

Aragon Gizerak

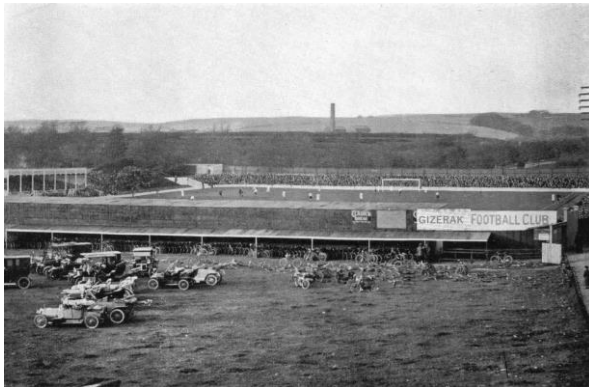


Aragon Football Club is a professional football club based in the town of Gizerak, Concordia, Pharos. Their home ground has been Lazarus Branca Stadium since 2004, having played at the Goldston Ground for most of the 20th century.

History

Formation and early years

The club was first formed as Gizerak Rangers on 24 June 1901 by members of the Gizerak



Goldston Ground 1900's

Athletics FC, who had a disagreement with the club's board. The name was quickly changed to Aragon FC Gizerak (after the river that has its estuary north of the city) and the club entered the Concordian 2nd division in the 1902-03 season, as the old club put a stop in their previous year enrolment, due to lack of a proper ground. The club initially played at the Gizerak County Ground, before moving to their own

Goldston Ground, north of the city limits, towards the village of Fila.

In 1920, 19 years after the club was formed, they were promoted to the Concordian 1st division for the first time.

Carl Nebb, born in Gizerak, started his playing career with Gizerak Athletics and later joined Aragon. He scored 79 goals in 175 appearances for the club and was the scorer for the only title Aragon won in the 20th century, the Concordian Cup of 1923, beating Select 1-0.





Carl Nebb, player and manager

Nebb joined the army in 1915, was captured and spent time in the Mainz prison camp as a war prisoner before being repatriated and, at the end of hostilities returned to Gizerak where, still only 28, played until his late 30's. He was then appointed as club manager, staying with the club until the 1946-47 season and becoming

known as 'Mr Aragon'. Carl Nebb was still living locally when he passed away in 1986 at the age of 86.

1950-1981

After WWII, the club announced a huge reconstruction programme which would affect all sides of the ground. This included increases in terracing (by 1953 all areas of the ground were terraced) and in 1954, construction of a brand-new South Stand. In the 1956-57 season the North Stand was extended to run the full length of the pitch and the following season the club finally escaped the Second Division where they had been competing since 1930.



Goldston Grounds 1960's



Yate Michol

The early 1960s brought little in the way of success to the club. They came close to winning the title on a couple of occasions but never quite made it. One outstanding player was inside-forward Yate Michol but, as seemed to be the norm at the time he was sold as soon as a decent offer came in.

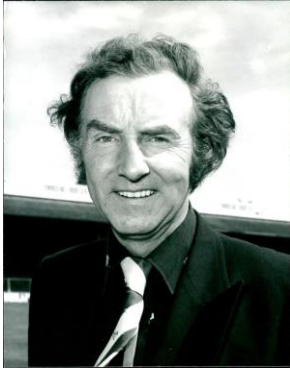
Perhaps the club's biggest claim during this period was the appointment of Vincent Norman to the Board of

Directors. Norman, who was a director between 1964 and 1973, was often seen on the pitch at the Goldston whipping up support. He also rewrote the lyrics of the club's unofficial anthem 'Fighters by The Sea'.

