

Mislinay gets soccer coach of year honor

Two years ago, Mike Mislinay gave the coaches in the North Suburban soccer League fits when he was a player at Birmingham Seaholm.

This year he plagued the league again.

But this time around, it was his coaching, not his playing that made him a standout.

And last week, the first-year coach from Seaholm was given due respect for leading the Maples to an 8-1-5 season when the coaches voted him "Coach of the year" in the league.

"THIS IS really a great honor because it came from the coaches themselves," Mislinay said.

"I'd like to think that I earned it," he added.

There wasn't much doubt in his fellow coaches' minds that he earned the award. They voted unanimously for the 20 year old Mislinay.

Although he led the team to a winning record and a second place finish behind Bloomfield Hills Andover, all was not a bed of roses this year for Mislinay.

"There were some headaches

from the kids and I being about the same age. I became almost friends with a lot of them. There's not that big age barrier as usually exists, and it hurt the discipline at times.

"Things will be different next year, though. I'm going to be a lot tougher," he said.

The secret of the young coach's success?

"I would picture myself in each player's situation on the field and postulate what I would do. Then I would correct each player on his mistakes," Mislinay said.

MISLINAY HAS a solid back-

ground in the sport. He played for a year at Western Michigan University and then had a tryout with the professional Dallas Tornado's. "I stayed for about a week and found out quickly that they were a lot better than me. Still, it was a valuable learning experience. I picked up a lot of drills down there that we put to use this year," he said.

Mislinay also gives credit for his success to his assistant coach, Craig Kirkby.

"Craig really knows the sport and he made all the important de-

cisions along with me," Mislinay said.

Mislinay picked up his game formation from watching films of foreign teams.

"We used a 3-2-2-3 formation which I got from watching the films of England's Arsenal team. It worked really well and we controlled the middle of the field most of the time.

"That's really important because it set up our passing game and passing is the most important aspect of soccer at this level," he said.

FOR SOCCER COACHES, who tend to get overzealous at times, Mislinay was relatively calm during the 14 game schedule.

"I screamed a lot but I never even got a warning from the referees. Most of my screaming was directed toward my team, anyways," he said.

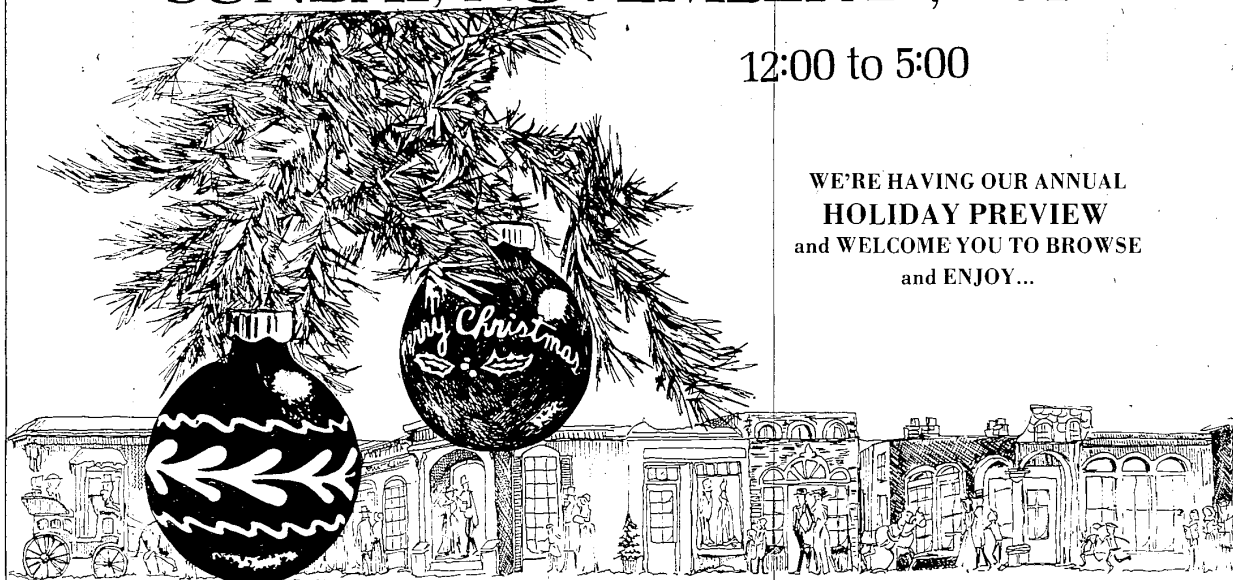
Mislinay's attitude is that it doesn't do much good for the team for the coach to get thrown off the field.

"At any rate, if I have to depend on referees to win a game, my team doesn't really deserve to win," he said.

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