

Saperstein Resurfaces With 'Super Soccer'

The Associated Press

MIAMI — It has fewer players, more scoring, wider goals and no worries about rain, promoter Jerry Saperstein said yesterday as he announced a new professional league called "Super Soccer."

He said it would be a faster, rougher and higher-scoring game than traditional soccer.

A four-month summer season by teams in 16 to 24 U.S. cities will begin June 1978, Saperstein said.

A list of "prospective franchise cities" was furnished reporters and Saperstein said contracts have been signed with a number of franchise

owners, but declined to name any. He said 16 franchises would be announced next month.

Super Soccer is "a bastardized game of soccer," Saperstein conceded in response to a question as he demonstrated a soccer-size ball done in fluorescent orange and green.

"They took cricket and bastardized it into baseball and it hasn't hurt," he said.

The 37-year-old Saperstein, from North Miami Beach, began as a sports promoter working with his father, Abe, who founded the Harlem Globetrotters.

Jerry Saperstein has been involved in sports promotions ever since. He once owned the New York franchise of World Team Tennis, he said, and is owner of the San Francisco Shamrocks of the Pacific Hockey League.

Super Soccer will differ from the traditional version in a number of ways, sponsors said. They include:

- It's played inside.
- The field is smaller, about 70 yards by 30 yards. Conventional fields are 110 to 130 yards long and 70 to 80 yards wide.
- There will be more scoring because of rule changes including a wider goal, fewer players on a side (six compared to 11), unlimited substitution and use of a hockey-style dasher board around the field to keep the ball in play.

"And then of course we're going to allow some body contact," Saperstein said.

Richard Ragone of Miami, introduced as a former official of the North American Soccer League, was named interim commissioner of the new league.

He said it will be a rugged game. "There will be some shoving or a little kicking," Ragone said, "but we will not allow it to get out of hand."

He said a penalty box will be used, similar to hockey.

Saperstein said Super Soccer will not try to lure players away from the established NASL.

Other founders of the new league are retired Miami businessman Fredric Wise, Los Angeles dentist Elliott Gorin and Dennis Murphy, also of Los Angeles. Murphy participated in founding the American Basketball Association, World Team Tennis, the World Hockey Association and Pacific Hockey League, said the sponsors.

U.S. getting a kick out of soccer...

By ALEX SACHARE
AP Sports Writer

There were tailgate parties in the parking lots on the sunny Sunday afternoon and traffic jams on the highways. Some 30,000 tickets were sold within an hour of game time and a crowd of 62,394 filed through the turnstiles at Giants Stadium.

But not a baseball or football was to be seen. It was soccer, pro soccer, which drew the huge turnout, the largest number of people ever to watch a soccer match on the North American continent.

They came to the Jersey Meadowlands June 19 to watch the Tampa Bay Rowdies play the Cosmos in a North American Soccer League game, and they saw one of the sport's alltime greats, Pele, get all the goals in a 3-0 Cosmos victory.

That huge throng was no fluke, either.

The same day in Bloomington, Minn., 28,284 flocked to Metropolitan Stadium to watch the Los Angeles Aztecs nip the Minnesota Kicks 3-2. On June 23, a team-record 32,605 turned out at Busch Stadium in St. Louis to see the hometown Stars shut out the Cosmos 2-0.

And last Sunday, while 55,039 were watching the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox play baseball at Yankee Stadium, 57,191 were at Giants Stadium. The Cosmos beat the Los Angeles Aztecs 5-2, Pele once again scoring three goals.

Pro soccer, entering its second decade in the United States, is showing definite signs of making it big. The popularity which it had achieved in some areas over the past few years seems to be spreading.

"I came to the United States three years ago in hopes of helping the sport of soccer to grow in this country," said Pele, the Brazilian World Cup superstar. "To see all these people here is the greatest thing for me. This is the greatest souvenir that I can take home with me."

The 20-team NASL is enjoying its biggest season at the box office by far. Last year's records for total attendance, 2,474,078, and average attendance, 10,309, are sure to fall by the wayside.

So far this year, the league has drawn 1,864,876 people for 141 games, an average turnout of 13,226. This average is likely to increase as the five-month season, which began April 8, reaches its summer climax.

The key franchise is the Cosmos, who draw big crowds wherever they go and who, in their first season at Giants Stadium, have finally achieved a firm foothold for the NASL in the New York area. They've already set a season attendance record of 290,189, an average of 32,242 per game, and they have four home dates remaining.

This popularity is quite a contrast to the sport's humble beginnings back in 1967 when two fledgling leagues, the United Soccer Association and the National Professional Soccer League, were formed to introduce the "world's most popular sport" to America.

Those were hard times. Seven clubs folded as the two leagues merged to form the NASL in 1968, and by the end of that season 12 more had died. The league was on the verge of extinction, with just five teams remaining.

The league, under the energetic leadership of Commissioner Phil Woosnam, would not die. It limped through the next couple of seasons, then took a big step



Soccer fever

forward with the addition of the Cosmos—backed by the Warner Communications conglomerate—in 1971.

The next big step came in 1974, with expansion to the West Coast, giving the NASL a true national image. The sport was an instant hit, achieving tremendous popularity in places like Seattle, Portland, Ore., and San Jose, Calif., and in 1975 the league added five more clubs to reach its present complement of 20.

Through the league's darkest days, Woosnam never lost confidence. He regularly spends four or five days a week crisscrossing the country, promoting the NASL and the sport of soccer to groups in big cities and small towns.

"Soccer is going to be the next big sport in this country," he tells anyone who will listen. "It's the most popular sport all over the world, and it will be just as popular here. It's just a matter of time."

Television exposure would help bring that time closer, but so far the league has had problems in that regard. The NASL has been on and off network TV, whose executives discovered that soccer's continuous style of play made insertion of commercials awkward. This year seven games are being televised on an independent network put together by TVS, including the Soccer Bowl title match from Portland Aug. 26.

Despite the paucity of national television exposure, soccer has caught on in many cities around the league.

The Minnesota Kicks, in their first season of opera-

tion in 1976, averaged better than 25,000 fans per game and four times drew over 40,000. Portland, despite an 8-16 record, drew more than 20,000 per game last year, while Dallas tripled its attendance to an average of more than 14,000.

San Jose sold more than 14,000 season tickets prior to the start of the 1977 campaign. Seattle opened the Kingdome with a crowd of 58,128 for an exhibition against the Cosmos last year and averaged over 23,000. Tampa Bay is averaging 23,308 this year, including 45,288 for a game against the Cosmos.

This has been achieved with a mixture of foreign and American-born playing talent. While players like the world-famous Pele draw crowds, NASL executives know that their future lies in developing talented American players like goalies Shep Messing and Bob Rigby, "Superstars" hero Kyle Rote Jr. and Trost, the former St. Louis All-American and U.S. Olympian who is perhaps the best midfielder ever developed in this country.

To that end, the league has spent much time, effort and money on developing youth soccer programs around the country. And the big crowds turning out can only spur that development.

"This was the team's finest moment," said Trost, after the Stars blanked the Cosmos before the record crowd in St. Louis. "All those fans gave the entire team a big thrill. Soccer is coming fast."



San Francisco

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Examiner

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1975

DAILY

Suddenly soccer is No. 1

By Carl Reich

At least 35,000 Bay Area youngsters, including girls, now play soccer. More than Little League baseball (281,000), Pop Warner football (6,500) and more than youth ice hockey (1,500).

A decade ago, soccer in the United States involved mostly immigrants and their children. Only in St. Louis and Philadelphia was soccer popular among boys whose families had been citizens for generations.

Don Greer, chairman of the U.S. Youth Soccer Federation, happily estimates that 523,000 boys and girls under 19 now play on organized teams around the nation.

Greer, like a businessman toting his assets, says California has 339 high schools with soccer programs. If you figure 30 players to a squad, that means 10,000 players. Plus about 600 junior high schools (9,99) to 12,000 youngsters.

And another 500 teams (about 7,500 boys and girls) are members of San Francisco Police Athletic League programs.

Not to mention the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), with 7,500 players and 30 California junior colleges with another 750.

Figures assembled for the Bay Area by the San Jose Earthquakes of the North American Soccer League are equally impressive. They add up to the 35,000.

"More than 80 per cent of all youth soccer is played in the Liver-



You have to use your head in soccer, as Kyle Rote Jr. demonstrates

more area, the South Bay and on the Peninsula," says Tom Morten, Earthquakes publicist and himself a former goalkeeper at Chico State.

An example of the recent growth of a sport that only the U.S. has

resisted until recently comes from Julie Menendez, soccer coach at San Jose State University. Twelve years ago, he says, no Santa Clara County high school offered soccer. Now it's a varsity sport at 50

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Paul Child (10) stars for the San Jose Earthquakes in game against Dallas

And suddenly soccer is No. 1

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schools.

