To be able to sit down in between the two fields and watch is a great thing."

The current breakdown of Madison United teams includes Men's Majors, Men's First Division, Men's Second Division, Men over 30, Men

over 40, U-23, a women's team and a co-ed team. The Men's Major division team currently holds the title of Wisconsin State Champions. "Our goal is to be the best in each one of those levels," Chris expressed, "we are currently not the best in each one of them but we are in the top three of each." As president, he oversees all Madison United teams. He is also working towards making Madison United the first club in the area to have their own facility. Specifically, he is searching for three fields and a clubhouse they can call their own.

In February, Madison United hosted their annual President's Cup Indoor Soccer Tournament at KEVA Sports Center and BreakAway Sports. Chris describes it as "The biggest and best adult tournament in the Midwest," and with good reason: the 2010 President's Cup had 84 teams with players traveling in from six different states and from Canada. Additionally, the reserve team from the Milwaukee Wave Pro Soccer team came out to play.

When Chris isn't on the soccer field, planning the President's cup, or overseeing Madison United, you can find him in the gymnasium of two elementary schools in the Madison Area. "I have the best job in the whole world," said Chris, "I teach elementary physical education." He has held this position for the past 22 years, which gives him insight into how soccer in this area has grown. He explained that the game has come a long way in the last two decades, children are exposed to soccer at a younger age which has allowed the quality of players and

the depth of the game to improve dramatically.

With this trend, Chris saw a need to recognize great soccer players and contributors in the area. Last year, he started the Madison Area Soccer Hall of Fame, which celebrates exceptional soccer players, coaches, referees, and builders. The community can nominate individuals by filling out a nomination form from January until April each year. Those selected into the hall of fame get their own plaque, which beginning this spring, will be displayed at Reddan Park in Verona. KEVA Sports Center, Middleton Sports & Fitness, BreakAway Sports, and the Claddagh Irish Pub agreed to sponsor the Madison Area Soccer Hall of Fame for the next four years. After that time, Chris hopes that the soccer community will be able to support the hall of fame itself.

*By Samantha Ganz*



**Chris Rumbelow  
Pictured with a Madison Area  
Soccer Hall of Fame Plaque**