

## History of Kaneohe AYSO Region 113

The following is a history of Kaneohe AYSO as told by Frances Sawai, a long-time volunteer for Kaneohe AYSO.

AYSO REGION 113 started with a phone call from Steven Chaffey of California to Greg Trifonovitch at the East-West Center asking him if he would be interested in starting soccer in Kaneohe.

In 1976 Greg took on the challenge and formed our Region. He had to read books to learn the game of soccer and how to coach his sons and their friends, all about 13-15 years old. They started with about 40 boys and formed 4 teams. Greg said soccer was so new to most people here in Hawaii. The Region had a soccer library for coaches to borrow books to learn about the game.

Kaneohe Region was officially chartered in 1978 and was the third Region to be formed on Oahu. Diamond Head was the first and Kailua second. Now there are 23 Regions across the state with approximately 20,000 players.

Meadow Gold was always a strong supporter of AYSO in Hawaii and provided 3 sets of goals to each Region. The only set left in Kaneohe is at Civic Center. They also provided meeting rooms at their offices, access to copy machines and other assistance when needed.

Initially, the boys wore t-shirts for uniforms and switched teams if the other team did not have enough players. After each game, the players had to referee the next game. It was a way for them to give back to the Region.

Jerseys were provided to the players later, however, they were collected at the end of each season, washed and stored for the next season. You never knew if the jersey would have holes or grime around the white collars. Parents would have to purchase the shorts and socks for themselves. Finding enough black shorts and socks for the team was very hard and eventually with some of the registration fees, whole sets of uniforms were provided to the players which was a great relief for the parents.

The Region grew every year from 1976. By 1986 there were 600 players, but still not enough for some age groups to play just within Kaneohe, so some teams played against teams from Kailua. Currently, Kaneohe has about 1100 players playing in the U5 thru U19 age groups.

When the U6 Division was started in 1983 there was not enough girls to form their own Division, so 2 or 3 girls were put on teams with boys. The "Bring a Friend" program was started to encourage girls to sign up with a friend and be on the same team. More girls signed up and by 1985 there were enough girls to make their own U6 Division.

Spring Season in Kaneohe started in 1986 with prize money being awarded by the Section to the winning teams. Kaneohe thought they would have about 100 players to form 3 or 4 teams but ended up with approximately 300 players wanting to play. As with the Fall season, Spring season

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became more and more popular with teams from across the islands playing each other.

The Gold teams were represented Kaneohe at the Kirk Banks Tournament where teams from across the state played. The Tournament was named after a young man who played and refereed in Kailua. He died in a car accident in 1983 and his parents donated some funds to begin this soccer tournament dedicated to him. This tournament has been going strong for over 30 years with more than 140 local teams participating.

The Rainbow Tournament brought approximately 60 teams from the mainland and from Hawaii together to play, giving the local teams a chance to host teams from across the mainland.

Both the Kirk Banks and Rainbow Tournaments were played at Kapiolani Park until the Waipio Soccer Park was built in 2000.

### PAST REGION COMMISSIONERS

1976 - 1979 GREG TRIFONOVITCH

1979 - 1982 TOM CLARK

1983 - 1986 CAROL JUDD

1986 -1989 GEORGE SAWAI

1989 -1991 ANDY YAMATO

1991- 1994 MAX SWORD

1994 - 1997 LEO TITOMB

1997 - 2000 RODNEY CHONG

2000 - 2003 TAMMY ALCARON

2004 - 2009 KENT GOYA

2009 - 2014 NELLA SWORD

2014 – 2017 JOHN ITAI