

History of the German American Club, DSC

Richmond, VA

1960 – 1980

In order for the past of the German American Sports Club Richmond is told in its entirety, we must start a few years before the actual founding date of the club.

It would be unusual indeed, when German people get together, that the sport of soccer should not be mentioned. By the year 1956, enough soccer enthusiasts had, by word of mouth, found each other, that practice games could be held on a regular basis at Fort Harrison.

People such as Erich Albus, Arthur Ballner and Heinz Engert continually looked for and brought players to the field, that these games could continue. It must be mentioned however, that it was not alone the sport of soccer that the German American Sportsclub Richmond can celebrate its 20th anniversary, because after the ball had been kicked around sufficiently, the players would sit together in the old tradition for a refreshing glass of beer, and during one of these sessions, the idea was formulated to celebrate New Years Eve together. This party consisting of 30 persons became so lively, that the floor joists literally sank by a whole inch.

These happy meetings and picnics, which were usually held in someones backyard, and because of their success, were held more frequently, and were often well supported by Mr. Albert Merz. Many a bush and flower lost its leaves and petals when the ball shot through the air. The wives, not only made sure that enough food was available, but were called upon to help out as substitute goalkeepers.

These get-to-gethers were the cause for the enlargement of the friendship circle, in addition to the establishment of communications between persons of the Inta-Roto organization and Hauni, Richmond, in the year 1959. The New Year 1960 was celebrated in the Henrico Tavern (Freedom Inn) with approximately 50 people, and a 3 man band provided the music.

Mr Fritz Wenniger was a visitor from North Carolina and expressed an interest to move to Richmond. It was he, who after coming to Richmond, together with Oskar Heinz, Werner Illig, Willi März, and Paul Preisner, germinated the idea to establish a sports club.

The first soccer game between Inta-Roto and Hauni, was faught to a draw on Siegfried Bohlmann's property. The enthusiasm for the game was now boundless, that two weeks later, the two teams met on a field near Byrd Airport with brand new soccer uniforms. (Inta-Roto in black and white and Hauni in green). After several games, the team members were changed such that players, who were born in the north of Europe, formed one team which competed against the team made up of players that were born in the south of Europe. This arrangement assured renewed excitement of the game. After one of the north-south games, the players gathered in Hermann's Restaurant in Richmond and decided to establish the Sportclub Richmond. Adolph Naujokat, who had recently moved to Richmond, consented to be its first president. The quarterly dues were set at .50 cents.

At the general meeting in October 1961, the membership voted for the following people as their club officers:

President

Adolph Naujokat

Vice-President

Manfred Schumacher

Treasurer

Heinz Engert

Equipment Manager

Erich Albus

Sport Committee

Arthur Ballner, Hans Kotulla, Erich Voss

The membership consisted of 36 people and the treasury contained a grand total of \$30.50.

The Washington Sportsclub should receive special recognition for its support of the newly established Richmond Sportsclub. Their soccer team was a regular and willing opponent, and their friendship resulted in many happy and congenial hours.

The German American Sportsclub Richmond has participated in regular soccer competition since 1962 in the Richmond area against teams such as the "Internationals", "Randolph Macon College", and "St. Christopher High School".

To dispel the idea that the German American Sportsclub is involved in soccer games alone, the club held its first large cultural affair in the Meadowbrook Country Club in 1962. In a Mardi Gras like ball, Prince Albert (Merz) and Princess Christine (Illig), reigned that evening over 135 "Fasching-fools". The total receipts of the evening increased the treasury by .75 cents after expenses.

The general meeting of 1962 brought no changes, except that the title of the Sportsclub Richmond was changed to Deutscher Sportclub Richmond.

In the following year it was decided to include an annual Turkeyshoot in the club functions. This event of shooting skills was first held on the farm of Mr. Schulz and later on the farm of Mr. Pashke and the proceeds were slated for the yearly childrens Christmas party.

