



JOHN ZIMMER

Beginning a soccer education that would take him far, John Zimmer grew up running and playing on the fields at Hetzel Field, helping his Hall-of-Fame father Frank and brother Joe set up the nets and practicing during halftime breaks. Watching some of the region's finest teams playing against Trenton's best set the stage for a fine career of his own. We welcome John Zimmer into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame.

John started with the Tom Hamnett program at its inception in 1957, quickly proving himself to be a player of great promise. He led his teams to a number of championships, including a win over neighbors and rivals West End for the county championship as a 12 year old booter. He followed this impressive victory with a another county title as a 15 year old, defeating the Scots Americans before leading his team to a National U-15 title where he was named to the All-Tournament team and Tournament MVP. His prowess on the field didn't go unnoticed as he was selected by fabled coach Hubert Vogelsinger to join the U-15 Nation Team on a two-week trip to Scotland where John played against youth sides from Celtic, Manchester United, Ajax, and Real Madrid.

He continued his success with the Hamnetts program through 1976, winning several more county championships and being named league MVP. Additionally, John represented the strong Mercer Juniors and was asked, along with his brother Joe, to play for the New Jersey State Select team.

John's accumulated youth experiences served him well once he reached high school, leading the Lawrence freshman side to an undefeated record while scoring 30 goals. Moving up to Hall of Fame coach Lou Angebrannt's varsity program, he helped the Cardinals to a Group 2 title over Garfield, scoring once and adding an assist to help seal the victory. He was voted captain in both his junior and senior years, once again defeating Garfield in his final year, where he scored twice and assisted on two other goals to thrash their opponents 7-1. From there the

honors for John started to roll in. He was named Mercer County and Trenton Knights of Columbus Player of the Year, 1st team All-State, and All-American honors. Lawrence was ranked 2nd in the final 1975 Star Ledger poll in a year that saw Steinert, Notre Dame and Ewing all win state titles, a testament to the strength of Mercer County soccer.

John took his talents to NAIA powerhouse Davis and Elkins, where, while helping the Senators to three West Virginia conference titles, was named All-Conference for three consecutive years. He was a member of an All-NAIA team that toured Mexico and played against such teams as Monterrey and Cruz Azul. As captain of D&E in his senior year, he was named by Soccer America as a "future professional". His outstanding college career earned him a tryout for the ill-fated 1980 Olympics, where a political boycott ended the US participation. His post college years saw John coming back to his roots, playing for Trenton Extension and for Trenton Azzuri in the North Jersey Metropolitan League, teaming with his brother Joe for one last time.

John took his love of the game to the sidelines, coaching at McCorristin and in North Brunswick for over 20 years, helping to bring a state title to the Raiders in 1993. An educator for 34 years, John Zimmer remains a passionate fan of the Beautiful Game and is welcomed into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame.