

*Paul Sanchez*

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*“Because of all the encouragement I received and the amazing soccer experiences I’ve had, I want to take my lifelong passion for the game and pay it forward.” – Paul Sanchez*

Paul Sanchez was foremost a teacher. Spending the early part of his professional career training to and eventually teaching kids, he was an expert at communication, compassion, understanding, and training.

As a child, influenced by neighbors and friends, Sanchez began playing soccer for Milwaukee Sport Club. One of his earliest soccer memories is more of a nightmare as he was placed in goal for a penalty shootout in the championship game of a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* sponsored tournament although he had never played keeper before. However, his fondest soccer memories are rooted in a field near his childhood home where he battled his siblings for bragging rights daily.

As a teenager, Sanchez played with the Tosa Kicks and Marquette High School soccer teams. Perhaps the most formative of all his experiences was an opportunity he got at age 15 to travel and play soccer in Europe with Teams USA. “When I got to tour Europe, that’s when it started. That’s when I realized soccer was something I loved,” said Sanchez. He played internationally for six weeks, seeing the world, and seeing a collective and constant passion for the game.

Coach Sanchez attended Marian University for four years becoming Team MVP, Captain, and earning All-American honors. He attributes his success on the field to the work he put in off the field and his aptitude for setting goals.

He began coaching just a few years after he began playing. He stepped in to coach his younger brother’s rec team when none of the team parents would. Since then, he has led camps, coached with the Kickers Nationals and the Polonia Majors, and assistant coached for Marquette High School, winning the

1997 State Championship. Currently, Sanchez is and has been a full-time coach with Milwaukee Kickers for three years.

Needless to say, he loved coaching. Working on a staff with so much professional soccer experience, he places a lot of value in his time as a teacher. "I love being a teacher. Some guys think it's all about winning, but I want to see the progress. It's great seeing something you worked on weeks ago finally click."

Sanchez's experience with at-risk children trained him to be prepared for anything and to be able to explain skills and teach strategy in unique ways. Since children on rec teams do not necessarily have a passion for the game or any prior knowledge, he finds that particular level to be the most challenging, but also the most rewarding as a coach.

"I've never needed my kids to be Division 1 athletes. I just want to give them this lifelong gift of exercise, friendship, and social experience, and if they want to take it further, they can,"