In 1962 the club added two bowling teams as a new sports activity. Paul Preisner was manager of both teams. In addition to bowling, a tennis team was founded under the supervision of Rolf Böttcher. In 1964 the soccer field at Montrose playgrounds was dedicated and August Holsmann accepted the responsibility for the field and the equipment.

We must also include the golf tournaments which were started at about the same time. These came under the direction of Fritz Wenniger.

In May of 1964 our soccer team was invited by the Liederkranz of Reading to play a friendly game against their team on their 20th anniversary. Our team lost by a score of 3:1, but the team members enjoyed their stay in Reading and brought back some very pleasant memories.

In the first 5 years of its existence, the club membership had risen to 91 people. Adolf Naujokat resigned as its first president and Mr. Bernhard Leipelt took over the reigns in his place.

In the year 1965 the Richmond area was given a special treat when the West German Bundesliga team Hannover 96 accepted the invitation of the German American Sportsclub to play an exhibition game at the Richmond Stadium. Although our team lost by a score of 8:2, it will remain an unforgettable experience for our players. The 3000 people who came to watch the game were astonished what these professional soccer players could do with that ball.

After a one year period, the club's presidency was again bestowed upon Adolf Naujokat, who remained in that position for an additional 8 years until his return to his native Germany. In 1966 Anita Maerz was elected Miss Soccer in honor of the visit of the Philadelphia Kolping soccer team. We are happy to report a 4:2 win over our guests. From 1967 to 1970 the fishermen of the Sportsclub participated in deep sea fishing trips which were discontinued when the last outing almost ended on the bottom of the bay. We doubt if the participants will ever forget that experience.

For Easter of 1968 a special Easter egg hunt was planned to be conducted in Williamsburg. Not included in these plans were the children of the other Williamsburg visitors who assumed that the city of Williamsburg was the sponsor of this event and happily participated with the club's children in the search for the eggs. Luckily the Sportsclub had brought enough eggs to go around. As far as we know the city fathers of Williamsburg did not take the hint to try an event such as this of their own.

At the 10th annual meeting, the club's treasurer reported a \$1,000 amount in the treasury. To put that much money aside at that time was an excellent piece of work by the officers, when one looks back to the starting amount in 1960, and when one is reminded that the treasury was practically zero at the end of the club year 1965-1966.

During the year 1969, Willi März assumed the responsibility to conduct the "Skate Evenings" for the card players of the Sportsclub and for the table-tennis buffs, Lucien Dupriez volunteered to guide the ping-pong players. As a social function, the first Richmond Oktoberfest was held at the Holiday Inn on Robinhood Rd. Because of its popularity this event was moved to the Richmond Arena the very next year and has grown to a two night affair and enjoyed almost 5000 visitors last year. The Richmond Oktoberfest is sponsored by the Oktoberfest Committee which is comprised of 10-12 people who are selected by the officers of the German American Sportsclub and the Gesang-Verein Virginia.

Since 1971 the club has added the Summernights festival to its annual events. We thank Dr. Hermann for his generosity in permitting us the use of his farm as an ideal picnic setting.

During the time period of 1971-1973 the soccer team members established contact with the crew of the freighter "Hamburger Dom" which docked at regular intervals at the Richmond Deepwater Terminal. We are grateful to the skipper Mr. Martin Hanke, who was host to many shipboard parties which we were able to enjoy. We also became friends with the field service personnel of the Liebherr Amerika company in Newport News, who reciprocated their visit to Richmond with a beautifully catered party in Newport News. Several soccer games were the result of both acquaintances, most of them were victorious for the German Sportsclub team.

The women of the German American Sportsclub formed a gymnastics group in 1973 under the direction of Ursula Sorensen. The interest of the group was not only to keep fit and trim but to entertain the Mardi Gras visitors with some sharp dancing.

During the general meeting in 1973, the membership decided to join AGAS, Association of German-American Societies ([click here to go to their website](#)) which permitted its membership reduced group airfares to Germany under the sponsorship of the Schwabenclub International; [click here to go to their website](#).

