

## **Robert Evans**

Robert (Bob) Evans was born in England in 1939. He grew up in Swansea in South Wales, where he played soccer in the local youth and senior leagues and became a devoted fan of the local professional team, Swansea Town (now City). He supported himself with summer jobs in the local steel mills and as a conductor for the municipal bus company. A bright young man, he was admitted to the University of Nottingham, highly unusual at the time for a boy from a working class background, where he played as goalkeeper for the University football club as well as joining the Royal Air Force ROTC Programme. After graduating in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in Geology, he emigrated to Canada to continue his studies, earning a Master of Science degree at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was in Nova Scotia that he first studied the Laws of the Game while recuperating from a broken leg suffered while playing for Keith's Brewery in the Nova Scotia league. He then entered the graduate program of the University of Kansas, from which he received his Ph.D. in Geology. While there he was the player-coach of the university soccer club.

Bob arrived in Texas in 1969 to work as a research geologist for Mobil Oil Company in Dallas, and was convinced that his soccer career was over. But within weeks he was invited to be player-coach of the eventual champions, the Dallas Rangers of the local men's league (the Dallas Soccer Association), for whom he played goalkeeper. He was also only the fifth registered referee in the city, and soon started teaching others, including future FIFA referee Edward Bellion, who had been a teammate on the Dallas Rangers. For one more season Bob played goalkeeper for the Rangers until he gave up playing and coaching. This was because he had been appointed as a linesman for local Dallas Tornado games in the North American Soccer League (NASL), then the top professional soccer league in North America, and he wanted to concentrate on refereeing which he correctly predicted he would be more successful at.

Bob worked in the NASL from 1971 until the demise of the league in 1985. Many of the world's greatest players heard his whistle, including Pele, Beckenbauer, Maradona, George Best, Cruyff, and several others. In those days, before the specialization we have today with separate tracks for assistant referees, top referees were expected to be highly competent at both functions, and Bob took this seriously. This was

demonstrated by his being selected as linesman for the 1982 Soccer Bowl, the NASL Championship match. He also refereed in the American Soccer League where one of his refereeing mentors, Pat Smith, was Director of Officials. Bob was appointed to the International Panel in 1979, the first referee from Region III to receive this honor. He subsequently refereed qualifying games in the World Cup and the Olympics. Traveling overseas throughout Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) and three times to Asia for tournaments, he refereed teams from every confederation in FIFA. He retired early from the FIFA list to accept the position of National Director of Referee Instruction for U.S. Soccer in 1988.

In 1974, Bob had participated in a meeting in New York City together with Eddie Pearson, Director of Officials for the NASL, Pat Smith, Harry Baldwin, Roger Schott, Don Byron and others at which the National Referee program of U.S. Soccer was set into motion. They initiated a system of instruction and training for referees and referee instructors. Bob was an instructor in the first ever series of clinics for referee instructors held in several locations across the country. Attendees at the Chicago clinic in 1976 included Alfred Kleinaitis, Angelo Bratsis and Edward Bellion, all of whom subsequently became FIFA referees and National Instructors and Assessors, attesting to the quality of the instruction.

From 1988 until 1992, Bob, together with aid of Harry Baldwin, created the instructor and assessor grades that are still in existence today, abolished the regional instructor positions, designed the curriculum for the first national assessors' course, and brought Bob Sumpter's dream of one testing session for national referees and national referee candidates into reality. In 1992 he became the first American to be appointed a FIFA referee instructor. He was much in demand as a referee instructor and was invited to speak at referee clinics throughout the entire country and overseas. He became an expert on Law 11, producing a comprehensive set of 50 slides that illustrated the concepts brilliantly. He campaigned for changes in the way offside was being called, suggesting that players who were simply in offside positions should not be penalized as was the norm at the time. He was delighted when this concept was eventually made part of the Law two decades ago. When U.S. Soccer received a grant in 1988 from the U.S. Olympic Foundation for referee education, Bob, in his capacity as National Director of

Referee Instruction, oversaw clinics for potential national referee candidates held in each of the four regions. That same year he was one of the lead instructors for the first CONCACAF referee instructor course held in the United States (Colorado Springs). In 1994, U.S. Soccer, in conjunction with FIFA, produced a video on Gamesmanship from situations that occurred during the 1994 World Cup; Bob was the narrator for this project.

