



BOUNCINGS



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2 Nov 14

**2014 PSLC
Over 40
CHAMPIONS**

WE WON!

Byki O-40	0 (2)	Premier Soccer League Over 40 Blue Division
Pampas	0 (1)	Hinsdale Central HS 26 October 2014

officials, and a penalty shootout that resulted in seven failed attempts from the spot. After all of that craziness, it was the Byki who prevailed 2:1 in the shootout, making club history by clinching the team's second title this season.

Byki edge Pampas for title in PKs

As the Over 40 Team prepared to take the field at Hinsdale Central HS to face Chicago Pampas in the PSLC tournament final last Sunday, anticipation was high for a match filled with thrills and excitement. The top two teams in the regular season had reached the final, and their two previous meetings were narrow 4:3 and 1:0 victories for the Byki. Instead, the teams provided the few dozen fans on hand a bizarre match. There were blown scoring chances on both sides, peculiar referee behavior, inexplicable game management by PSLC

The final was a stark contrast to the last meeting between the Byki and Pampas, a 1:0 victory that clinched the regular-season championship. The match was played at a breathless pace, with momentum swaying back and forth. In the end, a brilliantly struck free kick from Diego Penafiel late in the contest proved to be the difference. Given the long history of animosity between the clubs, dating back to their battles in the NSL, expectations were high for a match of incredible intensity in the final.

The outcome, unfortunately, was a letdown for both sides, at least in terms of the quality of play. A possible contributing factor was the League's decision to stage the final on a Field Turf surface. Several Byki complained during the build-up



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about having to switch away from grass, but the League's desire to have all of the finals at the same venue and the uncertainty of field conditions that can occur in October in Chicago justifies the decision to a degree. But the fact that a perfectly good grass field sat unused at Hinsdale Central cannot be ignored. And the fact that two very good teams could deliver such a clunker of a performance cannot be a coincidence.

The Byki wasted little time to put their imprint on the match, unlucky not to be up 2:0 within the first nine minutes. Steven Pedlow chased down a long punt from goalie James Vlahakis and played the bounce perfectly to create a 2 v 2 situation straight at the Pampas goal. Pedlow sprinted into the box and squared a pass for Mitch Posada. A Pampas defender got in the way and cleared the ball away.

A few minutes later, Eric Tower won a ball in midfield and flicked a pass over the Pampas defense. Pedlow was first to the ball and had nothing but open space awaiting him. He shot right at the goalkeeper and allowed the Pampas defense to wipe away the nervous sweat.

The game then devolved into a frustrating *mélange* of poorly paced passes from both teams. This was especially true for almost any ball played into space, as the players had difficulties judging their runs. Pampas was relying on the skill and trickery of their striker to pull off a breakaway miracle, but he hardly got any kind of decent service.

Pampas created their own flurry in the late stages of the first half. They broke out a counterattack on the left wing and a booming shot from the flank ricocheted off of the crossbar in the 35th minute.

Three minutes later, the Pampas striker nearly struck gold. His fancy flick at the halfway line turned into a breakaway, but Vlahakis came out quickly to engage him and induced a shot that sailed wide of the post.

As the Byki regrouped at halftime, the other source of frustration for them came from the referee, whose eccentric behavior turned more than a few heads. Players of both teams suspected that he was inebriated, although no one could tell for certain. One thing that was certain was that his management of the game was peculiar, to say the least. He repeated his instructions after every whistle at least three times and many players complained about his lengthy and unnecessary conversations following his decisions. In one humorous episode, Byki midfielder Ade Ekundayo crashed into him. As the two were getting back to their feet, the referee engaged Ekundayo in an extended chat that distracted Ekundayo to the point where he was not ready to receive a pass from Tower. Unfortunately for both teams, this was only the beginning of the day's referee shenanigans.

The Byki had two tremendous opportunities in the first few minutes of the second half. Penafiel sent a terrific diagonal pass to Pedlow, who took the ball to the left corner. He drove a low cross for Dan Nelson, whose diving header was grabbed by the keeper in the 47th minute.

Three minutes later, Dean Fukar launched a huge cross from the left wing that found an unmarked Nelson in the Pampas penalty area. The keeper made an excellent save from Nelson's open shot.

