



## SHAWN GARDINER

A well-known member of the Mercer County soccer community, Shawn Gardiner was one of the county's finest players and continues to be one of the most respected referees in the area. For his stellar playing career and for his continued involvement on the field, we welcome Shawn Gardiner into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame.

Shawn started playing competitively in 1978 as a member of the Hamilton 71's. Over a ten year period, Shawn and his teammates compiled a remarkable 648-57 record with 55 tournament championships while winning the NJ State Cup in 1983 and won championships at every level. Shawn flourished at Steinert, where, as a sophomore, he earned All-County and All-State honors. A hard-nosed defender, Shawn anchored the Spartan defense from sweeper, once again being recognized as an All-State player as well as an All-American as a junior. As a senior, Shawn led the Green and White to a 23-1-1 record and the 1988 Group Three State Championship, marshaling a defense that only allowed 10 goals all year and recorded 21 shutouts. He was named the NJ Player of the Year, Gatorade Player of the Year, and was named to the All-American team for a second time. He was inducted into the Steinert Hall of Fame in 2008 and his 1988 championship team also joined the rolls of Spartan greats in 2013

Shawn stayed close to home to begin his college career, matriculating at Mercer County Community College. Under Hall of Fame coach Charlie Inverso, he helped the Vikings to a national championship berth in his freshman year and received All-American honors once again as a sophomore. He moved onto Lock Haven University to finish his college experience, playing for a season for the Bald Eagles. Shawn continued to play upon his return to the area, spending years playing in the Mercer Men's League with the German American Kickers.

Shawn changed roles in 2009, when he received his FIFA referee license and began a career enforcing the rules on the field. He started refereeing high school games in 2011 and quickly earned the respect of his peers when he was voted Mercer County High School Referee of the Year in 2012. He returned to the Mercer Men's League as a referee and continues to be one of the most respected arbiters of the game

in the area. He has coached numerous boys teams through the Hibernian program and has trained a number of teams in the area over the years, bringing his years of accumulated knowledge and love for the game to those just starting out. A husband and father of three, Shawn and his family reside in Hamilton.

For his multi-faceted career as a player, referee, and coach, we are proud to induct Shawn Gardiner into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame.