

## Love of the Game

LOUIS BENNETT, 47,  
MARQUETTE MEN'S SOCCER COACH

The Bristol, England, native is in his third year as Marquette University's men's soccer coach after spending 10 seasons with UW-Milwaukee (including five berths in the NCAA tournament). He played professionally in the U.S. for seven years, including three with the Milwaukee Wave.

“ My grandfather was very involved in soccer. He was a big inspiration. Even with his dress shoes on, he could show a few moves.

I played for my first pro team when I was 19. I realized my career would have to be over here. I saw a big opportunity for coaching and also to play.

When I came to Milwaukee, I was so hungry to make a difference. It was a time where I grew up and became a proper, professional soccer player. The Milwaukee crowd took me to heart. I think my popularity was because I had a blue-collar streak and every game I left everything I had.

Then I got hurt, so I retired. I was disappointed and frustrated, but I knew I could earn a living. Coaching's not playing, but it's the next best thing.

I'm probably a better teacher than I was a player, though I don't want to admit that. I've tried to build a coaching style from everyone I meet, so I'm by no means a finished article. The way that I coach is truly American – it's a hybrid. Dutch attacking possession, German defensive possession, English wing play and add some American athleticism spice.

I got a couple of hate e-mails [when I left UWM]. I was yelled at when I went back. You know, called Judas, traitor. But I thought it was great. At least we've got a section of the public that really is passionate about soccer.

I don't expect to microwave Marquette. You have to sow the seed, nurture it, make it grow. The goal is to always be in the top 50 so we can be in the NCAA tournament. Because once you make the tournament, you've got the opportunity to win it.

Now, is that the only goal I have? No. My goal is to create one of the best soccer opportunities for people from 18 to 21 so they learn about themselves, learn about their fellow man. It's bigger than just being a winner.

— as told to Julia Ann Charpentier