The best chance of the contest came at 70 minutes, when Posada dribbled past the goalkeeper and dished to Jim Jacobs. The winger was in a great position to knock home the first goal, but a hustling Pampas defender intervened.

As the match wore on, Pampas put up increasing offensive pressure. Their shooting, however, was lacking in accuracy. The only clear opportunity from all of this pressure resulted in a breakaway that Vlahakis managed with a smart and strong intervention that caused the shot to roll wide of the target. The Byki were very much on the back foot for the final 15 minutes, but the league's best defense was not about to break easily.

The final bid by the Byki came in the 87th minute. Jacobs ran hard to chase down a ball deep in the right corner and stuck a cross into the mixer for Posada, whose snap header was knocked away by the keeper.

With the clock winding down, both teams were preparing for the inevitability of extra time. But a monkey wrench was also in the works, thanks to the dwindling daylight. The PSLC planned their day of finals matches in four Divisions rather poorly by not allowing enough time in their schedule for the potential of extra time and penalty shootouts. When the second final of the day went to extra time, that set back the schedule for the remaining two matches. The Byki v Pampas final was the last game of the day and twilight was fast approaching. PSLC officials asked the teams to shorten or to forgo extra time. The Byki did not agree to this suggestion because it is always preferable to settle a tied match on the field, rather than the farce of a shootout. The Byki went along with the idea of playing two seven-minute halves, rather than the ten-minute halves originally scheduled.

But that plan never saw the light of day, pardon the pun. During the second minute of stoppage time, an errant pass struck the referee in the head, knocking him to the turf. After he got back to his feet, he said that one more minute of stoppage time remained. That minute was extended to another five minutes and PSLC officials began to worry that nocturnal animals would invade the field before the match could end. After the second half had been extended a preposterous eleven minutes, it became clear that extra time would have to be canceled in order to ensure that a possible penalty shootout would not be executed in darkness. The PSLC's Referee Assignor removed the referee from his duties for the shootout, citing impairment after the referee had been struck in the head. No decision all day elicited as much relief for both teams.

Predictably, the penalty shootout had its wacky and dramatic moments. Pampas started things off and Vlahakis rose to the occasion, blocking the first shot. Brian Huck, who had looked so sharp from the spot in pre-game practice, promptly sent his attempt wide. Vlahakis then kept the Byki in the driver's seat with his second consecutive save. But the tiebreaker remained goalless when Penafiel's shot was saved. Pampas' third shooter had Vlahakis beaten, but could not beat the crossbar. Posada then ensured a tense ending when he was unable to find the target.

With futility at maximum level, drama took over. The fourth Pampas shooter sent his shot wide, but the situation

quickly devolved into confusion. The arbiter had failed to blow his whistle and the penalty attempt had been taken too early. Just after he finished waving the Pampas player away from the penalty area, a PSLC official intervened and the kick was retaken. Not surprisingly, the Pampas player botched the second try in a manner worse than the first when his shot sailed over the bar. "The re-take was unusual, but necessary," noted George Gorecki afterwards. "It was a good idea for a procedural error to be corrected. These are the types of errors that lead to protests, and then the protest can result in the entire match having to be replayed."

Pedlow broke the deadlock when he buried the fourth Byki kick. With all of the pressure on Pampas, their fifth player also found the back of the net, setting up player-coach Doug Towsey to be the hero of the day. The Pampas keeper dove right and Towsey sent the ball left, clinching the double for the Byki.

The PSLC presented the Byki their winners' medals and trophy in the twilight of last Sunday, bringing down the curtain on one of the most successful seasons in Byki history. The players and supporters retired to a local saloon and took the

opportunity to look back on how much they had accomplished over the last six months and to bask in the glory of yet another championship trophy.

BYKI LINEUP (4-2-3-1): Vlahakis – Towsey, Kuch, Fink, Safford – Lane, Tower – Pedlow (c), Nelson, Ekundayo – Posada. **Bench:** Cohen, Fukar, Gorecki, Huck, Jacobs, Muehlbauer, Penafiel.

BYKI SCORING SUMMARY
None.

PENALTY KICK SHOOTOUT
0:0 – Huck (shot wide)
0:0 – Penafiel (shot saved)
0:0 – Posada (shot wide)
1:0 – Pedlow
2:1 – Towsey

Byki Men of the Match: Doug Towsey and James Vlahakis

Byki Stats

FIRST TEAM, NSL 1st DIVISION

Player	G	A	Pts
Ciszewski	9	2	11
Freitag	4	3	7
Zachariah	6	0	6
Stamatinos	2	3	5
De Rama	2	2	4
Gronke	1	3	4
Salazar, C	1	2	3
Banbor	1	1	2
Herholdt	1	1	2
Sabo	1	1	2
Calleros	0	2	2
Rodriguez, J	0	2	2
Stopka	0	2	2
Rodriguez, C	1	0	1
Salazar, V	1	0	1
Zielinski	1	0	1
Team goals	6	x	x
Goalie	Min	GA	GAA
Avalos	18	0	0.00
Rodriguez J	45	0	0.00
Fukar	270	3	1.00
Sabo	73	1	1.23
Salazar, J	720	14	1.75
Calleros	62	2	2.90
Khankari	255	12	4.24

Final record: 9-2-6

O-30 TEAM, PSLC O-30 DIVISION

Player	G	A	Pts
Benavides	10	2	12
Kekus	8	4	12
Russ	10	0	10
Hurley	3	6	9
Gibbs	2	5	7
Kramarz	2	4	6
Guzman	1	4	5
Siervo	3	1	4
Boeckeler	1	3	4
Champagne	1	3	4
Stevens	1	3	4
Banbor	2	0	2
Vullo	1	0	1
Jedrzejowski	0	1	1
Team Goals	9	x	x
Goalie	Min	GA	GAA
Raidt	360	8	2.00
Stevens	990	30	2.73

Final record: 11-3-4

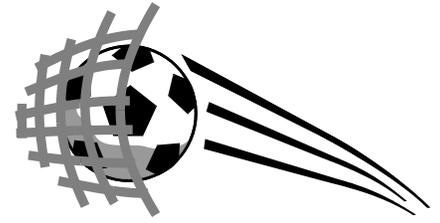
O-40 TEAM, PSLC O-40 DIVISION

Player	G	A	Pts
Ekundayo	8	11	19
Pedlow	10	5	15
Posada	11	1	12
Nelson	7	1	8
Rodriguez, G	4	2	6
Jacobs	1	3	4
Penafiel	2	1	3
Huck	1	2	3
Lane	1	2	3
Safford	0	3	3
Fink	0	2	2
Fukar	1	0	1
Muehlbauer	1	0	1
St Clair	1	0	1
Cohen	0	1	1
Dahlquist	0	1	1
Kuch	0	1	1
Tower	0	1	1
Towsey	0	1	1
Team Goals	3	x	x
Goalie	Min	GA	GAA
Fukar	45	0	0.00
Vlahakis	1440	17	1.06
Muehlbauer	135	2	1.33

Final record: 13-4-2



BYKI bits & pieces



Two Byki alumni have left the ranks of bachelorhood and both of them celebrated two weeks ago, incredibly, on the same day. **Wei Zhang** (Byki 2001-08) and **Edi Pinkowski** (Byki 1983-91) are the newest happy hubbies and their stories are something to remember.

Russ Haynes (Byki 1999-2011) organized Wei's big day with plenty of ambition and here is his report.

A fearless band of ex-Byki (aka USA plus other countries -mainly Ireland) showed up at Pebble Park in Hoffman Estates to take on a fearsome group of Chinese soccer players (many of them ex-Byki themselves).



The Wei Zhang Testimonial Match may have featured a lot of creaky knees, but it did not lack for camaraderie.

Immediately after kickoff, the Chinese team caught the USA team napping and quickly put two goals on the board in the space of five minutes, one coming from **Peng Liu** (Byki 2001-07). After that wake-up call, Team USA took it to their far-eastern compadres and got a goal back through the unstoppable scoring boots of Russ (Gaffer) Haynes. The USA then continued to turn the screw, thanks to some hard work in the middle of the park by **Enda (Keano) McGrath** (Byki 2003-11) and later by **Tim (Kimo) Hannan** (Byki 2001-05). The flanks were also working hard with the likes of **Mark (Quarter) Casey** (Byki 2010) doing his will-o'-the-wisp impersonation. That is,

except for **Jon (Silverspoon) Silverstein** (Byki 2007-11), who was clearly channeling Nani (or some other ManU reject), and ran around like a headless chicken. In fairness to Silverspoon, he was unfairly singled out and should've really got his wish of playing with the Chinese team (but Team USA couldn't afford the reverse transfer fee!).

Anyway, back to the game, someone else scored for the USA (I think it was an own goal from a corner). Then **Steven Pedlow** (Byki Over 40) split the defense with lightning speed and some classy Route-One Stoke-esque football. Team USA were leading 3:2 at half.

Halftime was definitely more productive for the Chinese team, who seemed to be getting their second wind. Team USA didn't really have a first wind to begin with and they never really posed a threat going forward, thanks to some solid defensive performances from **Jing Geng** (Byki 2000-11) and **Li Shen** (Byki 2000-04).

One other main factor in the second half was that Wei (who played with the Chinese team in the first half) was now playing with Team USA. Wei almost had at least three assists in the second half - for the Chinese team! Needless to say, there were some dodgy dealings going on there and if it wasn't for some full-blooded tackles thrown in from

Conor Casey (Byki 2003-11), or some point-blank saves from goalie **Jim Cook** (Byki 2004-07), things



Wei can't go wrong with his bride on one side and the Gaffer on the other.



It's **Conor Casey** howling at the moon again.

could've got very messy for Team USA. Not to say messy isn't a good way to describe what Jim Cook pulled off for the Chinese equalizer. A lofted ball was not dealt with very "handily" by Cook, who promptly threw the ball into the back of his own net.

Ah well, no one got injured and we all had a good laugh at our aged legs trying to run around playing 10v10 on a muddy field more appropriate for U8s playing 8 v 8.

A party then ensued at "The Peckish Pig" restaurant and brewery on Howard St in Evanston. There was plenty of "Chinese Hot Pot"

food to go around and there was a little bit of live music that went down too.

Wei's favorite recording artist happens to be **Lionel Ritchie**. And Quarter Casey led the band in a rousing, heartfelt rendition of "Herro." It was a beautiful thing to behold. **Eric Tower** (Byki Over 40) said he wept (I didn't ask for any more details).

Those who can remember are aware that they then boarded a trolley to cruise the downtown Chicago area, drinking and bar hopping.

It was a full schedule for Edi's group also. Crucially involved in the planning of the diverse range of activities were **Mark Sokolowski** (Byki 1983-87) and **Stef Wiecek** (Byki 1983- 2008).

The day began with a round of Foot Golf at a small course in Addison. Foot Golf is taking golf courses by storm. If you've never heard of it, Foot Golf is basically the soccer version of golf. Rather than hitting a ball with a club, you kick the ball into the hole. It is an actual organized sport, albeit in its infancy. Ten intrepid players set out to play nine holes. The experience at golf and soccer varied among the players in the group, but



There are enough Byki alumni mugging for the camera to have a team reunion.

they soon learned that any experience in soccer or golf was not much of an advantage in Foot Golf.

It didn't take long to breeze through nine holes, all of which were set at par-3. Edi had the low score of the day, and **George Gorecki** (Byki Over 40), who spent more time swearing at his errant shots than kicking the ball, was close on his heels in second place.

The group then retired to Bigby's Pour House for a couple of pints and a quick Foot Golf summary. The conversation very quickly drifted towards the boys telling stories of their best bachelor parties. Given the advanced age of this bunch, the stories were a bottomless pit of amusement.

The main event of the evening was slated for the Crazy Pour sports bar, where the group nearly doubled in size. Several people who were too timid to try Foot Golf joined in for food, beer and adult entertainment.

Stef was in his element as he organized the naughty portion of Edi's big day. Edi was crowned as King Edward for the night and his mates were all given Knights of the Round Table type names. The featured entertainer put on a show that was fit for royalty and her athletic ability drew many oohs and aahs from the attendees. And Edi, of course, was the big winner on the night, and in more ways than one. The lucky bastard will be one of the few dudes to actually remember what happened at his bachelor party.



Despite his advanced age, Edi Pinkowski still shows good footballing form on this tee shot.



Getting the ball out of a sand trap is a bit trickier than bending a free kick around the wall. Edi and George Gorecki consider their options.