Keeping up to date with technology, in collaboration with the California-North Referee Program, he produced an interactive DVD entitled “Angle of View.” This was in order to teach referees that positioning was paramount, and it showed how the same incident could be seen totally differently depending on the position of the referee and thereby influence the decision being made.

He was a national referee instructor and national referee assessor for U.S. Soccer from 1976 to 2013, and was a referee Coach-Mentor in Major League Soccer for several years.

He has authored numerous articles on refereeing that have appeared in various magazines and newsletters and two major works, “Manual for Linesmen”, and "Teaching Offside" (with Tony Waiters of Canada) together with a comprehensive book on referee training and instruction “For the Good of the Game” the latter co-authored with his long-time friend and colleague Edward Bellion. His writing skills and his acute sense of humor were demonstrated when he submitted a misconduct report to the NASL written entirely in rhyming verse. However the league managers did not see the funny side of this and ordered him to re-write it! A man of great personal integrity and uncompromising ethics, Bob was sometimes dissatisfied with certain components of the game generally and refereeing specifically, which prompted him to create his well-received blog for soccer referees entitled “For the Integrity of Soccer” to address. It operated, also in collaboration with Ed, from 2005 to 2014, and received postings from officials from all over the world.

Bob Evans was elected to the North Texas Soccer Hall of Fame, and received the prestigious Eddie Pearson Award of the USSF (1992) as well as the William Scofield Award (1994), the latter for recovering and continuing to make significant contributions to the game and U.S. referee program after recovering from non-Hodgkins lymphoma. The U.S. Soccer Region III Adult Referee program has established The Bob Evans

Award to be awarded annually to a person making substantial lifetime contributions to refereeing in Region III.

In his professional life, Dr. Robert Evans became an expert on the geology of evaporites, formations likely to contain petroleum reserves, and also published articles and monographs in his discipline, including in the Journal of Geology and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletin. He co-authored a book “Marine Evaporites: Origin, Diagenesis and Geochemistry” with his colleague from Mobil Oil, Dr. Douglas Kirkland in 1973. He and Dr. Kirkland were awarded a Distinguished Lectureship from the A.A.P.G. that saw them embark on a lecture tour around the USA talking about evaporites.

Upon his retirement from Mobil Oil, he moved west and enrolled in the Science Communication program at the University of California - Santa Cruz in order to pursue his love of writing. This was followed by a brief internship as a publicist at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. Subsequently deciding to settle in northern California, he became a freelance science journalist, and published articles in major popular magazines and websites, including Smithsonian, American Scientist, New Scientist, Exploratorium, and WebMD.

He was a licensed airplane pilot, climbed the sleeping volcano Mt. Tambora in Indonesia, and descended to 10,000 feet below the Pacific Ocean in the mini-sub Alvin. He described his interests as “mellifluous adagios; rainy days; Dylan Thomas's works; flying light aircraft; intelligent movies, books and ideas; the power of science as a way of thought.”

A true “Renaissance Man” Bob Evans led a remarkable life that most would be privileged to emulate, as well as leaving an indelible mark on the referee program of the United States Soccer Federation; he will be truly missed.

He is survived by his younger daughter Rhiannon and her husband Edward of Atlanta, Georgia, and two sisters, Wendy and Judy. His older daughter, Sian, predeceased him.

Compiled by Gary LeMay (E-mail: [glemay007@aol.com](mailto:glemay007@aol.com)), and edited by Ed Bellion

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Sources: Bob Wertz, former Referee Committee Chairman, U.S. Soccer  
Herb Silva, former Director of Officials, MISL and MLS  
Ed Bellion, former FIFA referee  
Colby Jones (NTX)  
Texas North website  
For the Integrity of Soccer website

## **Photos**

Bob as goalkeeper (center in green) for the Dallas Rangers in 1971



Bob as linesman (AR; left) with Gino Di'ppolito and Ed Bellion in NASL Tampa vs. Dallas 1977





