



Mike Avery (Green/Red)
VP - Equilibria in Sports
President, Center Circle Influencer Inc.

“I played on my first soccer team when I was four years old, and I fell in love. Flash forward now to me at 52, and I realize I’ve been on a soccer team every single day of my life for the past 48 years... that’s a lot of teams!” quips Mike Avery, the head coach for the newly formed professional club Fort Wayne FC. “I was a young player, a club player, a high school player, a college player, and a professional player before becoming a college coach for 29 years and now I am coaching a professional team. My whole life has been shaped by teams, teammates and coaches.”

Armed with the experiences of a lifetime spent in sport at the highest levels, Coach Avery now hopes to share insight through his roles as a consultant through Equilibria in Sports - a company that successfully enhances individual and organizational communication and performance through an understanding of personality and character - and as the founder of Center Circle Influencers - a sport leadership consulting firm that provides leadership training to coaches, athletic administrators, teams and athletes from the prep level through university and into professional sports.

In many ways, Mike Avery’s entire life has been an inside study of teams and the underlying reasons why some teams succeed and others fall short of their potential. A 1990 graduate of Westmont College with a degree in Physical Education, the two time All-American captain signed a professional contract with Real Santa Barbara of the American Professional Soccer League before moving on to professional stint in Sweden before an injury led him to the sidelines as a graduate assistant college coach. Avery received his Master’s degree in Kinesiology with an emphasis in Education in 1994 and then embarked on a college coaching career that spanned nearly three decades. In 2000 Avery broke into the NCAA Division 1 coaching ranks as an assistant coach at the University of Notre Dame before moving on to University of Louisville - two of the top programs in the country - and ultimately landing as the head coach of Valparaiso University. In a thirteen year run at the helm of the Valparaiso program, Avery transformed a struggling mid major D1 program into a nationally competitive program that achieved such program milestones as conference championships, coach and player of the year selections, multiple All-American honors, national top 25 rankings, MLS draft selections, and European professional contracts. Avery left Valparaiso as the programs record holder for wins, a feat accomplished in 100 games and six years faster than the previous record holder.

Off the field, Valparaiso developed a national reputation for the work Avery introduced in diversity and inclusion through the #oneVALPO initiative and the #oneVALPO Promise - two programs that have had international impact. A highly sought after inspirational speaker and teacher, Avery engages an audience with real life stories highlighting lessons learned from a life in teams and the impact they have on community, kindness, empathy, communication and leadership. As one who has been so heavily influenced by teams, Avery now seeks to honor that experience by giving back to other teams and organizations, helping others reach their potential both individually and collectively.

