

## Jack Blair Jr.

The parade of former Steinert greats continues with the induction of Jack Blair Jr. into the Soccer Hall of Fame. A hard-nosed leader on the field, Jack's passion exemplified the spirit of Mercer County soccer and his love for the game continues to this day. We welcome Jack Blair Jr. into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame!

Jack, like so many others, grew up in the local recreation leagues, school teams, and during his junior and senior high school days, his teams amassed an amazing 85-6-3 record during the 1970's, the halcyon days of soccer in Hamilton Township. It was when Jack attended Steinert that his prowess on the field came to the forefront. An excellent student as evidenced by his three years in the National Honor Society, Jack was a three year starter for the Spartans as a midfielder, helping the always potent Green and White side to a state championship in 1975. In 1977, Jack was a co-captain on the 24-0-0 state champs that was ranked #1 in the Garden State from the beginning to the end of the season and was touted as the top high school team in the nation by the highly respected soccer publication, Playboy. The same team was also voted as one of the "Teams of the Century" by the Star Ledger in 2000. Jack received All-County, All-Area, and All-State honors for his efforts as well as receiving the Wilkerson Scholar-Athlete award in his senior year.

Jack also was noticed on the national level when his Post 313 side progressed to the U-16 National finals, losing an overtime battle to Ruiz SC of St. Louis and as a result, he was selected to participate in the U-18 National Team final 30 training setup in Squaw Valley, Colorado in 1978. Jack continued his soccer and academic pursuits at Princeton University, where he was a four year starter for the Tigers and a four-time all-Ivy selection. A highlight of his time at Princeton was a 1979 NCAA tournament appearance, leading the 12-4 squad to a first round victory over Philadelphia Textile, the first win ever for the school on the national stage.

Jack continued in the club ranks after graduation, playing for Princeton SC, Trenton Italians, and Cranbury. But it was after his playing days that he once again displayed his devotion to the game that gave him so much. Taking a sabbatical from his family business, Jack assumed a role as Deputy Venue Executive Director for the 1994 World Cup, working to manage over 300 employees and 2000 volunteers in the NJ/NY area while hosting the Italian National Team, working to ensure what was to become a very successful event on the world stage. He has followed that effort with attendance at five World Cup finals, including the 2006 tournament in Germany where, together with his son John III, they logged 5500 kilometers, visited 10 cities, and were able to attend 13 games over a three week span!!

A true renaissance man, Jack, is an avid skier, scuba diver, wine connoisseur and successful businessman, as well as continuing to being a devoted follower of the Beautiful Game . A husband to Kathy and father to Taylor and John III, Jack Blair Jr. is a worthy and welcome recipient of induction into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame!!