

# KEYES SOCCER

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because he feels that he always does his best. "When I play, I never give less than 100 percent," Keyes says.

The team has a total of 22 players. The owner, Joseph Serralta, says that he likes to recruit players from the local area, however there are players from other countries such as Spain and Columbia. Keyes was recruited by Serralta and coach Mario Degl'innocenti after they saw him playing on the Houston Celtics, an area men's league. It was a game against the Houston Rangers in the quarter finals for the Houston Cup. The Celtics were down 2-1 at half-time and Keyes brought his team to victory with two goals. Last year, Keyes landed top goal scorer for the Celtics with a total of 29 goals.

Playing positions center midfield and center forward for the Hurricanes, Keyes says he can play anywhere coach Degl'innocenti places him. One of the reasons Keyes is a strong starter is that he can use either foot to shoot. "When you're a striker, you need to be strong with both feet," Keyes says.

Keyes averages 30 to 32 goals a season. Five times, he has been named Top Goal Scorer by the HFA (Houston Futbol Association).

The Hurricanes are part of the USISL (United Systems of Independent Soccer Leagues). USISL has five different branches

and the Hurricanes are in the Central Division of the Pro League. There is now a total of 51 teams in their league.

This season, the Hurricanes were scheduled to play 22 games: 11 home, 11 away. Their season stands at 4 wins and 8 losses. Ranked third in the division, they have a chance to qualify in the playoffs. First through fourth places qualify. Their next games will determine that fate. "It's a very close race," says Serralta.

The Hurricanes will play in Austin on Friday, here in Butler Stadium on Saturday at 5:30 p.m. and then they will travel to Chicago and Milwaukee for their last two games.

Keyes first began playing soccer when he was only five years old. "My dad was my first coach," Keyes said. He began playing soccer because, "everybody plays it in Ireland." Thirty-two year old Keyes follows in his own father's footsteps by coaching his 5 year old son.

Before the Hurricanes, Keyes played on professional teams in Ireland and Denmark. When he came to Texas, he played for the Houston Force which was in the American Professional Soccer League. This team folded only after three months because of the lack of funds. In 1987-92, Keyes also played for the Texas State Select team.

"Soccer is all I do for a living. It's all I've ever done," Keyes says.

The Hurricanes practice Monday through Friday from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. One of the rules for the Hurricanes is that if you do not practice, you do not play during games. When Keyes is not practicing or playing for the Hurricanes, his other jobs are coaching or training youth soccer teams. Keyes says he enjoys very much working with youth. Last year, Keyes trained seven teams, and five of those teams won Bay Area championships. In 1993, Keyes trained the Alvin Broncos to a state championship victory.

Keyes coaches 16 to 20 camps a year from June to August in Alvin, Friendswood, and the Bay Area. Last Saturday at the Hurricane's home game, a former camper Ben Stilwell expressed his spirits by wearing an identical Hurricane game jersey with Keyes' name and number 20. Fourteen year old Stilwell, from Friendswood, began his second camp with Keyes this week. However, Stilwell first met Keyes when Keyes helped trained his soccer team last year.

"We never won a game, but when he came, we were undefeated. We also won a lot of tournaments," Stilwell said. "He helped me a lot with my attitude, love for the game, work habits and skills. He taught me how to cross and shoot. Before, I was a goalie and now I'm a center midfielder."

Jason Armstrong, 14 years old from Friendswood, was also at the

game last Saturday to cheer on Keyes. Keyes had been his team trainer in a youth league. Armstrong said that Keyes taught him everything that is important in soccer. "He taught me how to head the ball," Armstrong said. "He was the best trainer I've ever had."

For future plans, Keyes plans to stick around this area and help build up the youth teams. He does carry a professional license to coach pro teams, however, he wishes to play professionally for at least seven or eight more years. "My goal is to coach pro teams, but that's a long way ahead. I am going to stay coaching youth soccer right now," Keyes says. He also plans to play for the Hurricanes next year.

It does seem like soccer takes up all of Keyes' time. However, he does enjoy other activities such as fishing and water sports.

Serralta says that the Hurricanes will be around for a while. "There are two main factors why we'll stay. One is the fact that we're the largest league. There has never been a league this large in this country before." Although this is the Hurricanes first year of existence, the league has been around for 10 years, according to Serralta. The second factor, Serralta says, "We're a strong league."

Pre-season will begin in February and the season will begin again in April.



Citizen photo by Sheryl Bucsanyni

When Brendan Keyes isn't playing professional soccer for the Houston Hurricanes, he can be found on another soccer field with one of his coaching or camp duties. The Irish native turned Webster resident coaches several teams and presides over his annual soccer camp in Friendswood. This is Keyes' initial year with the Hurricanes. The team's final home game is Saturday at Butler Stadium against Dallas.



Photo by Liz Roberts

The Hurricanes' Brendan Keyes gets position against an opposing defender.

## Hurricane Keyes eats, sleeps soccer with pro, camp commitments

By SHERYL BUCSANYNI  
Citizen Staff

Clear Lake is the home of a Houston Hurricane. His name is Brendan Keyes.

Many people might not be familiar with the Houston Hurricanes. They are Houston's professional outdoor soccer team. There does not seem to be much publicity on the team or it could be that this is the first year for the team.

Their season is almost over with only one more game to play at home. The Hurricanes host Dallas on Saturday at Butler Stadium.

Keyes, originally from Dublin, Ireland, came to the United States

about 10 years ago to play soccer. He resides in Webster.

"Soccer is my life," Keyes says.

Last Saturday was Keyes' fifth game with the Hurricanes. The Hurricanes lost 4-3 against Chicago. Mike Makow scored the Hurricanes' first goal.

Ricardo Cedillo scored the last two goals. In the last two minutes of the game, Chicago came back and scored their winning goal. In the Hurricanes' previous game against Oklahoma, the Hurricanes won 2-0. Keyes scored those two winning goals.

Keyes does not take it too personal when his team loses,

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