With the end of the 1973-74 club year began a new club period. The first president Adolf Naujokat relinquished his position to return with his wife Margarete to Germany. Rolf Henn was voted to be the president, a position he held until the end of the club year 1978-79.

The "Deutscher Sportclub Richmond" was incorporated in 1975 and added the title "German American Sportsclub Richmond, Inc." to its original name.

A new event was added to the club functions with the addition of the "Deutscher Tag" which was held annually at the State Fairgrounds. Unfortunately there is no more "Deutscher Tag" (German Day) in Richmond. The Richmond Oktoberfest took over the selection of the queen. The Oktoberfest Committee accepts applications each year and selects one of the applicants to become Oktoberfest Queen.

In April 1977, the Dixie Jazz band from Konstanz visited Richmond and entertained the club members at the Highland Springs American Legion Post. Karl Ilch had responsibility for the success of the evening. It would be a real mistake not to mention the visit of the Hauni-Hamburg soccer team. Although our team lost by a score of 6:1, many lasting friendships resulted from this visit and all of us will remember the tremendous party which we celebrated with them.

During the 1976 general meeting the majority of the membership voted affirmative to the question if the club should acquire a piece of land. Messrs A. Mertz, E. Marx, M. Schumacher, and A. Snellings were to act as advisors in the event of such an acquisition. A 5 acre piece of property was purchased 3 years later in Charles City County for \$9,200.

Since the year 1975 when the German American Club's soccer team won its first Richmond league championship, the club can look with pride upon its players who have since that time won almost every championship in the Richmond area. Many people share in this success, we will therefore mention only the two team managers Hans Stienen and Wolfgang Grimm.

The year 1978 was the most eventful in the club's history. In the month of September we took part in the Richmond International Food Festival in the Richmond Arena, in partnership with our friends from the Gesangverein Virginia. The following week we were privileged to again have the Hauni-Hamburg soccer team as our guests. Hermann Randohr did an outstanding job of organization to make their trip a memorable one and a friendship evening sponsored by the German American Sportsclub helped to renew old friendships and to strike up new ones. The cultural zenith of the German American Sportsclub was the concert given by the famous 75 year old Cologne Police Choir. The singers from the city of Cologne delighted the 350 listeners who came to the Henrico High School Auditorium. Even the cultural attaché, Herr Hans Müllers, found his long trip from Washington amply rewarded. The officers of the club, especially Wolfgang Grimm, Emil Marx and Fritz Schwenk, can look back with pride because their efforts made the concert a reality.

In the same month we were honored by a visit from Adolf Naujokat and his wife Margarete. This visit gave the sportsclub a chance to show its appreciation for the work which Adolf did for the club by sponsoring a dinner-dance evening at the Highland Springs American legion.

The year 1978 was without a doubt the busiest year for the club officers, however, success of their undertakings was reward in itself.

After he gave a short resume of the events of the club year 1978-1979, Rolf Henn gave up the club's presidency which he had held for the last 5 years.

Mr. Fritz Schwenk was elected as the 4th club president for the year 1979-1980. During the 20th general meeting a year later, he was re-elected for another one year term.

The proposition that the German American Sportsclub cancel its membership to AGAS in Washington was accepted by the full membership. The reason for the proposed withdrawel was the discontinuance of AGAS in its membership to the Schwaben International organization, which resulted in the nullification of the opportunity for the German American Sportsclub members to obtain reduced airfares to Germany which were under the sponsorship of the Schwaben International.

Over the years, many of the founding club members passed away, some are still with us. Here are their names:

Erich and Christel Albus

Lou Carl

Christine Illig

Gulherme Maerz

Christine Maerz

Margarete Naujokat

Paul and Inge Preisener

Peter Preisner

Lotte Schekulin

Manfred Schumacher

Ursula Sorensen

Hans and Annie Weidmann

Joseph and Frances Weigl