

The History of the German – American Sports Club.

Club History: For the past of the German American Sports Club Richmond is told in its entirety, we must start a few years before the actual founding date of the club.

It would be unusual indeed, when German people get together, that the sport of soccer should not be mentioned. By the year 1956, enough soccer enthusiasts had, by word of mouth, found each other so that practice games could be held on a regular basis at Fort Harrison.

People such as Erich Albus, Arthur Ballner and Heinz Engert continually looked for and brought players to the field, so that these games could continue. It must be mentioned however, that it was not alone the sport of soccer that made it possible for the German American Sportsclub Richmond can celebrate its existence. Because after the ball had been kicked around sufficiently, the players would sit together in the old tradition for a refreshing glass of beer, and during one of these sessions, the idea was formulated to celebrate New Years Eve together. This party consisting of 30 people became so lively that the floor joists literally sank by a whole inch.

These happy meetings and picnics, which were usually held in someone's backyard, were so successful that they were held more frequently, and were often well supported by Mr. Albert Merz.

Needless to say that a soccer ball was always present at the picnics. The result was that many bushes and flowers lost their leaves and petals when the ball shot through the air.

The wives not only made sure that enough food was available but were called upon to help out as substitute goalkeepers.

These get-to-getters were the cause of the enlargement of the friendship circle. In addition to the establishment of communications between persons of the Inta-Roto organization and Hauni, Richmond, the two local German Companies, in the year 1959, the New Year 1960 was celebrated in the Henrico Tavern (Freedom Inn) with approximately 50 people. A three-man band provided the music.

Mr. Fritz Wenniger was a visitor from North Carolina and expressed an interest in moving to Richmond. It was he, who after coming to Richmond, together with Oskar Heinz, Werner Illig, Willi März, and Paul Preisner, germinated the idea to establish a sports club.

The first soccer game between Inta-Roto and Hauni, was fought to a draw on Siegfried Bohlmann's property. The enthusiasm for the game was now boundless, that two weeks later, the two teams met on a field near Byrd Airport in brand new soccer uniforms. (Inta-Roto in black and white and Hauni in green). After several games, the team members were changed such that players, who were born in the north of Europe, formed one team which competed against the team made up of players that were born in the south of Europe. This arrangement ensured

renewed excitement of the game. After one of the north-south games, the players gathered in Hermann's Restaurant in Richmond and decided to establish the Sportclub Richmond. Adolph Naujokat, who had recently moved to Richmond, consented to be its first president. The quarterly dues were set at .50 cents.

At the general meeting in October 1961, the membership voted for the following people as their club officers:

President – Adolph Naujokat

Vice-President – Manfred Schumacher

Treasurer – Heinz Engert

Equipment Manager – Erich Albus

Sport Committee – Arthur Ballner, Hans Kotulla, Erich Voss

The membership consisted of 36 people and the treasury contained a grand total of \$30.50.

The Washington Sportsclub should receive special recognition for its support of the newly established Richmond Sportsclub. Their soccer team was a regular and willing opponent, and their friendship resulted in many happy and congenial hours.

The German American Sportsclub Richmond has participated in regular soccer competition since 1962 in the Richmond area against teams such as the "Internationals", "Randolph Macon College", and "St. Christopher High School".

The sport of soccer was not the only DSC activity. In 1962, the club held its first large cultural affair in the Meadowbrook

Country Club. In a hall that was decorated for Karneval, or what the Americans would most likely call Mardi Gras, Prince Albert (Merz) and Princess Christine (Illig), reigned that evening over 135 "Fasching-fools". The total receipts for the evening increased the treasury by .75 cents after expenses.

The general meeting of 1962 brought no changes, except that the title of the Sportsclub Richmond was changed to Deutscher Sportclub Richmond.

In the following year it was decided to include an annual Turkey shoot in the club functions. This event of shooting skills was first held on the farm of Mr. Schulz and later the farm of Mr. Pashke and the proceeds were slated for the yearly children's Christmas party.

In 1962 the club added two bowling teams as a new sports activity. Paul Preisner was the manager of both teams. In addition to bowling, a tennis team was founded under the supervision of Rolf Böttcher. In 1964 the soccer field at Montrose playgrounds was dedicated and August Holzmann accepted responsibility for the field and the equipment.

We must also include the golf tournaments which started at about the same time. These were managed by Fritz Wenniger.

In May of 1964 our soccer team was invited by the Liederkrantz of Reading to play a friendly game against their team on their 20th anniversary. Our team lost by a score of 3:1, but the team members enjoyed their stay in Reading and brought back some very pleasant memories.

In the first 5 years of its existence, the club membership had risen to 91 people. Adolf Naujokat resigned as its first president and Mr. Bernhard Leipelt took over the reins in his place.

In the year 1965 the Richmond area was given a special treat when the West German Bundesliga team Hannover 96 accepted the invitation of the German American Sportsclub to play an exhibition game at the Richmond Stadium. Although our team lost by a score of 8:2, it will remain an unforgettable experience for our players. The 3000 people who came to watch the game were astonished by what these professional soccer players could do with that ball.

After a one-year period, the club's presidency was again bestowed upon Adolf Naujokat, who remained in that position for an additional 8 years until his return to his native Germany. In 1966 Anita Maerz was elected Miss Soccer as an honor of the visit of the Philadelphia Kolping soccer team. We are happy to report a 4:2 win over our guests. From 1967 to 1970 the fishermen of the Sportsclub participated in deep sea fishing trips which were discontinued when the last outing almost ended on the bottom of the bay. We doubt if the participants will ever forget that experience.

For Easter of 1968 a special Easter egg hunt was planned to be conducted in Williamsburg. The children of the Williamsburg residents were not included in these plans, but since it was assumed that the city of Williamsburg was the sponsor of this event, they happily participated with the club's children in the

search for the eggs. Luckily the Sportsclub had brought enough eggs to go around. As far as we know the city fathers of Williamsburg did not take the hint to try an event such as this of their own.

At the 10th annual meeting, the club's treasurer reported a \$1,000 amount in treasury. Putting that much money aside at that time was an excellent piece of work by the officers, when one looks back to the starting amount in 1960, and when one is reminded that the treasury was practically zero at the end of the club year 1965-1966.

During the year 1969, Willi März assumed the responsibility to conduct the "Skat Evenings" for the card players of the Sportsclub and for the table-tennis buffs. Lucien Dupriez volunteered to guide the ping-pong players.

As a social function, the first Richmond Oktoberfest was held at the Holiday Inn on Robinhood Rd. (also known as the Abby). Because of its popularity this event was moved to the Richmond Arena the very next year, where it grew to a two-day event. As the Oktoberfest grew in popularity it was decided to move to a larger facility, the Show Place on Route 360. From there it was moved to the Richmond Race Way on Laburnum Rd. in Richmond and now enjoys an attendance of roughly 4000 visitors per day.

The Richmond Oktoberfest is owned and sponsored by the Deutscher Sportclub and the Gesangverein Virginia. It is

managed by a Board of Directors consisting of seven representatives of each club.

Since 1971 the club has added the Sommernacht's Fest (Summer Nights Festival) to its annual events. We thank Dr. Hermann for his generosity in permitting us the use of his farm as an ideal picnic setting.

From 1971-1973 the soccer team members established contact with the crew of the freighter "Hamburger Dom" which docked at regular intervals at the Richmond Deepwater Terminal. We are grateful to the skipper Mr. Martin Hanke, who hosted many shipboard parties which we were able to enjoy. We also became friends with the field service personnel of the Liebherr Amerika company in Newport News, who reciprocated their visit to Richmond with a beautifully catered party in Newport News. Several soccer games were the result of both acquaintances, most of them were victorious for the German Sportsclub team.

The women of the German American Sportsclub formed a gymnastics group in 1973 under the direction of Ursula Sorensen. The interest of the group was not only in keeping fit and trim but in entertaining the Mardi Gras visitors with some sharp dancing.

During the general meeting in 1973, the membership decided to join AGAS, Association of German American Societies ([click here to go to their website](#)) which permitted its membership reduced group airfares to Germany under the sponsorship of

the Schwaben club International; [click here](#) to go to their website.

With the end of the 1973-74 club year began a new club period. The first president Adolf Naujokat relinquished his position to return with his wife Margarete to Germany. Rolf Henn was voted to be the president, a position he held from 1973 until 1978 and again from 1981 until 1984.

The “Deutscher Sportclub Richmond” was incorporated in 1975 and added the title “German American Sportsclub Richmond, Inc.” to its original name.

Over the years soccer became more popular so that the Richmond Recreation Department started a soccer league for which area teams could sign up and compete. In 1975, when it was time to sign up with the city for another year of soccer, Hans Stienen, the manager of the DSC soccer team, and Ron Beckstoffer, the manager of the Richmond Internationals, decided that it was time for the clubs to start their own league. They formed the league and called it the “Central Virginia Soccer Association”. (CVSA). It started with 8 teams. Today the league has grown to approximately 40 teams.

Over the next few years, the DSC soccer program grew to three teams, a first team that played in the Premier Division, a second team for the second division and a Senior team for the older players.

In 1975 when the German American Club’s soccer team won its first Richmond league championship, the club can look with

pride upon its players who dominated league competition for many years by winning several championships in both divisions. Many people share this success, we will therefore mention only the two team managers Hans Stienen and Wolfgang Grimm. Both were later replaced by Gary Ilch. As the players got older the soccer program ended and was replaced with occasional pick-up games at Dory Park.

Since then, the Sports Club has transitioned into a social club.

A new event was added to the club functions with the addition of the “Deutscher Tag” which was held annually at the State Fairgrounds. Unfortunately, there is no more “Deutscher Tag” (German Day) in Richmond. The Richmond Oktoberfest took over the selection of the queen. The Oktoberfest Board accepts applications each year and selects one of the applicants to become Oktoberfest Queen.

In April 1977, the Dixie Jazz band from Konstanz visited Richmond and entertained the club members at the Highland Springs American Legion Post. Karl Ilch had responsibility for the success of the evening. It would be a real mistake not to mention the visit of the Hauni-Hamburg soccer team. Although our team lost by a score of 6:1, many lasting friendships resulted from this visit and all of us will remember the tremendous party which we celebrated with them.

During the 1976 general meeting most of the membership voted affirmatively to ask if the club should acquire a piece of land. Messrs. A. Mertz, E. Marx, M. Schumacher, and A.

Snellings were to act as advisors in the event of such an acquisition. A 5-acre piece of property was purchased 3 years later in Charles City County for \$9,200.

The year 1978 was the most eventful in the club's history. In the month of September we took part in the Richmond International Food Festival in the Richmond Arena, in partnership with our friends from the Gesangverein Virginia. The following week we were privileged to again have the Hauni-Hamburg soccer team as our guests. Hermann Ramdohr did an outstanding job of organization to make their trip a memorable one and a friendship evening sponsored by the German American Sportsclub helped to renew old friendships and to strike up new ones. The cultural zenith of the German American Sportsclub was the concert given by the famous 75-year-old Cologne Police Choir. The singers from the city of Cologne delighted the 350 listeners who came to the Henrico High School Auditorium. Even the cultural attaché, Herr Hans Müllers, found his long trip from Washington amply rewarded. The officers of the club, especially Wolfgang Grimm, Hans Stienen, Emil Marx and Fritz Schwenk, can look back with pride because their efforts made the concert a reality.

In the same month we were honored by a visit from Adolf Naujokat and his wife Margarete. This visit gave the Sports club a chance to show its appreciation for the work which Adolf did for the club by sponsoring a dinner-dance evening at the Highland Springs American legion.

The year 1978 was without a doubt the busiest year for the club officers, however, success of their undertakings was the reward. After he gave a short resume of the events of the club year 1977-1978, Rolf Henn gave up the club's presidency which he had held for the last 5 years.

Since then, the following club members served as presidents:

Mr. Fritz Schwenk was elected as the 4th club president and served for two years from 1978-1980.

Mr. Erich Albus served as President from 1080 – 1081.

Mr. Rolf Henn returned and served again as President from 1981 – 1984.

Dr. Peter Schulz served as President from 1984 – 1995.

Mr. Hans E. Stienen served as President from 1995 – 2000.

Dr. Peter Schulz served as President again from 2000 – 2001.

Ms. Carmen Hoge served as President from 2001 – 2003.

Dr. Allan Mills served as President from 2003 – 2005.

Mr. Hans E. Stienen served as President again from 2005 – 2015.

Mr. Gary Ilch served as President from 2015 – 2020

Mr. Hans E. Stienen served as President again from 2020 to present

The proposition that the German American Sportsclub cancel its membership to AGAS in Washington was accepted by the full membership. The reason for the proposed withdrawal was the discontinuance of AGAS in its membership to the

Schwaben International organization, which resulted in the nullification of the opportunity for the German American Sportsclub members to obtain reduced airfares to Germany which were under the sponsorship of the Schwaben International.
