



SAM MAIRA

A Mercer County product who excelled as a player and took those successes onto the sidelines as one of New Jersey's finest coaches, Sam Maira continues to influence players both on and off of the field. Currently an assistant and goalkeeper coach at Princeton University, the Hall opens its doors to Sam Maira as a part of the 2022 class of inductees into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame.

A native of Trenton, Sam's path followed a familiar one, playing for such teams as the Scots Americans under Tom Moffat Sr. and in the local leagues where, in his words, "for any team that had an opening". He eventually turned out for the Steinert juggernauts of the 70's, winning a state title under HOF coach Paul Tessein in 1975, a team that put together a 18-1-2 record and who shared the state Group IV championship with Kearny. Anchoring the team in goal, he earned All-County, All- Area, and All-State recognition while always crediting his teammates for his accomplishments.

He travelled north to Rutgers where he was a four-year letterman for the Scarlet Knights as well as team captain and MVP for Kalman Csapo's booters in 1980 while playing for local clubs such as Trenton Azzuri with many other HOF members. He was eventually named to the All-20th Century team for Rutgers. After college, he was drafted by the Pennsylvania Stoners of the ASL, but decided to continue his education at William & Mary, where served as the goalkeeper

coach while working on his masters degree and met his future wife, Erica during his time in Williamsburg, also serving in the same capacity at Rider University from 1981 to 1984.

Sam made several coaching stops while making his way back to New Jersey, finally landing at Shawnee High School, where he helped the Renegades to their first state title in 1986 before moving to Riverside, where success followed as he guided the Rams to three South Jersey championships, multiple league titles and a state final, followed by a Coaches Cup championship with the Shawnee girls program. In 2003, Sam became the first head coach of the boys soccer program at Seneca High School, leading the Golden Eagles to three conference championships, a South Jersey title, and a state final berth, accumulating over 370 victories for the Tabernacle school. In 2018, he was named local and state Coach of the Year by multiple publications and was named Large School Regional Coach of the Year, which encompassed New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware, in 2019. Sam also made professional waves in 2002/03 as he coached the South Jersey Barons to a USL Pro League national championship.

A proud father of three, Sam's passion has always been in guiding players to adulthood using soccer as the impetus. We are honored to tonight induct Sam Maira into the Mercer County Soccer Hall of Fame, Class of 2022