

Moises Junchaya: soccer coach One Life in Lodi
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Moises Junchaya radiates to the universe an inner peace, a certain calmness of spirit that seems to make still the hectic pace that surrounds him.

As an esteemed soccer coach for the Lodi Recreation for 36 years Moises is fast to extend his hand and his heart to the young people of our community. This is true both on the field of play and on the field of life.

Moises Junchaya was born in Lima, Peru on October 28, 1937. His father, Moises Senior, worked as a distributor for a construction supply company. His mother, Mercedes kept house and raised their seven children. . . i.e., Zoila, Max, Louis, Demetrio, Hernando, and younger sister Mercedes. "My brother Demetrio is a priest," said Moises. "He, along with Mercedes and Hernando, remain in Peru."

Moise's love for the game of soccer began as a 5 year old kicking rocks across the open fields of Lima. Too young to participate in organized sports Moises was allowed, by his father, to practice with the bigger kids. "My father was the coach," laughs Moises. "The players had no choice but to take me under their wing."

At age 10 Moises was finally accepted into league play as a member of the San Antonia Soccer Club. "We lost most of our games that season," remembers Coach Moises. "We got better as we got older."

Although strong and fleet of foot, Moises lacked the necessary prowess that was needed to become a player of impact. "I was not a good player," admits Moises. "So at 10 years old I decided to start coaching." Moises has been coaching ever since.

On December 18, 1965 at 27 years of age Moises married his childhood sweetheart, Laura. She was 22.

It was during that time when Moises became employed by Panamerican Television in Lima. After only a few months on the job Moises was elevated to the position of program coordinator/stagehand supervisor. "It was a good job but not good pay," said Moises. "By then I had my wife and two children, Moises III and Miguel to support."

Moises added that in Peru if you're not a professional chances are that you are going to struggle. Realizing this, Moises, in the spring of 1968 ventured on his own to Lodi, U.S.A. and went to work as a cash register repair man for Protective Check Writing in New York City. For Moises the difficult part was leaving his family behind while he became established in the U.S.A. "I came to live with my sister on Union Street," recalls Moises. "Later that year I went back to Peru to get my family."

Once back in Lodi Moises put down roots on Charles Court. By then his family had grown by one. "My daughter Patricia was born," smiles Moises. "All three children played soccer at Lodi High for Coach Lou Jasmine.

In the fall of 1972 Moises signed on as soccer coach for Vince Nocito, then Director of the Lodi Rec. At the time there were two teams in the fledgling soccer league. One was Italian and the other Portuguese. The teams during early years practiced at Century Field in Garfield, New Jersey. That was before the lanscape was re-developed and safe to play on. When rocks and rabbit holes ruled the ground and the sun baked grass cut the skin like razor blades.

"Vince Nocito was a great supporter of the game," said Moises. "Even though it was last on the list. . . He and Anna Belli breathed life into the game."

Thanks to the efforts of Vince, Anna and Mayor Chris Paci the Lodi Rec soccer teams were playing in the relative safety of Kennedy Park.

"Mayor Anthony Luna played a large part in helping the program to grow and prosper," says Moises." His support was instrumental in allowing soccer to become established as a recognized sport in our community."

In the beginning the only words that Coach Moises knew in English were yes, no and okay. Yet even with his limited vocabulary the lines of communication between he and his players remained open. "We had no problems communicating," said Junchaya. "They understood by what I showed them not by what I told them."

Moises recalls his rookie year as a coach with mixed emoitons. It was then that his team suffered the rigors of a winless season. The end of the schedule found them celebrating a tie grame. "We had a pizza party," laughs Moises. "A tie game was a good reason to celebrate."

The following year that same team of 12 year olds made it to the Cosmos sponsored, state championships at the Giants Stadium. The Lodi squad lost a 3 to 2 heartbreaker to a rough and tumble German American Club. "They were big guys but our kids played them hard. They scored 3 goals in a row and we answered back late with 2 of our own."

It's important to note that in the early stages of soccer, which in 1970 was all but unheard of in Lodi, there were no girls teams to be found. The Lodi Rec was among the first to give birth to girls soccer. "It was hard to get kids to play in those days," recalls the coach. "A team consisted of 11 players. . . We were lucky if we got 12. . . There were no subs."

Moises and wife Laura have three children:Moises III, Miguel and Patricia. They have 9 grandchildren.

Assistant Coaches during Moises's career:

Max Junchaya Luis Alfaro Angelo Dimitrakiv

A. Pagano Diego Cruz Philip Vartolone
Joe Scimeca (deceased) Glen Russo
Alex Vizcaino M. Bernardi A. Dimarcu

All Members of the United States Soccer Federation:

First 12 players:

Moises Junchaya, Mike Junchaya, Oggie Maggiore
John Maggiore Tony Dominguez, Manuel Brito, Serfin Brito
John Beites, John Amandio

Career Record:

1980 Garden State Championship
1981 Garden State Championship - 2 teams
1982 Metro Championship - 3 teams
1983 Metro Championship
1984 Metro Championship
1990 Metro Championship - 2 teams
1991 Metro Championship - 2 teams
1992 Metro Championship - 3 teams
1993 Metro Championship
1994 Metro Championship
2002 Metro Championship - 3 teams
2003 Metro Championship - 2 teams

Moises thanks the following for their support:

DPW, Al Perrelli , Mayor Chris Paci , Mayor Anthony Luna
Ann Desmon, Phil Vartolone (Treasurer, Coach, Sponsor)
Anna Belli

Moises had a unique way of introducing kids to the game of soccer. "The kids use to see me playing with my children," says Moises. "To get them involved I'd purposely kick the ball over to them and ask them to return it. One by one they'd come over to kick the ball. They had no idea what they were playing."

In December of 2008, after 36 productive years the much heralded coach saw fit to retire from the game he loves. "I'll still be helping Anna Belli whenever I'm needed," says Moises. "My days with the Metro League are over." Moises will continue to teach kindergarten and first graders the basics of the game.

When asked what his secret to long term coaching success Moises is quick to say that he always treated the kids with respect and understanding. He never installed the fear of failure into the youngsters nor did he expect them to perform like seasoned players.

"Soccer is a game where the children have to create their own style and personality," says Moises. "Let the kids be themselves and coach them from that perspective."