**The “Three Musketeers” in 1979 and 2005**

1979 Texas Stadium



2005 Pizza Hut Park

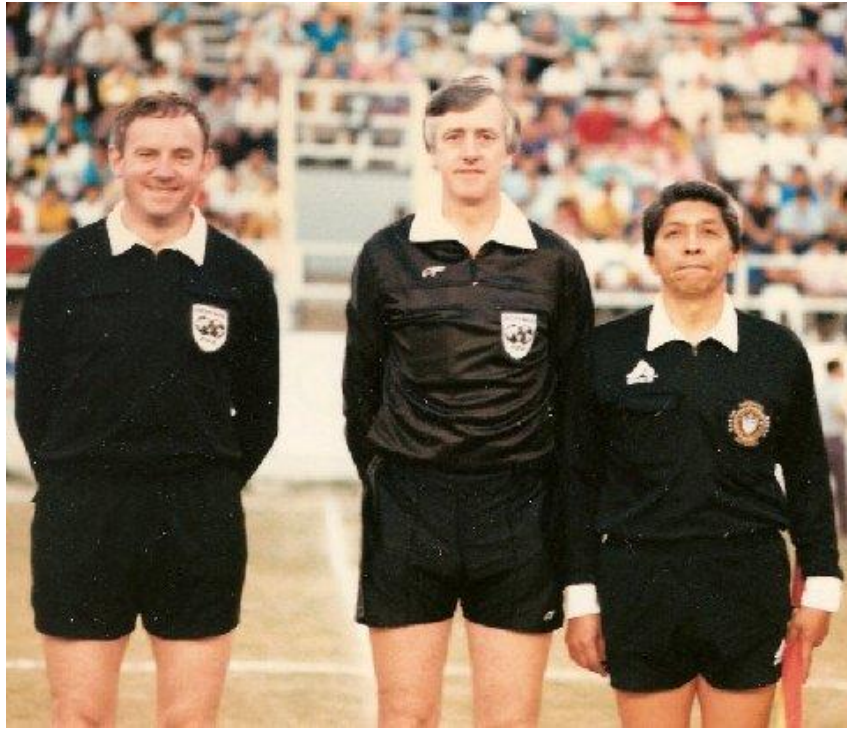


**ONLY THE BALL IS THE SAME!!!**

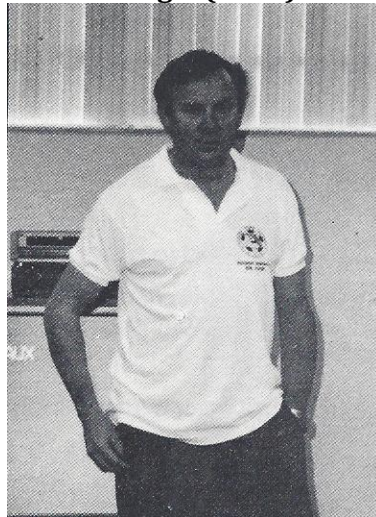
**US FIFA Referees in Memphis, TN for photo shoot for US edition of the Laws of the Game (1981)**



**Bob (left), Ed Bellion, and Manny Ortiz, Sr.**



**Bob teaching at USSF Regional Clinic for potential national referees in Atlanta, Georgia (1988)**

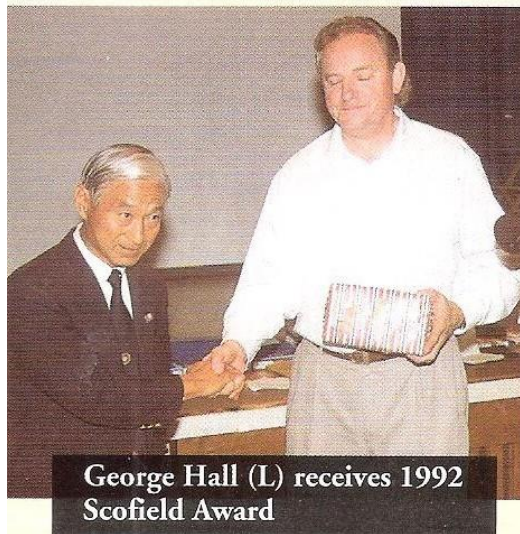




1994 National Referee Testing Brochure (Bob pictured with Alfred Kleinaitis)



Bob presenting Bill Scofield Award



George Hall (L) receives 1992 Scofield Award



**Bob teaching at USYSA Region III ODP in Alabama 2009**



**Bob (far right) with Brian Hall, Ed Bellion, and Fred Hiler at the Dallas Cup 2013**



**Bob, right, receiving his Eddie Pearson Jacket from Pat Smith in Florida (2009)**



**Group Photo at ceremony to honor Pat Smith (2009)**

Back row: Pat's grandson, Herb Silva, Joe Michna, Brian Darling, and Brian Hall

Front row: Bob Evans, Alfred Kleinaitis, Thomas Bobadilla, Pat Smit, and Gary LeMay





Bob's work

