

The VSSL is Hitting the Airwaves! Dennis Munroe: A Gentleman On and Off the Pitch. Kurt Heinrich: Playing Soccer With a Purpose.



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## Using Soccer to Inspire and Empower

### Message from the President

Dear Street Soccer supporters.

2014 promises to be a very exciting year for the VSSL. The Canada 2014 Street Soccer Tournament will run from May 28 to June 1, and promises to be the highlight of the year.

Thanks go to Charles McGregor and his committee for leading this groundbreaking initiative.



The VSSL Board is now fully established, and with Board committees is setting our course for the future. We now have a clear Mission to guide our deliberations, and against which we can measure new initiatives.

This year will see us establish the place for research in the VSSL, expand our outreach and recruitment, and ensure the viability of the organization with stable public and corporate funding.

We are pleased to have UBC Medical students continue to add significantly to the VSSL, and welcome the new relationship with Temple Shalom. In 2014, we expect our relationships with the Whitecaps and the Southsiders to flourish, and to add new street soccer teams to the VSSL.

Most importantly, we will continue to expand the regular and consistent practice and playing opportunities that allow players to have fun, upgrade their soccer skills, develop friendships, and bring ideas to benefit the VSSL. In particular, I am grateful for the example shown by many of our more experienced players, as they mentor the new participants.

I look forward to working with you all for a memorable 2014.

Sincerely,

Steve McMinn  
President



### Kurt Heinrich: Playing Soccer With a Purpose



If you happen to stop by Carnegie Community Center on a Sunday afternoon or really, any of the VSSL's events, you are likely to see Kurt Heinrich, one of the league's most dedicated volunteers, in action.

Kurt currently serves as one of the coaches for Portland FC and on the VSSL Board as the Vice President. He does everything from teaching soccer fundamentals to new players to developing communications and outreach strategies for the VSSL. When he is not volunteering, he is hard at work as the Public Relations Manager for the Vancouver School Board.

The value of soccer was instilled in Kurt at a young age "My father thought as a good young German lad, I'd better start kicking the ball around" he recalls. It is this passion for soccer that inspired Kurt to volunteer with VSSL.

In 2009, he got involved in street soccer when his friend, Sarah Blyth, invited him to join her for a practice with one of the original VSSL teams, the Portland FC. The league was just getting started. "At that time we had just a small handful of players, many of whom were just learning how to kick a ball. It was a perfect fit for me. Soccer with a real purpose" he says. Since then, the Portland FC has blossomed into a robust team, playing in tournaments throughout BC, hosting the Canada Street Soccer Tournament and sending players to the Homeless World



**A huge thank you to UBC Rec for organizing the 2014 VSSL-UBC Rec Tournament! It was an amazing bonding opportunity for both the VSSL and UBC!**

Cup.

One of Kurt's favorite moments was the farewell party for the team going to the Homeless World Cup in Brazil, an event that demonstrated how beautifully the League came together in support of the players. "There was great food from the potluck cafe, multiple media interviewing our team like the sports stars they were, touching speeches, some nervousness and so much hope. Everyone was draped in Canada flags and equipped with black duffel bags - all courtesy of the Portland Hotel Society," he remembers.

Reflecting on the significance of the VSSL, Kurt suggests that the league has the remarkable power to transform people. "This is an incredible organization full of passionate people, which fundamentally changes the lives of the people it serves. At the very crux of it all, street soccer proves that sport and soccer are true levelers. The league also offers an important outlet to connect people who care about homelessness with a proven grassroots volunteer organization" he explains.



## **Dennis Munroe: A Gentleman On and Off the Pitch**

Whenever Dennis Munroe enters the soccer field he not only brings his best game, but also a good-natured smile and sense of comraderie that ties the VSSL together. The 41-year old jokes that he is one of the league's senior players, but one would never guess that based on the energy and enthusiasm that he brings to the field.

Not only that, but his cool and collected temperament makes him into a key leader and role model in the league. One example of that was the fundraiser organized by Dennis and a few other VSSL players that raised enough funds for

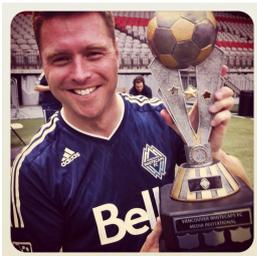
them to travel to the 2013 Street Soccer Canada Tournament in Comox.

Sports are important part of Dennis's background. He grew up playing contact football with his Squamish cousins in North Vancouver. It was a "great childhood" he remembers.

He joined the VSSL to get back into shape. "I feel sport and physical activity is great for the mind, spirit and if played right the body, so street soccer fundamentally works for me" he says. "People of all ages get something back from a run around the pitch 1 or 2 times a week..."

Yet, Dennis also recognizes that street soccer is not just about getting exercise. One of his favorite moments, was when the league took a road trip to the village of Alert Bay, BC where 'Namgis First Nation hosts a soccer tournament each June. He was impressed by the sportsmanship he saw, which he believes "really does transcend the game."

Ultimately, it's the sense of community surrounding the league that's important to Dennis, "I would encourage anyone to join street soccer in any capacity, as I truly feel blessed to have met so many amazing people and have so many good friends" he says.



### The VSSL is Hitting the Airwaves!

March 1 is the launch of Tyler Green's soccer talk show on AM650.

The show will broadcast 2 public service announcements about the VSSL, sponsored by Duso's!

Please spread the word and listen live 10pm-midnight every Saturday on AM650 Radio!

Please click [here](#) for more info or follow [@tylergreenFC](#) and [@soccertalk650](#)



### Get Involved

We are always looking for new volunteers to help with coaching and other VSSL activities.

If you want to get involved, [email us here](#).

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