**Bill Merriman: 1973-1978 **

Bill Merriman is described by former high school coach Muzz Bryant as one of the most skilled soccer players ever to play at Belmont. In fact he still holds the school record for the most goals in a season – an incredible 37 in 1976 – a number that may never be surpassed! Bill started playing soccer at the age of 6 and spent most of his youth years with the Juan de Fuca Association. He also played a little basketball and rugby at school, but soccer was always his #1 sport. He also admits to one superstition that helped him focus before a game. His sister Lori would draw a soccer goal with balls in the net to remind him where to shoot. Apparently this pre-game visualization was very effective, based upon Bill’s consistent scoring prowess! Today he has adopted a new ritual to honour his father. He keeps a twoonie in memory of his dad who was always present at all his games and would flip him a coin every time he scored a goal.

Not surprisingly, Bill’s best Belmont-related sports memories revolve around soccer. He is proud of the fact he won the league scoring title for two consecutive years and also twice won the Jim Hincks Memorial Trophy which is awarded to the player who best combines sportsmanship and athletic ability. He says that “*hands down my best Belmont memory is the year our team won the Victoria High Schools soccer Shield against Esquimalt Dockers in front of about 300 fans.”*

After high school graduation, soccer continued to play a central role in Bill’s life. He coached an played on the provincial team, winning a national championship, he took the U-21 BC team to Nationals and shot the final penalty kick at the McGavin Cup. He has earned many accolades for his coaching achievements, including being named NDYSA and BCCCA Coach of the Years. He currently coaches the Vancouver Island University men’s soccer team.

Bill credits a number of people for his success in the sport: “*My dad for sure as my first coach and supporter. Mr. Roller was a great coach for me and taught me the skills and most of all what team work and soccer teams were as a family. David Keith coached me on the Island Rep Teams, Provincial Teams and opened doors for me as a player, but he was also a mentor as a coach and helped me continue in my coaching career*.”

He has two pieces of advice to pass on to current Belmont athletes.

1. *Remember that how you play and how you act towards your team mates and others is how you will be remembered.*
2. *As a Student Athlete, as hard as it is, be a student first and it will pay off later in life.*

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