

## **Our Second Meritorious Inductee into the Class of 2012 is: Brian Kelly**

Brian Kelly was called to the high school office on Jan. 26, 1993, where he was greeted by Principal John Oliver. **The news:** Kelly had just been named the national high school Player of the Year by PARADE magazine. **The reaction:** the 18-year-old politely thanked Oliver and quickly returned to class.

Four years later, Kelly was concluding his collegiate playing days at Duke University during a senior all-star game when he was approached at halftime. **The news:** Kelly had just been selected in the first round -- fifth overall -- of the Major League Soccer draft. **The reaction:** the 22-year-old quietly returned to the field and finished the game.

"They were both very humbling, and memorable, experiences," said Kelly, now in his 30s, living in Manhattan and working for an investment bank. "They were tremendous individual accolades, but they were a tribute to the outstanding teammates and coaches I had during my playing career."

Although he hasn't played in the Wyoming Valley Conference in more than a decade, Kelly remains the yardstick by which local players are measured. There have been several outstanding players in the Wyoming Valley Conference, but none has come close to matching what Kelly accomplished on the soccer field.

In addition to being named the best high school player in the nation, the son of Mark and Linda Kelly, Brian played on several U.S. national teams and had an outstanding career at Duke, and is the only person from Northeastern Pennsylvania to ever play in the MLS.

"I had a great time playing soccer," said Kelly, who left the MLS in 2001 after playing the season with Tampa Bay. "I made so many friends, and I have a lot of great memories. I'm very proud of my team and individual accomplishments."

What makes Kelly's accomplishments -- especially the ones at Lake-Lehman --even more impressive is the time at which he played. While many regions in the state had been playing high school-level soccer for decades, the Wyoming Valley Conference was only 3 years old when Kelly started playing as a freshman.

"I really enjoyed growing up and playing soccer in the area," said Kelly, who played for head coach Bill Tooley at Lake-Lehman. "I played against some very good players from Dallas, Valley West and Abington Heights. It was a great time for high school soccer in the area."

While at Lake-Lehman, Kelly led the Black Knights to a pair of WVC Division I and District 2 Class 2A championships. Lake-Lehman advanced to the state semifinals during his senior year, before losing against Holy Ghost Prep. Kelly finished his high school career with an amazing 145 goals and 44 assists.

The success continued at Duke University, where he was an Atlantic Coast Conference first-team all-star. In 1995, Kelly and the Blue Devils advanced to the national championship game, losing 2-0 against Wisconsin.

Soccer trips around the globe have been replaced by business meetings with CEOs and bank portfolio managers in the financial mecca of the world. Kelly left professional soccer to take a job with Goldman Sachs & Co. in New York City.

Currently, Brian is married with two little girls who are the light of his life. He also left Goldman Sachs and is now a Vice President at Paribas Bank in New York City. BNP Paribas is one of the top rated banks in the world. The Group has one of the largest international

networks with operations in nearly 80 countries and 200,000 employees, including more than 150,000 in Europe.

Kelly, who was born in Mission Viejo, California, has not forgotten his roots. "My parents moved to San Diego a couple of years ago and I don't get back to the area as much as I'd like, but I think about it often," said Kelly. "There were a lot of great games and moments, but I think what I remember most about playing high school soccer was the people. The teammates and coaches I had at Lake-Lehman were like a second family."

### **Brian Kelly's response to nomination to the "Knights of the Roundtable" Class of 2012:**

It is with great regret that I have to write this message but due to the timing of the Knights of the Round Table event I will not be able to attend. I am extremely disappointed as Lake Lehman was an integral part of my path in life. Lake Lehman had a positive and profound impact on my life and I know that I would not be the person I am today if not for the people who invested their time and energy into my development.

I started down a path of educational enlightenment due to the enthusiasm and talent of my teachers who drove my interest in higher learning. It was their help and guidance that pushed me to excel in the classroom. They taught me the value of a quality education and equipped me with the tools to succeed. I am extremely honored to be considered, much less accepted, to the Knights of the Round Table. I am very disappointed that I will not be able to attend but please know how touched I am.

Thank you,  
Brian

**Accepting on behalf of Brian Kelly is Mr. James Welby**