



LEHIGH  
UNIVERSITY

Library &  
Technology  
Services

The Preserve: Lehigh Library Digital Collections

# The North American Soccer league in American sports culture

## Citation

Bullock, David. *The North American Soccer League in American Sports Culture*. 2008, <https://preserve.lehigh.edu/lehigh-scholarship/graduate-publications-theses-dissertations/theses-dissertations/north-american>.

Find more at <https://preserve.lehigh.edu/>

*This document is brought to you for free and open access by Lehigh Preserve. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of Lehigh Preserve. For more information, please contact [preserve@lehigh.edu](mailto:preserve@lehigh.edu).*

**Bullock, David**

**The North American  
Soccer League in  
American Sports  
Culture**

**May 2008**

The North American Soccer League in American Sports Culture

by

David Bullock

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate Research Committee

Of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

American History

Lehigh University

April 25, 2008

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

4-23-08  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Thesis Advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Co-Advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Department Chairperson)

## CONTENTS

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL.....   | ii |
| ABSTRACT.....                  | 1  |
| INTRODUCTION.....              | 2  |
| HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....        | 2  |
| Professional Soccer in America |    |
| CULTURAL REASONS.....          | 14 |
| INTERNAL REASONS.....          | 19 |
| ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS.....    | 33 |
| CONCLUSION.....                | 41 |
| WORKS CITED.....               | 46 |
| VITA.....                      | 50 |

**Abstract:** This thesis examines the rise of the North American Soccer League (NASL) during the 1970's and 80's. The league captured the attention of the American public and sports media when it signed the Brazilian superstar, Pelé, in 1975. With growing media coverage and rising attendance figures the future of the NASL looked bright. However, a combination of historical and cultural factors coupled with poor internal decisions made the demise of the league inevitable and it folded after the 1984 season. Historical factors, such as the inability of soccer to enter into the American "sports space" during the first half of the twentieth century and soccer's failure to become established at the collegiate level undermined the league. Under these conditions, other sports such as baseball, basketball, football, and hockey were already firmly established by the time the NASL was formed in 1968. From a cultural perspective, Americans simply did not understand soccer. It was a game thought to be both "foreign" and violent and this negatively influenced the perception of the league. The NASL was also plagued by a number of internal problems. The most significant of these problems were the dominance of international players and the lack of an identifiable American star; hasty expansion into markets which were not ready for soccer; the New York Cosmos' negative influence on the other franchises' growing payrolls; competition from indoor soccer; and lastly, the failure of soccer on major network American television. Evidence of the NASL's inability to penetrate into American sports culture is revealed by looking at the sports pages of newspapers from five major American cities in 1978 and 1980. Editors clearly did not feel the NASL was worthy of the same amount of coverage that other sports received. Although the league folded it left an undoubtedly positive legacy as soccer has grown to become the most popular youth sport in America.

## **Introduction:**

On August 14, 1977, a sell out crowd of 77,691 spectators watched the New York Cosmos play soccer against the Fort Lauderdale Strikers at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The large crowd was a testament to the growing presence of the North American Soccer League (NASL) in American sports culture during the late 1970's. The league's growth was an incredible feat considering that ten years before there was not a professional soccer league in the United States and most Americans were unfamiliar with the game. With a blossoming league full of imported talent, attendance figures on the rise, and major network television contracts being signed, the future of the NASL looked bright. However, although the league showed tremendous promise it would eventually come to an untimely end after the 1984 season. Could the NASL have avoided this fate if different internal decisions were made or did historical and social factors make it ultimately inevitable?

## **Historical Context: Professional Soccer in America**

According to Andrei S. Markovits and Steven Hellerman, one can look back upon America's unique history and see how it affected the growth of soccer. The isolationism of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries combined with a pervading sense of detachment from all things British were crucial to Americans embracing a different style of football than the rest of the world. Significantly, the decision to "Americanize" versions of British games, such as "rounders" and soccer occurred at a time when the commodification of sports was beginning to occur. By this it is meant that sports were transformed from leisure activities for the upper classes to games which were played, attended, and

embedded into the culture of the middle and lower classes.<sup>1</sup> It is during this time period that baseball, football, and eventually basketball emerged as “traditional” American sports, while soccer was consigned as a game for foreigners. Markovits and Hellerman compare the weakness of soccer in the United States to another example of American exceptionalism: “the absence of a European-style socialism or social democracy as a systemically dominant political force in American politics throughout much of the twentieth century.”<sup>2</sup> In speculating why this may be, political sociologists have referred to America’s unique past, such as the lack of a feudal order, the abundance of cheap land, a high degree of geographic mobility, an emphasis on individualism, and the overall bourgeois nature of American politics and society. While this comparison is interesting to keep in mind, the more important thing to grasp from this is there were historical reasons for soccer’s obscurity in America.

The theory of “sports space” reveals how difficult it would be for soccer to enter into America’s sports cultural consciousness. According to Markovits and Hellerman each nation has a “sports space” in which only a limited number of sports can achieve prominence. Which sports occupy a “sports space” is determined by a combination of timing, the ability of the sport to modernize, and how this modernization coordinated with the particular society’s overall modernization.<sup>3</sup> The most important time period for a sport to enter a country’s “sports space” was during the time period between 1870 and 1930, the decades when, according to Markovits and Hellerman, “both industrial proliferation and modern mass societies” were established. Once sports are established

---

<sup>1</sup> Andrei S. Markovits and Steven L. Hellerman, *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 7-34.

<sup>2</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, x.

<sup>3</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 14-6.

within a nation's "sports space" it becomes increasingly more difficult for them to be unseated by new sports.<sup>4</sup> As baseball was the prominent sport that entered into the American "sports space" in the time period between 1870 and 1930, and football, basketball, and hockey had each successively emerged afterwards, the American "sports space" was rather crowded by the 1970's when the NASL tried to enter. However, there were earlier efforts by professional soccer to establish itself in America.

The early 1920's saw the emergence of the American Soccer League (ASL), which gave hope that soccer could begin to carve its own niche in American sports culture. The league was confined to cities in the Northeast, such as Philadelphia, Jersey City, Harrison, Holyoke, New York, and Brooklyn. It had an almost entirely ethnic fan base. Bethlehem Steel F.C., the most famous and talented soccer franchise in the United States joined the league in 1924. The league averaged around six thousand spectators during the height of its success and a friendly match between the Austrian club Viennese Hakoah and a conglomeration of ASL players played at the Polo Grounds in New York attracted forty-six thousand people. However, the success of the league would only be ephemeral. Poor leadership, inter-organizational rivalries, and a fan base that remained confined to small ethnic enclaves caused the league to fold in 1931, as baseball, college football, and boxing emerged as the mainstream sports.<sup>5</sup> Although, there would be one "foreign" sport" which did enter into the American sports space during this time period.

Hockey provides a very fascinating comparison with soccer. Unlike baseball, football, and basketball, hockey is a Canadian and thus "foreign" sport just like soccer. The National Hockey League was formed in 1917 and consisted of four Canadian teams.

---

<sup>4</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 108-113.

In 1924 the first U.S. team, the Boston Bruins, entered the league and by the end of the decade there were four more American franchises in New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Detroit. Many Americans embraced hockey, as evidenced by the league's continual growth throughout the United States over the later half of the twentieth century. A theory in understanding why hockey was accepted into the American "sports space" is that the United States and Canada possess a very special relationship. The cultural similarities, constant social exchanges, and close geographic proximity have created conditions in which there is an easy mutual transfer and adoption of innovations, trends, and ideas. Americans thereby adopted hockey enthusiastically, despite its "foreign" origin. The fact that professional hockey entered the American "sports space" in the critical time period between 1900 and 1930 was also significant in the sport's acceptance into American sports culture. Hockey's ability to permeate into the sports cultures of the Northeast and upper Midwest during the middle of the twentieth-century are what have allowed the sport to significantly expand into the rest of the country during the 1980's and 90's.<sup>6</sup>

A second American Soccer League (ASL II) was formed in 1933 and began playing a season from September through April. The league was much closer to a semi-professional association than a professional sports league. Virtually none of its players made their living entirely from playing soccer and many of the teams were entirely ethnic-based, which further assured that the American public would ignore the league. Franchises were spread across the northeast and changed locations on a frequent basis.

---

<sup>6</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 91-3.

Despite poor attendance and a lack of serious financing, ASL II constituted the United States major soccer league until the late 1960's.<sup>7</sup>

The 1950 World Cup in Brazil epitomized America's isolation from and indifference toward soccer. During the tournament the United States national team defeated the heavily favored English team, 1-0. Of the four hundred reporters sent to the game from around the world there was only one American reporter, Dent McSkimming of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.<sup>8</sup> An upset of this magnitude garnered front-page news almost everywhere in the world, except for the United States where it was greeted with indifference. When *The New York Times* received the score they thought it was a hoax and thus printed nothing about the game.<sup>9</sup> The complete ignorance of the American public to this shocking victory is indicative of Americans regard for soccer before the NASL.

Soccer also failed to establish itself at the collegiate level. Traditional sports such as football and basketball were more popular in their collegiate form until the 1950's, which emphasizes the importance of collegiate athletics to American sports culture. Few universities had soccer teams in the beginning of the twentieth century and although the sport was gradually being seen on more campuses, there were only six college conferences for soccer in 1936. By 1946 there were 86 schools in the nation playing soccer. This number jumped up to almost 1,000 schools by 1978 after college athletics were expanded after World War II. However, college-level soccer has attracted

---

<sup>7</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 114-15.

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Douglas, *The Game of Their Lives* (HarperCollins, New York: 1996), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Douglas, *The Game of Their Lives*, 141.

few spectators and minimal media coverage.<sup>10</sup> There has never been great interest in collegiate soccer as there has been for collegiate-level football and basketball. Soccer's inability to use collegiate athletics as a way to expose and acculturate Americans to the sport, as football and basketball successfully did, was a major deterrent to professional soccer's future in the United States. Baseball can be excluded from this scenario, as it was the first sport to enter into America's "sport space" and had already permanently established itself without needing the help of collegiate sports. The future of collegiate soccer will be discussed later in the paper.

The middle of the 1960's was a time of rapid growth in professional sports leagues in the United States. Major League Baseball successfully expanded its franchises while the American public supported rival professional leagues in football and basketball. A number of factors, such as a generation of baby boomers growing up with more disposable incomes, and subsequently the rapid growth of leisure industries helped create these markets.<sup>11</sup> Awareness of professional soccer was still minimal within the United States, but two developments sparked the interest of investors in creating an American league. The 1966 World Cup final between England and West Germany was broadcast nationally on NBC.<sup>12</sup> American television viewers witnessed a crowd of 100,000 fans fill Wembley Stadium in London to capacity. "You can't have a professional league without having investors convinced. And I think the showing of the 1966 World Cup was the turning point." stated Phil Woosnam. Investors also looked at the growth of the National

---

<sup>10</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 121-3.

<sup>11</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 163.

<sup>12</sup> The World Cup is an international soccer tournament between thirty-two competing nations from Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Australia. It is held every four years and is regarded as the world's largest sporting event, with over 1 billion viewers watching the 2002 World Cup.

Football League (NFL), whose owners had paid relatively small amounts for their franchises and were reaping large profits as the league became more successful. These factors influenced prominent businessmen who were already involved in traditional American sports, such as Lamar Hunt and Jack Kent Cooke, to take an interest in the formation of a professional soccer league in America.<sup>13</sup> In 1967 two different coast-to-coast professional soccer leagues were formed, the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) and the United Soccer Association (USA).<sup>14</sup> The NPSL even signed a two-year television deal with CBS. Nonetheless, in their first years of existence both leagues experienced unexceptional play, poor television ratings, and, especially in the case of the NPSL, large financial losses.<sup>15</sup> Both leagues were on the verge of folding when they struck a deal in the spring of 1968 to form a new, seventeen-team professional league, the National American Soccer League (NASL).<sup>16</sup>

The NASL experienced little success in its first six seasons. The league continued to be characterized by mediocre players, below average facilities, and sparsely attended matches. *New York Times* sports writer, Robert Lipsyte, described the scene of an early Cosmos game: “It was not a Babe Ruth crowd, less than 4,000 bunched along the left-field foul line, many of them chattering in heavily accented English, when they were speaking English at all.”<sup>17</sup> The NASL resembled an amateur league more than it did a professional one. Most of its players were earning no more than \$80 a week and worked a

---

<sup>13</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 164.

<sup>14</sup> Bill Murray, *The World's Game* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996) 123.

<sup>15</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 165.

<sup>16</sup> Bill Murray, *The World's Game*, 124.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Lipsyte, “Siggy Stritzl is not the Babe, Yet,” *The New York Times*, 8 May 1971, p.19.

variety of other jobs, such as teachers, truck drivers, waiters, and construction workers.<sup>18</sup> The strong leadership of Commissioner Phil Woosnam, Clive Toyne, an NASL executive, and Lamar Hunt, who owned the Dallas Tornadoes (as well as the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs) was the main reason the league continued to survive.

With teams failing to generate interest in the NASL, many turned to an assortment of marketing gimmicks to boost attendance. Publicity stunts such as free giveaways, vouchers for fast food restaurants, and appearances by major league baseball players occurred regularly. The New York Cosmos even had a chimp from a local wildlife habitat known as "Harold," who was unfortunately prone to urinate on the field and players alike.<sup>19</sup> Media coverage for the league was abysmal in these early years in which the urinating monkey at half time might be as much of a draw to fans as the soccer. If there was any coverage at all, and usually there was not, it would be found in filler paragraphs in the back of the sports section. However, in 1975 the NASL made sure they would receive media coverage from all over the world: they signed the most famous player in the world, the Brazilian superstar, Pelé.

To sign Pelé the NASL gave him a three-year contract worth 4.8 million dollars. To put this in perspective, Hank Aaron, Major League Baseball's highest paid player at the time, was only making \$200,000 per season.<sup>20</sup> The only team in the NASL capable of making such an extravagant deal was the New York Cosmos, who was owned by Warner Communications. Pelé's illustrious career had spanned eighteen years, in which he scored

---

<sup>18</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime: The Incredible Story of the New York Cosmos* (New York: Atlantic Press, 2006), 42.

<sup>19</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 30.

Gerald Eskenazi, "New Yorkers get two fine scorers," *The New York Times*, 21 April 1968, 9 (S)

<sup>20</sup> *Once in a Lifetime: The Incredible Story of the New York Cosmos*. (Film Documentary) Directors: Paul Crowder and John Dowder, Passion Pictures, 2006.

1,220 goals, won three World Cups, and was considered a “national treasure” in his homeland of Brazil.<sup>21</sup> Clive Toye had famously convinced him to sign with the Cosmos instead of a major European club team by telling him: “if you sign with Real or Juventus you could win another championship, but if you come with us you can win a country.”<sup>22</sup>

The success and attention that Pelé single-handedly brought to the NASL was truly remarkable. CBS televised his first game live with the Cosmos and an astounding ten million people tuned in to watch.<sup>23</sup> Stadiums that had previously been nearly empty were now packed with fans wherever the Cosmos played. Some teams would even rent out larger stadiums to accommodate the large crowds who wanted to see Pelé and the Cosmos.<sup>24</sup> The Cosmos were drawing crowds ten times the size of their average attendance of 3,600 the previous year.<sup>25</sup> The average attendance in the NASL increased from an average of 5,974 in 1974 the year before Pelé arrived to an average of 13,584 spectators in Pelé’s final season in 1977.<sup>26</sup> By signing Pelé the NASL was also able to gain the attention of the media. “Now that the world’s most famous athlete was in New York City the media could no longer ignore soccer.” said David Hershey of the *New York Daily News*.<sup>27</sup>

Pelé was instrumental in bringing soccer to the masses in America. The overall media attention that he brought the NASL exposed many Americans to the game.

Sportswriter Hanker Nuwer observed: Pelé quickly established himself as an American

---

<sup>21</sup> Henry Kissinger, “Pele,” Time.com. 14 June 1999.  
“<http://www.time.com/time/time100/heroes/profile/pele01.html>”

<sup>22</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

<sup>23</sup> Melissa Ludtke “Soccer is getting a Toehold,” *Sports Illustrated*, 30 October 1976. 66.

<sup>24</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 67.

<sup>25</sup> Stian Jordalen, “An Investigation of the Long-term Viability of Major League Soccer, and Soccer as a Sport in the USA,” (Master of Business Administration, the University of Montana, 1999). 24.

<sup>26</sup> “NASL Homepage,” 12 March 2002. “<http://home.att.net/~nasl/nasl.htm>”

<sup>27</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

household name. He appeared in an American Express commercial, clowned with Johnny Carson on national television and traveled to the White House to show President Gerald Ford the art of booting a soccer ball.<sup>28</sup> Jim Trecker held a number of public relations jobs within the league, including working as a public relations director for the New York Cosmos and as the overall public relations director for the NASL. Through these experiences he is an invaluable source of knowledge about the NASL. When asked to describe the impact of Pelé on the success of the league he stated: “I honestly cannot think of another moment in American sports history where the arrival of just one person completely transformed a game, the perceptions of the game, and the emotional energy of fans and media.”<sup>29</sup>

The signing of Pelé would usher in a new era for the NASL. In the following three years after Pelé’s arrival, a number of international stars, such as Franz Beckenbauer from Germany, George Best from Northern Ireland, Giorgio Chinaglia from Italy, and Carlos Alberto from Brazil arrived to play in the NASL<sup>30</sup> With the importation of world-class foreign players the quality of the league began to rise. The Cosmos also developed into the league’s “glamour club,” as they moved from an aging and decrepit stadium on Randalls Island to brand new Giants Stadium in the New Jersey Meadowlands in 1977. They embedded themselves into the prominent New York sports scene, receiving frequent media coverage and at times even outdrawing the Mets and Yankees.<sup>31</sup> Optimism about the league’s future came from sportswriters and league executives alike. Paul Gardner, writing for the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, *Horizon* magazine

---

<sup>28</sup> Hank Nuwer, “Soccermania,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 1978, 56.

<sup>29</sup> Jim Trecker, interview by author, 26 June 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 167.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Singer, “Bizarre, Brawling Cosmos,” *Sport*, April 1978, 70.

stated, “Scores of television features and newspaper and magazine articles have probed the soccer phenomenon, and their conclusion is that pro soccer has finally arrived in the USA.”<sup>32</sup> Even the cantankerous ABC sportscaster Howard Cosell was quoted as saying: “Soccer is not only here to stay, it will be the biggest big league of all.”<sup>33</sup> However, optimism would dwindle as a multitude of problems forced the league to dissolve after the 1984 season.

From 1985 to 1996 the professional soccer situation in American reverted back to the pre-NASL days, with an array of semi-professional and amateur leagues scattered throughout the country, which were generally ignored by the American public. Soccer finally returned to the national spotlight in 1994 when the United States hosted the World Cup. With the eyes of the world fixed on the United States, the tournament gained a considerable amount of media attention from the nation’s largest newspapers and news networks. The 1994 World Cup can be considered a great success, as there were record attendance figures, respectable television ratings, and a substantial amount of press coverage.<sup>34</sup>

Capitalizing on the success of the World Cup a group of investors decided to launch a new American domestic soccer league in 1996, Major League Soccer (MLS). Teams in the MLS are made up of primarily American players and salary caps are in place, preventing them from making extravagant player purchases. In terms of evaluating the new league compared to the NASL, the main difference seems to be in infrastructure. Whereas, the NASL was made of a number of different ownership groups competing

---

<sup>32</sup> Paul Gardner, “Making Soccer an American Sport,” *Horizon*, November 1977, 77.

<sup>33</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

<sup>34</sup> Markovits and Helleman, *Offside*, 203.

with each other for top talent, and thus driving up their own spending, the MLS is composed of a single-body entity. Therefore, the league essentially controls every team and ensures that each team has an equal amount of money to spend. This way if a team is faltering at the gate it is not in a dire financial situation because it is backed by the finances of the league itself. The league has also secured a long-term television contract with ESPN, something the NASL could never accomplish for more than two years. The MLS has the benefit of cable television in this respect, as the NASL had to vie for time only on major networks. The expansion of cable television has provided an additional outlet for soccer in America. Although media coverage on major network is still peripheral, it is now possible for television viewers to choose from hundreds of specialty channels. Television viewers in America can now watch games and highlights regularly from all over the world on Fox Soccer Channel, Gol TV, and Setanta Sports. As of now the MLS has not been successful in generating money. *Business Week* estimated that between 1996 and 2004 the MLS lost more than \$350 million.<sup>35</sup> However, there is reason to believe that the league's future is bright. In January 2007 the league made a Pelé-like signing by giving English International Superstar David Beckham a \$250 million dollar contract. Reminiscent of Pelé the MLS has already seen a surge of media exposure for their league. MLS teams are also forming partnerships with popular clubs from Europe and South America. This has a number of benefits for MLS teams: they can share ideas about anything from tactics to marketing strategies, they can bring these world-renowned clubs over to the United States to play, and they can further extend their brand globally.

---

<sup>35</sup> Jeff Gammage, "Soccer Team Thinks Globally," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 March 2008. 1.

Commissioner Doug Garber has stated that the league is projected to be in the black by 2010.<sup>36</sup>

Another major advantage that the MLS has over the NASL is that there are a number of soccer-specific stadiums throughout the country now. Teams in cities such as Columbus, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Chicago all play in smaller stadiums built specifically for soccer, which usually seat from 18,000 to 28,000 spectators. Instead of in much larger American football stadiums. With plans for soccer-specific stadiums in the New York metropolitan area, Washington D.C., and Salt Lake City, it seems like the MLS has successfully laid the foundation for a league which will not have to depend on sharing the cavernous stadiums of the NFL. There is a clear connection between the growing success of the MLS and the past precedent set by the NASL, but why did the NASL fail to become America's professional soccer league? The answer lies in a combination of cultural reasons and internal factors, which combined to bring the demise of the league.

### **Cultural Reasons**

In assessing the NASL's ability to penetrate into American sports culture, the first thing to take into account is that the majority of Americans simply did not understand the game. "The U.S. was a country where 99.9% of the population had never heard of soccer. It was a barren country in terms of soccer," stated Clive Toye.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, many of the articles in *Sports Illustrated*, *Sport*, and other widely read sports magazines had the tedious task of explaining the rules and intricacies of the game to their readers. Paul

---

<sup>36</sup> Jeff Gammage, "Soccer Team Thinks Globally," 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

Gardner's "Soccer, American Style," from the *New York Times* magazine tried to explain the structure of soccer to an American audience whom he assumed would not even understand the basic rules. Gardner was forced to explain that there were eleven players per side, the dimensions of the field, and even the function of the goalkeeper. He also systematically explained in great detail the difference between a free kick, an indirect free kick, and a penalty kick.<sup>38</sup> Gardner wrote a similar piece for *Sport* magazine in which he simplistically broke down the off-the-ball movements of players that resulted in a goal during an NASL game. He even included a diagram that showed where the players were on the field and how the ball went from player to player before ending up in the net.<sup>39</sup>

In looking at public relations surveys from twenty-three of the twenty-four teams which were sent to *Kick Magazine* in the fall of 1978, a number of teams expressed sentiments that their fan base did not fully understand the game. Marcia Schallert of the Tampa Bay Rowdies stated that her team's fan base "has a core of 10,000 people who are die-hard fans. They know and love the game. But we feel that most the community still views the game as foreign and doesn't understand it." Tampa Bay, Oakland, Memphis all specifically mentioned educating their fans and the media about soccer as goals for the upcoming season.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, most Americans did not possess any familiarity with soccer.

Sports writers, in their depiction of soccer, often compared it to other more traditional American sports, particularly football. While there is a degree of carry over at times between the traditional American sports (for example, having a writer describe a buzzer-winning shot in basketball as a "Hail Mary"), the constant references to other

---

<sup>38</sup> Paul Gardner, "Soccer, American Style," *The New York Times Magazine*, 4 May 1975, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Gardner, "Fan's Guide to Soccer," *Sport*, June 1979, 38.

<sup>40</sup> *Kick Magazine* public relations surveys, 1978

sports undermined soccer as a sport that could not stand on its own. An article that explained Dutch star Johan Cruyff's switch to a more defensive position related it to an NFL quarterback switching positions: "This is roughly akin to moving Terry Bradshaw to middle linebacker, except that Cruyff is so extraordinarily versatile, he slips into the role like he's been playing it all his life."<sup>41</sup> Another *Sports Illustrated* article made reference to an English professional soccer team's style of gritty play by comparing them to the NFL's Green Bay Packers.<sup>42</sup> Center midfielders or other players who assumed leadership positions on the team were also constantly referred to as "quarterbacks."<sup>43</sup> Through recurring references such as these it is clear that sportswriters did not feel their audience properly understood soccer. Thereby, it made sense to them to make comparisons with a sport they identified more with, such as the traditional American sport of football.

There was also a discernibly xenophobic reaction toward soccer from members of the media. According to Toye, the media clearly expressed an element of nativism in its perceptions of the league:

We were not welcomed with open arms by the media, that's for sure. There was one guy in San Francisco who said pray God Americans never take to soccer because it's the beginning of Communist infiltration. Another guy said they are nothing but a bunch of Commies and fairies in short pants.<sup>44</sup>

Prescott Sullivan of the *San Francisco Examiner* was quoted as saying: "In Europe, as in South America they go raving mad over the game. Pray that it doesn't happen here. If

---

<sup>41</sup> David Hirshey, "Soccer's Best is a Dutch Treat," *Sport*, May 1979, 76.

<sup>42</sup> Tex Maule, "Chelsea Almost Won the Cup," *Sports Illustrated*, April 1970, 22.

<sup>43</sup> One such example seen in: Gwilym S. Brown, "Quick Somebody, a Pele," *Sports Illustrated*, May 1973, 101.

<sup>44</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 30.

soccer shows signs of getting too big, swat it down.”<sup>45</sup> With this sort of sentiment toward soccer it was not surprising that newspapers failed to provide substantial coverage.

Similarly xenophobic reactions toward soccer have persisted from other sources. In 1986, Republican congressman Jack Kemp stated before congress: “a distinction should be made that football is democratic, capitalism, whereas soccer is a European socialist sport.”<sup>46</sup> Such statements ingrain in the minds of Americans that soccer is a sport that is contrary to American values.

Soccer was also thought of as a sport that inspired inappropriate levels of passion, which many times led to bloody violence. Articles about soccer frequently referred to the negative effects the game had on the demeanor of fans around the world. Hank Nuwer’s article “Soccermania,” that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* made sure to include that a soccer dispute had been the catalyst in sparking a 1969 war between Honduras and El Salvador and incidents of mob violence associated with soccer throughout the world were “endless.”<sup>47</sup> *Sports Illustrated* sensationalized soccer to its American audience as it claimed: “Violence in and around soccer is sweeping England, usually considered the citadel of fair play and orderly behavior. Rough stuff on the playing field is matched by fighting in the grandstands, fierce attacks on special trains and outbreaks in nearby streets and even distant cities.”<sup>48</sup> The same A.P. article appeared simultaneously in both the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Atlanta Constitution-Journal* on June 26, 1978, which gave a sensational account of violent behavior caused by “World Cup fever.” This behavior

---

<sup>45</sup> Colin Jose, *NASL: A Complete Record of the North American Soccer League* (Derby, England: Breedon, 1989), 14.

<sup>46</sup> Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World* (New York: Harper, 2004), 241.

<sup>47</sup> Hank Nuwer, “Soccermania,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, 55.

<sup>48</sup> Wilfred Sheed, “This Riotous Isle,” *Sports Illustrated*, 21 April, 1969, 78.

included a French woman who poisoned her husband because he watched too many games, a German nun who attacked a man for rooting against her homeland, and Dutch youths who smashed windows in the Argentine embassy after their team's defeat.<sup>49</sup>

Another *Sports Illustrated* article also focused upon the violent behavior of fans who attended international soccer matches: "the players and officials were protected from the crowds by barbed wire and a moat, a not unreasonable precaution, because in far less important matches officials and players have been stomped to death by frustrated fans."<sup>50</sup> Frequent comments, such as these, presented soccer to the American public as not only foreign and bizarre, but as an extremely violent activity for fans. American sports fans certainly have an inclination for violence on the field (look at such popular sports as football and hockey), however they attend and enjoy sporting events in a relatively peaceful fashion. With these kinds of associations embedded in the minds of Americans, it was more difficult for professional soccer to become a part of American sports culture.

Another indication of soccer's inability to permeate into the consciousness of Americans is the considerable lack of books and movies that feature soccer compared to other traditional American sports. Suzanne Wise, a specialist on American literature with sports themes, compiled a list of 4,500 works on baseball, 4,100 on football, and 2,800 on basketball. In comparison, there are only 15 books on soccer which appear on her list.<sup>51</sup> In terms of American films during the past century there has been 86 films featuring baseball, 48 films featuring football, and 37 films featuring basketball. Tellingly, there

---

<sup>49</sup> "World Cup Causes Stir," *Chicago Tribune*, 26 June 1978, section 6, 3. and

"Soccer Can be Deadly," *Atlanta Constitution-Journal*, 26 June 1978, 8.

<sup>50</sup> Tex Maule, "Soccer is a Frenzy," *Sports Illustrated*, June 1970, 12.

<sup>51</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, 11.

have only been 15 American films featuring soccer and ten of these films were post-2000.<sup>52</sup>



### **Internal Reasons**

The league's most significant internal problems include the following: the dominance of international players and the lack of an identifiable American star; hasty expansion into markets which were not ready for soccer; the Cosmos' negative influence on the other franchises' soaring payrolls; competition from indoor soccer; and lastly, the failure of soccer on major network American television. These problems pushed the league close to financial ruin and led to its collapse after the 1984 season.

One of the major reasons that the NASL failed to become a major American sports league was that the league was comprised primarily of foreign players. This negatively affected the league by reinforcing the stigma that soccer was a foreign sport and also was detrimental to the development of American players. The domination of the league by international players was unprecedented for a major American sports league during this time period. In 1978, the most successful year in terms of attendance 77 percent of the players were from outside the United States or Canada.<sup>53</sup> Although each team had American players, very few were given significant playing time. J.R. Reed of *Sports Illustrated* observed in 1979 that "With all 24 teams in action, only 55 of the 264 starters were North Americans...21 of the 55 were Canadians...There were only 24 homegrown U.S. players, an average of one per team."<sup>54</sup> American players responded to the foreign dominance of the league with disappointment and ire. "NASL doesn't mean

---

<sup>52</sup> "Sports in Movies," 3 Jan. 2008, "<http://www.sportsinmovies.com/>"

<sup>53</sup> Colin Jose, *NASL: A Complete Record of the North American Soccer League*, 14.

<sup>54</sup> J.D. Reed, "Tea Party Brewing in the NASL" *Sports Illustrated*, 6 August 1979, 46.

North American Soccer League, It means Non-American soccer league.” bemoaned Nick Owcharuk, an American third-string goalkeeper for the Tulsa Roughnecks.<sup>55</sup> “Experience was spelled European.” recalled former New York Cosmos Goalkeeper Ship Messing. J.D. Reed wrote, “Except in poverty-level franchises, you can forget about the Americanization of the NASL.”<sup>56</sup>

With such a large percentage of the international players, American players were denied the experience necessary to compete at the national level and thereby generate more interest in soccer by making it to the World Cup. After the United States national team (which was composed of mainly NASL players) suffered an abysmal 6-0 defeat at the hands, or rather the feet, of the French national team, the lack of homegrown development was clearly noticeable. American goalkeeper Arnie Mausser commented after the game that, “Our players get such little playing time in the NASL because foreigners dominate the game. It’ll be a long time before we’re up to France’s level.”<sup>57</sup> The NASL seemed willing to address this problem, with plans as early as 1975 to reduce the number of international players to only two per team by the 1985 season, ironically the last for the NASL.<sup>58</sup>

With so many foreign players composing the core of every NASL team, it was difficult for American players to develop any kind of household-name recognition other than Pelé. There simply was not an American soccer hero for fans to look up to. As Hank Nuwer stated, “Foreign superstars have helped put soccer into the minds of American

---

<sup>55</sup> J.D. Reed, “Tea Party Brewing in the NASL,” 46.

<sup>56</sup> J.D. Reed, “Not Settling for Hamburger,” *Sports Illustrated*, 26 March 1979, 40.

<sup>57</sup> J.D. Reed, “Merci, we needed that.” *Sports Illustrated*, 14 May 1979, 63.

<sup>58</sup> Melissa, Ludtke, “Soccer is getting a Toehold,” 66.

youth, but it's going to take an American-born superstar to put it into their hearts."<sup>59</sup>

Sports articles made the search for a homegrown superstar a continual theme. Gwilym S. Brown remarked on the all-too-elusive American star in an article about American prospect Kyle Rote Jr., "Rote remains only a hope, albeit a promising one, because no one has yet discovered a way to produce an instant American soccer star."<sup>60</sup> The elusive American soccer star would never surface in the NASL.

Another major reason for the NASL's downfall was expansion, which was both poorly planned and premature. During the 1978 season the NASL hastily decided to expand from eighteen to twenty-four teams.<sup>61</sup> Contemporary observers frequently questioned this decision. In a *Sport* magazine article, "Soccer and the Ghost of Christmas yet to come," Jerry Izenberg questioned the decision for the NASL to expand to smaller-market cities such as Memphis, San Diego, and Rochester when they had not even fully captured the markets in larger cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and Toronto.<sup>62</sup> Instead of focusing upon building support for the teams within these larger markets, the league felt it could ride on the success experienced by the Cosmos and expand into smaller markets. "We had no business being in San Antonio, Texas, Jacksonville, Florida, Las Vegas, Calgary, Hawaii..." claimed former television commentator Paul Gardner.<sup>63</sup> These smaller markets were not conducive to professional soccer and failed to support financially many of the new clubs. Sportswriter Hal Quinn harshly criticized the

---

<sup>59</sup> Hank Nuwer, "Soccermania," 95.

<sup>60</sup> Gwilym S. Brown, "Learning the Game by Rote," *Sports Illustrated*, 6 August 1973, 30.

<sup>61</sup> Steve Holroyd, "The Year in American Soccer – 1978," 27 October 2003, "<http://home.att.net/~nasl/nasl.htm>"

<sup>62</sup> Jerry Izenberg, "Soccer and the Ghost of Christmas yet to come," *Sport*, April 1978, 77.

<sup>63</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

NASL for expanding to cities such as Edmonton, where fewer than 7,500 fans, on average, attended games.<sup>64</sup> This resulted in the development of franchises re-locating from city to city and eventually completely folding which greatly destabilized the league.

The addition of more teams forced the league to schedule more games. The schedule went from 250 games in 1977 to 360 games in 1979. The excessive number of games included a weekday game played on Wednesday nights, which contributed to a decline in the league's overall attendance. Alex Yannis pointed out in a 1978 *New York Times* article that the average attendance was down 6% from the previous season, but if the expansion franchises were taken out of this equation there would actually be an increase of 3%.<sup>65</sup>

Expansion also contributed to the dilution of the talent in the league. Former Toronto Blizzard general manager, Clive Toye explained why the decision was so harmful to the balance of the league:

Before 1978, we'd had six good clubs, six were okay and six that were rubbish. We felt we needed to get rid of the last six, either by getting new ownership if the city was right or getting the team out of the city. Phil was going off on the parallel path of expansion. We presented our plan, which was contraction, and he presented his idea of expansion. With six new franchises paying \$3 million, the idea of having \$18 million to spread around had been too much to the owners. I still think it was a mistake. Instead of having two-thirds of our teams performing acceptably we now had 50 per cent that were not.<sup>66</sup>

Toye summed up the situation accurately: as the league had greatly enhanced its quality of play after Pelé's arrival in 1975, it had then taken a step in the opposite direction. "It was a negative impact because you had people owning the teams who couldn't afford to players who had no business playing professional soccer, and the quality itself wasn't

---

<sup>64</sup> Hal Quinn, "Hard Times for the Game of the Decade," *Macleans*, 7 June 1982, 95.

<sup>65</sup> Alex Yannis, "N.A.S.L.: Too Much, Too Soon?" *New York Times*, 9 July 1978, S3.

<sup>66</sup> Clive Toye, interview by David Tossel, *Playing for Uncle Sam* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2003), 218.

what it was.” expressed Lee Stern.<sup>67</sup> Jim Trecker called the expansion a “fatal virus to the league,” and pointed to the same consequences that Toye mentioned.<sup>68</sup> Expansion also created a greater divide between the wealthier teams and small-market teams, a problem epitomized by the dominance of the New York Cosmos.

Ironically it would be the team that helped elevate the NASL into the national spotlight that also played a considerable role in the demise of the league. As the New York Cosmos made their remarkable rise to one of the world’s most recognizable professional sports teams, it became apparent their overall influence on the league was becoming decidedly negative. With the signing of Pelé in 1975, the Cosmos had begun a trend among the NASL’s wealthier teams that would eventually be one of the main reasons for the demise of the league; they shelled out millions of dollars for foreign stars, which other teams began to emulate.

The Cosmos were able to spend excessive amounts of money on players because they were owned by Warner Communications. Warner owned film and television studios, recording studios, and even the video game company Atari, so purchasing an international soccer star was not going to bankrupt their operations by any means. “Warner bought big names for big bucks and promoted the hell out of them,” as Stephen Singer said in *Sport*.<sup>69</sup> Their payroll dwarfed those of the other NASL teams. In 1977 the average salary of a Cosmos player was \$20,000, more than twice the league average.<sup>70</sup> The discrepancy between the Cosmos and the other teams in the NASL was characterized by an article in *Sport* magazine that pointed out that the Cosmos played in the luxurious.

---

<sup>67</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

<sup>68</sup> Trecker interview

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Singer, “Bizarre, Brawling Cosmos,” 69.

<sup>70</sup> Stephen Singer, “Bizarre, Brawling Cosmos,” 70.

brand new Giants Stadium, whereas the Rochester franchise played their games on a converted high-school football field.<sup>71</sup> This also meant a competitive imbalance in the league, as teams could not afford to purchase the same quality of players as the Cosmos. This imbalance was clearly demonstrated by the Cosmos three Soccer Bowl victories in four years between 1977 and 1980 seasons. Their advantage over the league was even recognized by the team after they signed Dutch star Johann Cruyff, but decided to give him to the Los Angeles Aztecs to “create more competition in the league,” according to former Cosmos general manager Rafael de la Sierra.<sup>72</sup>

Many of the former executives in the NASL attributed the Cosmos high spending as a critical factor in the downfall of the league. John Best, the former general manager of the Vancouver Whitecaps recalled that “The Cosmos situation was not compatible with where the league was at that time. The basic fact was that franchises could not support their payrolls and that was really the demise of the league.”<sup>73</sup>

Former commissioner Phil Woosnam reiterated this sentiment:

They created enormous things for us, but brought a lot of concerns, too. We couldn't stop them from trying to build overnight but the net effect was that costs and salaries were rising and there were disgruntled people everywhere. Since then there have been ideas like salary caps, but there was no legal way for us to do it then.<sup>74</sup>

Contemporary observers at the time were well aware that the Cosmos' high spending approach would hurt the NASL in the long run. J.D. Reed lamented in *Sports Illustrated*: “In a league badly in need of a counterweight to the Cosmos, many teams are suddenly seeing virtue in chaos and in the multinational roster approach and are opening their

---

<sup>71</sup> Jerry Izenberg, “Soccer and the Ghost of Christmas yet to come,” 77.

<sup>72</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 164.

<sup>73</sup> John Best, interview by David Tossel, *Playing for Uncle Sam*, 211.

<sup>74</sup> Phil Woosnam, interview by David Tossel, *Playing for Uncle Sam*, 211

checkbooks.”<sup>75</sup> Thereby, instead of steadily building up player salaries, teams in the NASL were forced to quickly raise their payrolls to levels they could not afford. This was a dilemma, as teams were forced to pay more than they had on international stars, which put them in the red. Teams that failed to spend money on international players felt they would not be able to compete with the Cosmos. Dallas Tornado Coach Al Miller, who declared, “If I can make all these foreigners play together, we’ll never be embarrassed by the Cosmos again.”<sup>76</sup> The most troubling aspect of the league’s overspending was that in many cases the international players that teams were signing to large contracts were not true stars. Most were aging former stars whose sole motive was to make quick money at the end of their careers. Clive Toye was adamant in his condemnation of these players: “They cost people bloody fortunes. The owners didn’t understand that if Pele was worth \$2.8 million, that Gerd Muller wasn’t worth \$1.5 million or even \$100,000. In the later days, rosters were full of overpaid, overweight non superstars.”<sup>77</sup> Thereby franchises paid excessive amounts of money for players who did not and could not generate the interest in their teams necessary to be financially successful.

Another problem for the league was that the Cosmos became the league’s “golden boys,” receiving far more media attention than the other teams. This might be understandable, as the Cosmos featured the most foreign superstars and played in one of the nation’s largest media markets, but it was not healthy for the league. *Sports Illustrated* reported in 1977 that the Cosmos’ home attendance accounted for nearly a

---

<sup>75</sup> J.D. Reed, “Not Settling for Hamburger,” 38.

<sup>76</sup> J.D. Reed, “Not Settling for Hamburger,” 40.

<sup>77</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 251.

sixth of the league's total.<sup>78</sup> Stephen Singer reported, "Everyone covered the Cosmos. § from Howard Cosell to representatives of Swedish TV, *Staats Zeitung*, *Carta de Espana*, the London *Daily Express*, *Aufbau*, *Agence France Presse*, *The Village Voice*, and the *Deaf American*."<sup>79</sup> It was obvious that the league's other teams did not receive this kind of media attention. The plethora of stars, high attendance rates, and frequent coverage gave the Cosmos an aura of being above the league. These feelings were expressed by Clive Gammon of *Sports Illustrated* who wrote: "...behind all the bluster was the implication that the Cosmos club was bigger than the league, that only the Cosmos gave the league 'credibility.'"<sup>80</sup> The article also concluded "ABC might be more than a little worried about its Soccer Bowl ratings next Saturday when Vancouver faces the Tampa Bay Rowdies. And more than likely Giants Stadium, site of the final, wouldn't be sold out."<sup>81</sup> The article revealed the feelings of dependence that the NASL had on the Cosmos in attracting both television ratings and attendance for the league. Jim Trecker would disagree with these assessments when asked if the Cosmos were "above the league." He replied that: "Honestly, no more so than the Yankees, Packers, Oilers, Celtics did in their respective sports. I do think there was a bit of a smug 'just try and keep up with us' attitude within the Cosmos family, but the publicity value of the team alone drove the league's visibility." However, it seems evident that the over-emphasis on the Cosmos severely weakened the league.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> J.D. Reed, "Not Settling for Hamburger," 39.

<sup>79</sup> Stephen Singer, "Bizarre, Brawling Cosmos," 70.

<sup>80</sup> Clive Gammon, "It was a Cataclysm of Cosmic Proportion," *Sports Illustrated*, September 1979, 30.

<sup>81</sup> Clive Gammon, "It was a Cataclysm of Cosmic Proportion," 33.

<sup>82</sup> Even in researching this thesis there is an emphasis on the Cosmos, not only because they were so integral to the league's success and failure, but because there is a wealth of information on the team compared to the rest of the teams in the league.

The influence of the Cosmos owners compared to the other owners in the NASL emphasizes how important strong ownership is to the success of a developing sports league. A select few owners such as the Time Warner Corporation, Lamar Hunt, and Jack Kent Cook had the resources to properly invest in players, coaching, and management by taking heavy financial losses. However, the majority of the owners in the league did not have the capital to make large investments without bankrupting themselves and certainly did not have the resources to continue on during prolonged periods of financial failure. The Tulsa Roughnecks found themselves in such a dire financial situation that their fans donated \$65,000 to the team through a promotion by a local radio station.<sup>83</sup> The financial problems of Tulsa exemplify the problems faced by the majority of the owners in the league. The public donations in Tulsa were not a common occurrence, most teams that faced financial problems folded or moved to another market. In comparison, the NFL was able to endure early periods of turmoil because many of their owners were wealthy enough to absorb large financial losses and continue to invest in their teams. From 1933 to 1945, during a critical early period in the league's existence, only one NFL team folded because of financial difficulties, a far greater success rate than the NASL.<sup>84</sup> There was also a great deal of civic boosterism among the early franchises in the NFL, as booster clubs and fans donated their own money to assure their clubs' financial stability: just as the people of Tulsa did for the Roughnecks.<sup>85</sup> In the case of the NASL, both the dearth of strong owners who could absorb large financial losses and the lack of widespread civic boosterism greatly weakened the stability of the league.

---

<sup>83</sup> John Ferguson, "Samuels Committed to NASL's Survival" *Tulsa Daily World*, 18 November 1983, F-1.

<sup>84</sup> Craig R. Coenen, *From Sandlots to the Super Bowl: The National Football League, 1920-1967* (The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville: 2005), 81-5, 135.

<sup>85</sup> Craig R. Coenen, *From Sandlots to the Super Bowl*, 35.

The emergence of indoor soccer leagues in the early 80's presented the NASL with competition at the worst possible moment. The Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL), the brainchild of Philadelphia lawyer, Earl Foreman, was formed in 1978 and began to make an impact on American sports in the early 80's.<sup>86</sup> Indoor soccer was a hybrid version of the outdoor game, as only six players per team played at once and fields were reduced to the size of hockey rinks. As indoor soccer decreased the number of players and the size of the field, it also greatly increased the amount of scoring. During the 1981 season, the NASL only averaged 1.8 goals per game compared to the MISL which averaged 5.3.<sup>87</sup> Indoor soccer is similar to hockey in that players can be continuously subbed in and out of the game and the ball can be kicked off of the boards surrounding the field. Games also consisted of four fifteen-minute quarters (like in professional basketball) instead of the traditional two forty-five minute halves in the outdoor game.<sup>88</sup> High scoring and rules similar to traditional American sports attracted fans toward indoor soccer and away from the NASL.

There arose a general feeling that the indoor game was more "American" and exciting than the NASL's outdoor version. J.D. Reed wrote in *Sports Illustrated* that the indoor game "makes the outdoor version look pale. There's lots of action, plenty of scoring and some surprising sellouts."<sup>89</sup> Tex Maule, another *Sports Illustrated* writer, was also adamant in acknowledging that the indoor game "leads to more action and

---

<sup>86</sup> Steve Holroyd, "The Year in American Soccer - 1978"

<sup>87</sup> Steve Holroyd, "The Year in American Soccer - 1981," 27 October 2003, "<http://home.att.net/~nasl/nasl.htm>"

<sup>88</sup> "MISL History," 6 May 2006, "<http://www.oursportscentral.com/misl/history.html>"

<sup>89</sup> J.D. Reed, "They get their Kicks on a Hockey Rink" *Sports Illustrated*, 18 Feb. 1982, 22.

scoring.”<sup>90</sup> “This is the game Americans want,” stated league founder Earl Foreman.<sup>91</sup>

The new novelty of the indoor league created a buzz in American cities and the league was quickly compared with the NASL. “How, for instance, can the Steamers draw sellout and near-sellout crowds for Major Indoor Soccer League games when the old St. Louis Stars of the NASL, playing outdoors, were driven by yawning apathy...”<sup>92</sup> Sportswriter Jonathon Maslow further endorsed the indoor game as superior to outdoor soccer, as he exclaimed, “Frankly, I admit to moments of ‘soft focus’ during the endless midfield maneuvering of soccer, but found the indoor game enthralling.”<sup>93</sup>

The NASL seized on the opportunity for more exposure and created an indoor season for the league in 1982. However, as sportswriter Ken Becker noticed. “None of the NASL teams expect to make money from the indoor season. Not surprising, since none made money from the outdoor season either.”<sup>94</sup> This sentiment was reiterated by Vancouver Whitecaps president Tony Waiters who blamed indoor soccer for the team’s inability to break even. Waiters also claimed that by playing indoor soccer the Whitecaps “lost credibility” in the opinion of Vancouver fans, whom he labeled as “traditionalists.” “We had stories and headlines in the papers here saying, ‘Would the Vancouver Canucks play floor hockey in the summer? The B.C. Lions touch football in the winter?’” Waiters further claimed that the league threatened to heavily fine the Whitecaps or disband the franchise if they did not agree to play indoor soccer.<sup>95</sup> Waiters’ comments reveal the financial burden the NASL placed upon its teams by forcing them to participate in indoor

---

<sup>90</sup> Tex Maule, “The Sport that came in from the Cold” *Sports Illustrated*, 3 March 1975. 22.

<sup>91</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 141.

<sup>92</sup> J.D. Reed, “They get their Kicks on a Hockey Rink,” 22.

<sup>93</sup> Jonathon Maslow, “Indoor Games—Thugs, Giants, and Women,” *Saturday Review*, 15 March 1980. 49.

<sup>94</sup> Ken Becker, “Playing Hockey with a very Large Puck,” *Macleans*, December 1980, 44.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Lewis, “Whitecaps are Thumbs Down to Indoor Soccer,” *Vancouver Courier*, June 1980.

soccer. They also demonstrate how the league's decision to play indoor soccer invited negative comparisons by the press who quickly inferred that it would be absurd for other "professional" sports to play a distorted version of their game during the off-season. A 1982 article in *Sport* magazine predicted the demise of the outdoor NASL because of competition from indoor soccer.<sup>96</sup> The presence of indoor soccer had many questioning the validity of a professional outdoor soccer league in the United States.

Jim Trecker agreed that indoor soccer damaged the NASL. Trecker described how the emergence of indoor soccer pressured the NASL into wasting time, energy, and money on their own indoor league:

There was a fear that the MISL could get into marketplaces with its slam-bang, high-speed faux soccer (my feeling), so we ran out immediately to get contracts with arenas, thereby: a) locking MISL out of some cities and b) committing us to play indoor. I believe it stretched us thin, caused us to stray from our core product, and diluted the mission of the NASL. Certainly, in retrospect, it didn't succeed on the NASL level. Players were tired out, staff was exhausted 12 months a year, and there was just too much NASL soccer.<sup>97</sup>

At a critical time when the NASL was losing credibility due to frequent franchise dislocation and financial woes, the introduction of another professional soccer league, albeit indoors, was completely deflating to the league. The media approval of the league as being more exciting put a stamp on the NASL's ticket to dissolution. Worse yet, the NASL made itself look even less credible by conforming to the formula used by the MISL and creating a rival indoor league. This completely undermined the NASL's hopes of achieving success through their outdoor league.

In 1978 the NASL had finally signed a two-year deal with ABC television that guaranteed nine live games, including the Soccer Bowl, during the 1979 and 1980

---

<sup>96</sup> Wayne Coffey, "The Best Rivalry in Soccer: Indoor vs. Outdoor," *Sport*, June 1982, 52.

<sup>97</sup> Trecker Interview

seasons. "Television was crucial. It had always been a thorn in our side and when we finally signed a deal with ABC it looked like we were getting somewhere." said Woosnam.<sup>98</sup> However, problems with television would contribute to the NASL's failure in attracting an American audience. The first problem was that Americans were accustomed to sports, such as basketball and football, which have a number of breaks in play during the games. During these artificial breaks, such as timeouts and between kick-offs, the network could switch to commercials. Soccer only has one break at half time. Thereby, television networks could not sufficiently take breaks from the game to show commercials without cutting away from the live action. A number of times, a pivotal moment in the game, such as a goal, would occur when a commercial break was taken and ABC would then have to re-air the clip. Another time the referee was clearly seen persuading an injured player to continue to stay down, so that the network would have time to air its commercial break. Trecker recalled that "...back then there were no 'clock wraps' to let sponsors get their ID on TV without interrupting play; we broke away from the action, making telecasts pretty dismal."<sup>99</sup> Another problem was that most television viewing Americans were not familiar with the players, teams, or even soccer in general as previously shown. In considering this cultural barrier, it would have made sense for the NASL to ease into its programming. Instead they aired live games on Saturday afternoons during the summer. An idea by Ed Bleier, the chairman of the NASL's Television Committee makes logical sense in retrospect. He stated:

I had a very different view of our television potential than the other team and club members. They wanted an instant network contract and I said we will go on television and fail, then they will blame soccer... I wanted us on anthology

---

<sup>98</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 165.

<sup>99</sup> Trecker interview

shows, like the *Wide World of Sports* with standings, players, saves, goals, player of the week to build all the intrinsics of the sport and only put the championship game on television. I was overruled. I got out voted.<sup>100</sup>

The contention has been made that ABC did not put enough effort into their television broadcasts of the NASL. However, Jim Spence of ABC Sports insisted: “We put tremendous effort into the NASL. We had top flight productions and promotion.” Lee Stern emphatically disagreed: “Television was handled poorly by ABC and the league itself. They were playing games at 12 o’ clock in the middle of July, no one was watching!” Once again the large foreign presence in the league was cited as a reason for soccer’s failure on television. “I don’t think soccer’s really caught on yet and I’m not sure it ever will on a large scale. I don’t think Americans can associate with foreign players.” was the explanation of Chet Forde, former director of creative services for ABC.<sup>101</sup>

After one season, ABC decided that it had already given up on NASL. “We only had a 2.7 rating, roughly 2 million homes.” said Spence. In comparison the NFL’s television ratings for ABC were at 20.8 for a similar number of games.<sup>102</sup> It was obvious that Americans simply were not watching professional soccer. Without the legitimacy of a television contract there was no way the league would be accepted as an American sport. During a time when the league needed to grow, ABC’s decision to cancel their contract effectively stifled that growth. The NASL missed a tremendous opportunity when it failed to capture a consistent television audience. The NFL’s easy adaptability to television and the revenue it gained from the television networks were a major reason why the league became so successful. It also allowed the league to build a fan base

---

<sup>100</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 167.

<sup>101</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 188.

<sup>102</sup> “NFL.com.” June 3 2007, <[www.nfl.com](http://www.nfl.com)>

throughout the United States.<sup>103</sup> In retrospect, the failure to sustain a long-term television contract was one of the most significant reasons for the demise of the league. Trecker went as far as stating that the failure to reach a television deal was "...the biggest single factor in the financial instability of the league and its franchises' ultimate collapse."<sup>104</sup>

### **Analysis of Newspapers**

There are millions of sports fans in America who actively participate in shaping American sports culture by attending live events, watching games and analysis on television, and through reading sports magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated* and *Sport*. Another major way that Americans actively participate in sports culture is by reading the sports section in newspapers. "Soccer was the least important sport in the pantheon of American sports," stated Lawrie Mifflin of the *New York Daily News*. "Sports editors treated soccer as if it were a leper colony," said David Hershey, also of the *New York Daily News*.<sup>105</sup> These quotes referred to the media's lack of acceptance or promotion of soccer in America. To gain a true sense of media coverage given to NASL teams in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, and New York, the sports pages of major newspapers from each region were analyzed during the summer of 1978 when the league was experiencing a surge in attendance and popularity. The newspapers evaluated include *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and *The New York Times*. A major Washington D.C. area newspaper, *The Washington Post*, is also considered. Through looking at the coverage granted to

---

<sup>103</sup> Craig R. Coenen, *From Sandlots to the Super Bowl*, 9, 151-4.

<sup>104</sup> Trecker Interview

<sup>105</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 35.

NASL teams in these newspapers a number of conclusions can be made about the true reception the NASL received by the media and the American public.

In terms of comparison it is clear that the NASL did not receive the same consistency of coverage as sports such as tennis, golf, and especially baseball. The first facet to identify is the number of times an NASL article appeared on the front page of the sports section compared to other sports. Clearly, the front page is where sports editors place the stories they feel to be the most important as it is the most read page of the sports section. In *The Dallas Morning News* at least one Major League Baseball article appeared on the front page of the sports section 56 times. In comparison an article on the front page featuring the NFL appeared fifteen times, the National Basketball Association appeared twelve times, golf appeared thirteen times, and tennis appeared eight times. Articles featuring the NASL only appeared on the front page five times during this time period. In analyzing the *The New York Times* during the summer of 1978 a similar discrepancy in coverage is revealed. There were 90 front-page articles dedicated to Major League Baseball during a 70-day summer time period in 1978. An article about tennis appeared 29 times, with golf following close behind with 24. The NFL also appeared 18 times and horse racing appeared 13 times on the front page. The NASL only appeared eight times. Between the two Chicago newspapers, an NASL article only appeared twice, both times in the *Chicago Tribune*.

Another important place to look is at the number of feature articles NASL teams received compared to other hometown sports teams in their newspapers. In this case the Dallas Tornados received 35 feature articles, which is a significant amount of coverage, but not nearly the 60 feature articles written about baseball, or the 48 and 46 articles

written about golf and tennis respectively. Many of these articles were not shy about revealing the trouble the Tornado was having in attracting spectators. Articles frequently detailed the club's dramatic drop in attendance, from 16,000 the previous season to 9,000 during mid-July of 1978, and its ongoing competition with the Texas Rangers Baseball team, who were selling more tickets at a cheaper price.<sup>106</sup> These were not fabricated tales, but merely observations and the actual analysis of games were quite good. In terms of feature articles, baseball with 110, tennis with 53, and golf with 45, dominated *The New York Times*. However, there were 35 feature articles devoted to the NASL, more features than the NFL, horse racing, boxing, and auto racing. Both *The Dallas Morning News* and *The New York Times* both provided comprehensive coverage. Their articles were usually large and contained game analysis, player and coach interviews, and previews for upcoming games. Sometimes the articles were also more of a human interest variety, a positive sign as it showed a willingness to attract fans through getting to know the team as people and not just as players. In looking at the features in the *Chicago Sun-Times* over a span of twenty days there were 20 full pages devoted to Major League Baseball coverage. In comparison the NASL did not have any full pages, but did have ten feature articles. Tennis and golf both had 12 feature articles each and the NBA had thirteen. Therefore, the coverage allotted to the NASL, although certainly not as significant as baseball, was about the same as other summer sports (the NBA finals stretch into the middle of June). The *Chicago Tribune* had 18 pages devoted to Major League Baseball coverage and 59 feature articles about either of the cities' two baseball teams. In comparison there were 31 feature articles for the NASL. Tennis was the only other sport

---

<sup>106</sup> Sam Blair, "Club Buckles 'Seat' Belt for Tornado" *The Dallas Morning News*, 23 July 1978, 4B. Temple Pouncey, "Tors Taking Town Stormily," *The Dallas Morning News*, July 20, 1978, 4B.

to have more, with 33 feature articles, with golf close behind with 30 feature articles. Many of these articles were distinctly negative, giving continual attention to the sparse crowds which attended Chicago Sting games. The negativity of the articles also reflected the team's performance on the field, which was pitiful.

*The New York Times* was also the only paper that allowed a glimpse into what the readers' thought about the NASL. Six times the league was the subject of a readers' letter in a "Mailbox" segment. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1978, Robert Pollock Jr. wrote in to express his anger at the continual commercials that interrupted his Cosmos telecasts, as he felt he was missing out on goals and exciting runs.<sup>107</sup> Norman Arbriza reiterated these sentiments when his letter to the "Mailbox" appeared on June 11, 1978, in which he stated "...there were millions like him who are fed up with the commercials interrupting Cosmos games."<sup>108</sup> Another "Mailbox" letter was sent in by Jaimie Morozowski who felt that Cosmos coach Eddie Firmani was misinterpreting the fans' chanting during the game: "...the basic point that Firmani misses is that the fans love their Cosmos and want to spend an enjoyable few hours with them."<sup>109</sup> These examples and the other letters demonstrate that fans in New York were passionate about their team and reveal that the Cosmos were beginning to become embedded into New York sports culture. *The New York Times* was also the only paper to provide statistics for the Cosmos and for the league, such as number of goals scored and saves made by goalkeepers. These statistics

---

<sup>107</sup> Robert Pollock Jr., "Mailbox," *The New York Times*, 4 June 1978, Sec 5, 2.

<sup>108</sup> "Mailbox," *The New York Times*, 11 June 1978, Sec 5, pg 2.

<sup>109</sup> Jaimie Morozowski, "Mailbox: Cosmos Coach Misreads Sentiments of Fans," *The New York Times*. 2 July 1978, S2.

appeared ten times over the course of the summer and are an indication that the New York media was beginning to provide more comprehensive of the league.

To emphasize the amount of coverage given to all of the teams in the league, not just the local team, is a good indication of how deeply embedded a sport is into the culture of its society. *The Dallas Morning News* had consistent coverage of the league in a section entitled “NASL Roundup,” which gave scores and game summaries for all of the NASL teams and not just the Tornado. This section appeared 25 times during the summer period analyzed (61 days), so it appeared roughly forty percent of the time. *The New York Times* was comprehensive with the Cosmos, but more lackluster with their coverage of the rest of the NASL. However, they did have a number of feature articles on rival teams and players in the league. Both the Chicago papers had little more than the game results in the Statistics page and these only appeared nine times in the *Tribune*, as well as a few very minute articles on the Cosmos. The lack of overall league coverage is an indication that the NASL never really entered the consciousness of Chicago sports fans.

*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* is a fascinating newspaper to look at during the summer of 1978. Atlanta had previously had two NASL teams, both of which folded due to poor attendance. During this summer Atlanta was granted another NASL team, the floundering Colorado Caribous franchise, which would begin play the following year as the Atlanta Chiefs. By looking at the amount of coverage the city afforded to the NASL the summer before it was granted a team, it can be determined whether it was a good idea to bring a team back to the Atlanta market again. Over three months, or 92 days in the summer of 1978, a major league baseball article appeared on the front page of the sports

section 73 times. Comparatively an NFL article appeared 25 times, an NBA article 16 times; a golf article appeared 21 times, a tennis article appeared 15 times, and a boxing article 10 times. The NASL only received five front-page articles during the entire summer. The paper also dedicated 125 full pages of coverage to Major League Baseball, as well as 28 and 16 to golf and tennis respectively. In striking contrast the NASL did not receive one full page of coverage and only received nine feature articles the entire summer. The most coverage the league received was its standings on the Statistics Page, but even these only appeared 43 times, not even half of the total days in the summer. In looking at the coverage the league was given in Atlanta, it does not seem that Atlanta was a market that soccer would thrive in. It is also a reflection of the league's inability in some areas to embed itself into the sports culture of American society. Judging from this coverage it seemed that sports fans in Atlanta maintained only a minimal interest in soccer. In retrospect the league should have been much more cautious in moving teams to markets such as Atlanta. An interesting avenue of further study would be to see how well received the NASL was in other markets where the league had already failed or soccer had no precedent. An educated guess would be that it would receive the same kind of minimal coverage.

The last paper to evaluate is *The Washington Post*, which was examined over a shorter time span, during the summer of 1980. The coverage afforded to the NASL from this paper seems like a bit of an anomaly, but it also must be taken into account that Washington D.C. did not have a baseball team (America's primary summer sport) during this time period. The NASL appeared on the front page of the sports section 14 times, just as many as both baseball and golf. There were also 14 features articles devoted to the

NASL more than any other sport, but baseball, which featured 47 articles. The coverage of the NASL was very extensive in the *Post*, most of the articles contained in depth analysis and included interviews with coaches and players.

In turning back to the public relations surveys, a major problem that many of the teams faced was maintaining consistent road coverage. New York, New England,

Portland, Tulsa, and Washington were the only five teams whose P.R. directors reported that the media traveled with their teams on a regular basis. The majority of newspapers in NASL cities did not seem to take the league seriously enough to consider dispatching writers permanently on the road. This is evidenced by a variety of complaints that P.R. directors made in their surveys. Many of the teams from the other 18 cities would be joined by the media only on in-state or regional trips and for playoff games, but rarely for an extended period of time. Both San Diego and Memphis had no members of the local media travel with them the entire year, while the Philadelphia Fury only had one newspaper send a reporter to their playoff game in Detroit. To ensure that their teams would receive *any* road coverage many teams were forced to call or wire in scores and reports to local newspapers themselves. The deficiency in coverage afforded to road matches was a clear indication that the majority of the American sports media did not consider the NASL worthy of receiving the same attention it granted to other sports.

A telling sign of the league's inability to maintain the consistent coverage allotted to other professional sports can further be seen by looking at the goals for the following (1979) season of the twenty-three teams who filled out surveys. Only one team, the Tulsa Roughnecks, felt that the media had done such an effective job covering their team that they dismissed any possibility of receiving more coverage. The other twenty-two

teams surveyed had a variety of goals. The most significant goal, which more than half of the teams mentioned, was to increase television coverage. Other goals that were repeatedly mentioned by multiple teams were to increase the number of feature articles in newspapers, maintain more consistent coverage in newspapers, to increase coverage on the road, and to improve radio coverage.

Another goal that a number of teams stated was to increase coverage in non-sports areas of the media. Diane Olson of the Houston Hurricane wanted the team to appear in the “lifestyle section of the newspaper, not just the sports page.” The Tampa Bay Rowdies also aspired for coverage beyond the sports page in business sections and specialty publications. The Seattle Sounders expressed similar sentiments. That teams needed to aspire for coverage in outlets other than the sports media is a sign that they were not yet receiving adequate attention from fans and media alike.<sup>110</sup>

Through looking at the newspaper coverage allotted to the NASL a number of conclusions can be made. The first is that although the NASL was beginning to establish itself in certain markets, particularly in New York and Washington, the coverage it was given was still marginal compared to other sports. Sports editors did not consider the NASL to be worthy of the same kind of headlines and overall coverage that other sports garnered, unless something spectacular or unusual was occurring in the league. This is further evidenced by the amount of writers sent on the road with NASL teams. Editors simply did not feel NASL games were of significant newsworthiness. The lack of overall league coverage was another indication that the league had not permeated into American sports culture. Fans might be interested in their own hometown team, but there did not

---

<sup>110</sup> *Kick Magazine* Public Relations Surveys, 1978

seem to be any real desire for fans to immerse themselves into following the rest of the league, with the exception at times of the Cosmos. The NASL did receive almost daily coverage in most media markets, but realistically the league was still far from becoming a permanent fixture in the consciousness of Americans the way baseball, basketball, or football had.<sup>111</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The downfall of the NASL could have been avoided if the league had foreseen a number of their most critical problems and planned accordingly. The league could have set up a farm system to develop young American players and limited the amount of foreigners on the playing field at an earlier date. They could have imposed a salary-cap on the Cosmos and other wealthier teams, which would have forced them to build their payrolls at a slower, steadier rate. They also could have forgone expansion until the league was fully stable and mature. However, even with careful planning, it is my contention that a number of intangible factors would have had to occur for the NASL to actually succeed. The two intangible factors that could have altered history were if the United States would have hosted the 1986 World Cup and if a true American soccer star would have developed.

Although it has not been widely considered, the NASL could have been given a lifeline if FIFA had decided to award the 1986 World Cup to the United States instead of Mexico. Colombia was originally scheduled to host the tournament, but when the

---

<sup>111</sup> The papers analyzed for this segment of the paper include: *The Chicago Tribune*. 1 June-17 July 1978. *The Chicago-Sun Times*. 1-22 June 1978. *The Washington Post*. 1-20 June 1980. *The Dallas Morning News*. 1 June-1 August 1978. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. 1 June 1-31 August 1978. *The New York Times*. 1 June-16 August 1978.

Colombian Soccer Federation declared in 1982 that the nation's facilities would not be adequate for such an event, FIFA were forced to choose a new host nation. Mexico, which had hosted the quadrennial International tournament only twelve years earlier in 1970, was chosen again by FIFA to the detriment of the NASL. The excitement surrounding soccer during such a massive tournament could have propelled the spotlight back on the faltering league. In the opinion of Brazilian international Carlos Alberto: "FIFA killed the best market in the world at that time."<sup>112</sup> The 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles revealed a glimpse of what could have been, as a record 101,970 fans attended the final match at the Pasadena Rose Bowl. Soccer even outdrew the traditional favorite event, track and field, by over 300,000 spectators.<sup>113</sup> Major League Soccer's inception shortly after the 1994 World Cup, which was played in the United States, is a testament to the World Cup's ability to stimulate interest in soccer. However the NASL's decreasing attendances and glaring financial problems did little to enhance the United States chances. This is one of the factors that could have greatly increased the NASL's likelihood of survival.

The most decisive factor that would have altered the course of the league is if a true American star developed. This player would have needed to possess both an exceptional ability on the field and the charisma to market the sport to a nation that was reluctant to accept soccer as an "American sport." The league needed a player like a Babe Ruth or a Joe Namath to emerge from the cornfields and become the poster-boy for the sport. However, this American Pelé never emerged and I feel that with this absence of a

---

<sup>112</sup> *Once in a Lifetime*, (Film Documentary)

<sup>113</sup> Gavin Newsham, *Once in a Lifetime*, 246.

true American star coupled with the dire situation the league faced because of its poor planning, the NASL was destined to fade into obscurity.

If professional soccer is to continue to grow in America it will not be through the popularity of the college game. Unlike typical American sports such as football and basketball, there is nowhere in the world where collegiate level soccer is primarily used to develop players. Players are developed through residency programs instituted either by their national soccer federation or by professional teams. The same is true in the United States, where although there is an annual draft of college players by the MLS, the very best young players are still encouraged to forgo college soccer because it is thought to hinder their development. If anything it will be professional soccer that helps the growth and mainstream proliferation of the collegiate soccer.

To achieve the recognition and status of sports such as baseball, basketball, and football, soccer will have to do so on the strength of its domestic league. The most direct way to force the American sports media to pay attention to soccer is for the MLS to consistently draw large attendances to their games, something the league has seemed unable to do thus far. NASCAR's ability to draw large crowds on a consistent basis has to be considered one of the prime reasons that the American sports media has devoted more attention to the sport.

The failure of the NASL was inevitable. The league entered the American "sports space" at a time when traditional American sports such as baseball, football, and basketball had already been established for decades. It was only through the extraordinary skill and charisma of Pelé and the publicity generated by the New York Cosmos that the league began to receive recognition in the United States. However, the

environment was not yet conducive for a permanent soccer league. The majority of Americans simply did not understand soccer, which makes it very difficult to build up a continual fan base for the game. There was also a pervading feeling that soccer was “foreign.” Xenophobic reactions and sensationalized accounts of fan violence from the media did little to persuade Americans to take an interest in the game. Coupled with these cultural barriers the NASL was also rife with internal problems that began to become exposed after Pelé’s retirement. The over-reliance on international players, poorly planned expansion, the lack of balance within the league, the failure of soccer on major network American television, and competition from indoor soccer all combined to seal the fate of the league.

In retrospect, although the league essentially failed in its quest to become America’s permanent professional soccer league, it did leave a legacy that is undoubtedly positive. The true legacy of the NASL is that soccer has continued to be played today at an astonishing rate. There are 17.5 million children in the United States playing soccer. Comparatively, there are only 2.2 million children playing baseball and 260,000 playing football.<sup>114</sup> It is the most popular team sport for children in the United States, a remarkable thought when you consider that the game was hardly even known forty years ago. The success of the MLS and the United States Men’s and Women’s national teams is also derived from the NASL. The league exposed many Americans to soccer for the first time and in doing so can be looked upon as the forbearers for the present state of

---

<sup>114</sup> Laura Hilgers, “Youth Sports Drawing More than Ever,” *cnn.com*, 5 July 2006, “<http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/07/03/rise.kids.sports/index.html>”

American soccer. If professional soccer ever does truly flourish in the United States the NASL must be recognized for its major contribution to this success.

## Works Cited

### Books: \_\_\_\_\_

Coenen, Craig R., *From Sandlots to the Super Bowl: The National Football League, 1920-1967*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2005.

Douglas, Geoffrey, *The Game of Their Lives*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

Foer, Franklin, *How Soccer Explains the World*. New York: Harper, 2004.

Jose, Colin, *NASL: A Complete Record of the North American Soccer League*. Derby, England: Breedon, 1989.

Markovits, Andrei S. and. Hellerman, Steven L., *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Murray, Bill, *The World's Game*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Newsham, Gavin, *Once in a Lifetime: The Incredible Story of the New York Cosmos*. New York: Atlantic Press, 2006.

Tossel, David, *Playing for Uncle Sam*. Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2003.

### Magazine Articles:

Becker, Ken, "Playing Hockey with a very Large Puck," *Macleans*, December 1980, 44.

Brown, Gwilym S., "Quick Somebody, a Pele," *Sports Illustrated*, May 1973, 101.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Learning the Game by Rote," *Sports Illustrated*, 6 August 1973, 30.

Coffey, Wayne, "The Best Rivalry in Soccer: Indoor vs. Outdoor," *Sport*, June 1982, 52.

Gammon, Clive, "It was a Cataclysm of Cosmic Proportion," *Sports Illustrated*, September 1979, 30, 33.

Gardner, Paul, "Fan's Guide to Soccer," *Sport*, June 1979, 38.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Making Soccer an American Sport," *Horizon*, November 1977, 77.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Soccer, American Style," *The New York Times Magazine*, 4 May 1975, 14.

- Hirshey, David, "Soccer's Best is a Dutch Treat," *Sport*, May 1979, 76.
- Izenberg, Jerry, "Soccer and the Ghost of Christmas yet to come," *Sport*. April 1978. 77.
- Ludtke, Melissa, "Soccer is getting a Toehold," *Sports Illustrated*, 30 October 1976. 66.
- Maslow, Jonathon, "Indoor Games—Thugs, Giants, and Women," *Saturday Review*. 15 March 1980, 49.
- Maule, Tex, "Chelsea Almost Won the Cup," *Sports Illustrated*, April 1970. 22.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Soccer is a Frenzy," *Sports Illustrated*, June 1970, 12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Sport that came in from the Cold" *Sports Illustrated*, 3 March 1975. 22.
- Nuwer, Hank, "Soccermania," *The Saturday Evening Post*, October 1979. 55-6, 95.
- Quinn, Hal, "Hard Times for the Game of the Decade," *Macleans*, 7 June 1982, 95.
- Reed, J.D., "Not Settling for Hamburger," *Sports Illustrated*, 26 March 1979. 40.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Merci, we needed that." *Sports Illustrated*, 14 May 1979, 63.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Tea Party Brewing in the NASL" *Sports Illustrated*, 6 August 1979. 46.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "They get their Kicks on a Hockey Rink" *Sports Illustrated*, 18 Feb. 1982. 22.
- Sheed, Wilfred, "This Riotous Isle," *Sports Illustrated*, 21 April, 1969, 78.
- Singer, Stephen, "Bizarre, Brawling Cosmos," *Sport*, April 1978, 70.

### **Newspaper Articles:**

- Blair, Sam, "Club Buckles 'Seat' Belt for Tornado" *The Dallas Morning News*. 23 July 1978, 4B.
- Eskenazi, Gerald, "New Yorkers get two fine Scorers," *The New York Times*, 21 April 1968, S9.
- Ferguson, John, "Samuels Committed to NASL's Survival" *Tulsa Daily World*. 18 November 1983, F-1.

Gammage, Jeff, "Soccer Team Thinks Globally," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 March 2008, p. S 1.

Lewis, Michael, "Whitecaps are Thumbs Down to Indoor Soccer," *Vancouver Courier*, June 1980.

Lipstyle, Robert "Siggy Stritzl is not the Babe, Yet," *The New York Times*, 8 May 1971, p. S 19.

"Mailbox," *The New York Times*, 11 June 1978, Sec 5, pg 2.

Morozowki, Jaimie, "Mailbox: Cosmos Coach Misreads Sentiments of Fans," *The New York Times*, 2 July 1978, S2.

"New U.S. Format for Soccer Plays to Empty Seats," *The New York Times* (May 4, 1969) S27

Pollock Jr., Robert, "Mailbox," *The New York Times*, 4 June 1978, Sec 5, 2.

Pouncey, Temple, "Tors Taking Town Stormily," *The Dallas Morning News*, July 20, 1978, 4B.

"Soccer Can be Deadly," *Atlanta Constitution-Journal*, 26 June 1978, 8.

*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. 1 June 1-31 August 1978.

*The Chicago-Sun Times*. 1-22 June 1978.

*The Chicago Tribune*. 1 June-17 July 1978.

*The Dallas Morning News*. 1 June-1 August 1978.

*The New York Times*. 1 June-16 August 1978.

*The Washington Post*. 1-20 June 1980.

"World Cup Causes Stir," *Chicago Tribune*, 26 June 1978, section 6, 3.

Yannis, Alex, "N.A.S.L.: Too Much, Too Soon?" *The New York Times*, 9 July 1978, S3.

### **Other Sources:**

Laura Hilgers, "Youth Sports Drawing More than Ever," *cnn.com*, 5 July 2006.  
<<http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/07/03/rise.kids.sports/index.html>>

Holroyd, Steve, "The Year in American Soccer – 1978," 27 October 2003.  
<<http://home.att.net/~nasl/nasl.htm>>

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Year in American Soccer – 1981," 27 October 2003.  
<<http://home.att.net/~nasl/nasl.htm>>

Jordalen, Stian, "An Investigation of the Long-term Viability of Major League Soccer, and Soccer as a Sport in the USA," Master of Business Administration, the University of Montana, 1999.

*Kick Magazine* Public Relations Surveys, 1978. Obtained from the archives at the National Soccer Hall of Fame, Oneonta, New York.

Kissinger, Henry "Pele," Time.com. 14 June 1999.  
<<http://www.time.com/time/time100/heroes/profile/pele01.html>>

"MISL History," 6 May 2006. <<http://www.oursportscentral.com/misl/history.html>>

"NASL Homepage," 12 March 2002. <<http://home.att.net/~nasl/nasl.htm>>

"NFL.com." June 3 2007. <[www.nfl.com](http://www.nfl.com)>

*Once in a Lifetime: The Incredible Story of the New York Cosmos*. (Film Documentary)  
Directors: Paul Crowder and John Dowder, Passion Pictures, 2006.

"Sports in Movies," 3 Jan. 2008. <<http://www.sportsinmovies.com/>>

Trecker, Jim, interview by author, 26 June 2007.

# David James Bullock

1991 Buckingham Drive  
Jamison, PA 18929  
215-313-2769  
djb205@lehigh.edu

## Personal:

Date of Birth: May 13, 1983  
Place of Birth: Hartford, Connecticut  
Parents: George and Mary Bullock

## Education:

Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA  
B.A. degree in history, May 2005  
-4- year Varsity tennis player, 3-year team Captain  
-Student Tour Guide

Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA  
M.A. degree in American history, anticipated May 2008  
-3.63 G.P.A.

Delaware Valley College, Doylestown, PA  
Teacher Internship Certification Program, anticipated certification to teach:  
June 2008

## Work Experience:

Angelo's Soccer Corner, Huntingdon Valley, PA  
Sales Associate, June 2007-Present  
-Assisted customers in finding sales products  
-Operated the cash register with proficiency  
-Offered advice and solutions for every-day business problems  
-Re-stocked and took inventory on products  
Contact: Jake Denninger, manager, 215-322-7606

Zoellner Arts Center, Bethlehem, PA

House Assistant Manager, September 2005-April 2007

- Assisted the manager in opening up theaters
- Prepared theaters for that night's show
- Interacted with guests and managed crowd

### Academic Accomplishments and Pursuits:

- Presented a paper at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research in April 2005 on the "Political Influence of the Public Games in Republican Rome," Washington and Lee University
- Dean's List: Fall 2004, Spring 2005, Juniata College
- Currently working on Master's Thesis: "The North American Soccer League in American Sports Culture," anticipated to be finished in April 2008

### Additional Skills:

#### Research:

- Can proficiently use micro-film, scholarly journals and databases, primary and secondary sources, educational films

#### Teaching:

- Will be certified to teach in June 2008
  - Enhanced ability to relate to students
  - Excellent organizational skills
  - Can proficiently structure lessons and educational activities

**END OF  
TITLE**