

Timbers equipment manager wins MLS award

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(Photo: KGW)

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Timbers equipment Manager Sam Younie has a special distinction. He has seen every single Timbers game since they joined Major League Soccer in 2011.

"I'm batting a thousand," Younie said. "I've never missed a home or away game. It's a point of pride, just having that consistency and knowing that I'm dependable and capable of taking care of our players and coaches over the long term day-to-day."

Yes, Younie is good. In fact, he was named the MLS Equipment Manager of the Year.

"It's really just a testament of loving what I do," Younie said. "Coming in every day, working with a great group of people and that's just a reflection of a real passion for what I do."

Usually, Sam is the first in and the last to leave. He gets help from assistant Kevin Christiana, who's from Coos Bay. They pack equipment for every player on the team including kits and cleats.

"If we're playing a home game here, we'll pack at least two pairs of firm ground boots for each person," Younie explained. "So, everybody has at least one backup and then if we're playing on the road on a grass surface, we'll have two firm grounds and then a soft ground pair of a metal kind of screw in detachable studs."

Younie grew up in Portland and went to Wilson High School and was a ball boy for the Blazers, which is where his passion for this job started.

Then it was on to Oregon, where he worked in the equipment room with the Ducks for four years. You might say he is right at home with the Timbers.

"It means everything to me," Younie said of working with the Timbers. "This team has such a great standing in the city in our community and being a small part of that is just terrific for me and I love it."