Norman was the one that persuaded Lazarus Branca, a local real estate businessman and property developer, to become involved with the club. Branca became joined chairman in



Vincent Norman (down left) and the Aragon team in 1968



Lazarus Branca

1972 and owner of the club in 1974. Alongside vice-chairman Hano Bloom, Branca negotiated the appointment of Fil Sahtior as manager in November 1973. Sahtior would later describe Branca as *"a wealthy gem of a man, who turned out to be the nicest and best chairman I ever worked for,"* and *"If he was alive today and I was tempted to come out of retirement, Lazarus would be the offer I would take".*

Under the leadership of Sahtior, Aragon Gizerak would become a major force in the Concordian scene in the 1970's, but could not gain promotion to the newly formed PSL in 1981. However, they were crowned Concordian Champions for the first time in their history in 1982, with Sahtior leaving for Zaria in the summer.

The early PSL era and the new stadium

Branca's first job was to make plans for a new stadium for Aragon. For this purpose, he donated land to the club, almost 1 mile west of the Goldston Grounds. Unfortunately, he passed away from a heart attack at his home in Gizerak on 11 July 1988, aged only 57, before seeing his plans go through. Commenting on Branca's death in August 1988, Aragon's then new chairman and Branca's right hand in his business and the club, Hano Bloom said, "Lazarus was the most successful chairman we've ever had and the club enjoyed its finest hours under his leadership".

Aragon would win another 11 Concordian Championships from 1982 to 2004, when the new expansion of the PSL would allow the



Lazarus Branca Stadium

club to join the league's 2nd division for the first time.

In 1997, Lazarus Branca's son Porfirat took over the family



Porfirat Branca

business and was also appointed new club chairman at the age of 25. He immediately proceeded to fulfil his father's project for a new venue. Designed by Concordian architect Kell Kosberg who would later lend a hand to Sor Arena in Southport, Aragon's Stadion cost an estimated ff 41 million, and was financed by the club's owner Porfirat Branca, who named it after his late father. Much heralded upon completion, the stadium was

awarded the City Prize, and nominated for a Prix D'Excellence. The most notable change to the stadium in recent years came in October 2013 when the club opted to replace the natural surface with more durable artificial turf. The Lazarus Branca Stadium would accommodate 15,300 spectators, all in covered seats.

2005-

In 2004-05 Aragon Gizerak competed in the PSL 2nd division, finishing in 8th place, with former Select international player Dan Glovic as manager. In 2006 they missed promotion to PSL A by 2 points to Ceiserstellen, losing at home to Dynamo Pharos in the last game of the season.



Yate Broderig

In 2010, another former international, Yate Broderig, was given the manager's job. He had been managing some great clubs before coming to Gizerak, such as Foundation BC, Villa Town, Select and Zaria. He had to manage a team of youngsters, with only Jan Nalas being over 25 years old. He guided Aragon to the 1st place of PSL B and to promotion to the top tier for the first time.

Unfortunately, financing was at its worst in Gizerak. Porfirat Branca could not make any new additions to the young team, he also had to put Nalas on sale. As a result, Aragon finished in the last position of the PSL A, with only 11 points, tying Ceiserstellen's 1985 record as the worst result in PSL A history.

Aragon struggled the next seasons, finishing in the bottom half of the 2nd division table. In 2015 they lost the play-out game to Hinjioamaru and were relegated to PSC A division. From 2016 to 2018 they played for promotion in the PSC-PSL play offs, but failed each time, losing to Haast 79, to Dynamo Pharos and to Estwald Metropolis.

They failed promotion 2 more times under new manager Yol Dorsa. In 2020 they lost to Zenith Parietal and next season to Taupo SC on penalties. They made them 6 times under manager Kleon Karsten, the most of any club in Pharos, in 2023 and 2024, with Olympic Trandor preventing their accession to PSL both times. In 2024, Zeb Nespoor, former assistant coach in Champion Athletics and head manager of Victoria City was named head coach, but Porfirat Branca's financial situation did not seem to get any better. By early 2025 fans were demanding that the Lazarus Branca heir should find a suitable person to sell the shares of the club.



Dan Glovic

