

Major League SOCCER

San Jose
Earthquakes



John Bankston

Mitchell Lane

PUBLISHERS

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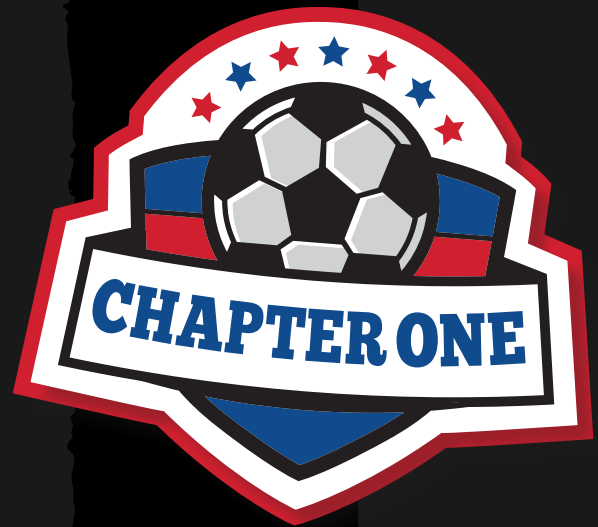
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Words in **bold** throughout
can be found in the Glossary.



Soccer Valley



Do you have a smartphone? Do you watch videos on a tablet or write letters and reports on a computer? Much of the **technology** powering those handy devices was invented in San Jose, California. The city isn't just a tech pioneer. It's a soccer pioneer, too. In 1996, the first goal in a new **professional** league was scored in San Jose.

The city is part of Santa Clara County in Northern California near San Francisco. Almost 50 years ago, journalist Don C. Hoefler called it "Silicon Valley." The well-known writer named it after a chemical used in making the electronic circuits running computers. Computer inventions helped make San Jose important in the world. So did soccer.

Soccer is the most played game in the world! It is often called "football." That's because players use their feet to move the ball. The word "soccer" came from England. This is also where we get today's soccer rules.

California was settled by Spain, England, Mexico, and Portugal starting in the 1500s. It was filled with a mix of cultures, especially after the famous discovery of gold in 1848. In Northern California, soccer arrived with **immigrants** from Mexico and Portugal. By the early 1900s, amateur soccer leagues had started like the Pastimes and Vampires Football Club. San Jose State University fielded its first college team in the 1920s.

Lots of people played soccer. Few paid to watch it.



In the 1960s, the North American Soccer League (NASL) was one of the first professional leagues in the U.S. In 1974, it added teams. Teams were started in Vancouver, Canada, Seattle, Washington, and Los Angeles, California. The fourth West Coast team almost went to San Francisco. Instead, an immigrant named Milan Mandric who earned his fortune selling electronics bought a pro team for San Jose. Mandric loved soccer and wanted his team playing in his adopted hometown. The local newspaper sponsored a contest for readers to name their team. Readers voted to call them the Earthquakes.

“In the early 1970s, there was nothing to do here,” author Gary Singh explained to a reporter. “There had never been anything like professional sports in our city.” San Jose soccer fans really supported the Earthquakes, nicknaming them the “Quakes.” Attendance at home games was often higher than in larger NASL cities.

The Earthquakes never won a championship. One highpoint came in 1975 when the team won an indoor **tournament** against the Tampa Bay Rowdies. The NASL **folded** in 1984. San Jose’s team still had many fans. The Earthquakes joined the Western Soccer League. The team lasted four more years. Long before the Quakes stopped playing, most fans stopped watching.



In Northern California, other pro sports teams are successful in San Francisco and Oakland. Football fans cheer on the '49ers and loved the Oakland Raiders. Baseball fans support the Oakland Athletics and the San Francisco Giants. These teams have some of the best players in the sport. In soccer, the best players around the world compete in the World Cup. Different countries host the tournament every four years. Soccer fans travel long distances to cheer on their favorite teams.

The United States team did not do well in the World Cup before the 1990s. The country still wanted to host the highly popular tournament. To do this, the U.S. needed to create a professional soccer league. Major League Soccer (MLS) was born.

In 1994, more people attended U.S.-hosted World Cup matches than ever before. In Northern California, more than 500,000 people attended quarterfinal matches at Stanford University's **stadium**.

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