Bob DiGrazia of Walnut Creek, soccer coach at UC Berkeley, says every four-year college and university in the state now has a soccer program.

"Soccer teams are cheap, to outfit—just uniform shirt, shorts and shoes. Bill Clarke, coach at Cleveland State College, once said he could equip a soccer player for the cost of one football helmet," he says.

Scores of summer camps have sprung up. Boys aged 6 to 19 can learn under expert coaches. Rates average \$20 a day, with residency costs naturally more expensive. Some camps even offer group discounts.

At least two schools in England are advertising extensively for American students. Rates for three weeks minus air fare are about \$380, for four weeks with air transportation about \$1,000.

Only the lack of enough coaches and referees has kept American soccer from mushrooming faster, Greer says.

Menendez was so highly

regarded for his efforts at San Jose State that he was named coach of the American team for trials leading up to the 1976 Olympic Games in Canada.

(Bermuda defeated the U.S., 3-2, last Sunday. The teams meet again at San Francisco's Balboa Soccer Stadium at 2 p.m. tomorrow.)

Menendez has four Bay Area players on his U.S. squad. They are Jimmy Zylker and Gary St. Clair, San Jose State graduates; Len Salvemini, an Air Force Academy junior from South San Francisco, and Polla Garibay of Redwood City. A fifth, Anatole Hulewsky, lives in Sacramento.

The winner of Sunday's game advances against Mexico. The loser is out.

Many of the Bay Area's aspiring young soccer players wear shirts with the name "Kyle" lettered across the back. That's a reference to Kyle Rote Jr., son of the former professional football star.

Sought by hundreds of col-

leges when he graduated from high school in 1968, young Rote attended Oklahoma State for a year on a football scholarship. Then he transferred to University of the South in Tennessee. Instead of football, the state religion in Texas, he chose soccer.

Young Rote isn't big (5-10, 180 pounds). But he plays adequately for a young man who began a soccer career five years late, as these things go—at, age 15. He won the 1973 NASL scoring championship and the most valuable player award that year.

Kyle Jr. plays for one of the world's richest men, Lamar Hunt, who owns the Dallas Tornado as well as the National Football League Kansas City Chiefs and countless oil wells.

A year ago, sponsors of a televised Superstars decathlon-type competition added Rote to the ranks almost apologetically.

Rote, 23, beat out other sports figures for the \$15,000 top prize, plus about \$35,000 in point money. This spring, football star O. J. Simpson

won Superstars II, with Rote second.

The Bay Area has its own version of Kyle Rote Jr. He's Paul Child, a 5-10, 165-pound transplanted English star whose talents have won a loyal Northern English League in 1971, and was talked into trying out with Atlanta of the NASL. Last summer, he was the leading NASL scorer with the Earthquakes, who picked him in an expansion draft.

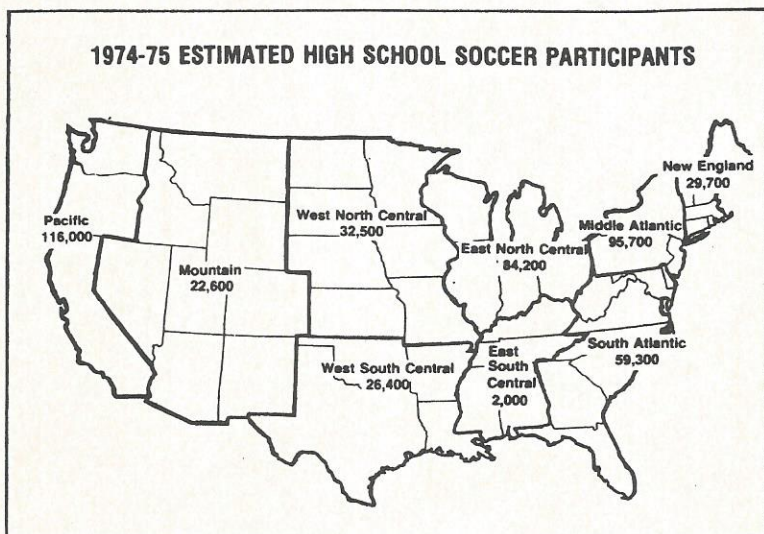
Rote and Child showed their drawing power Feb. 7. Their teams drew an indoor record crowd of 11,000 in an exhibition game at the Cow Palace. The crowd of mostly youngsters saw Child have a field day as the Earthquakes defeated the Tornado, 8-6.

Child has applied for citizenship and plans to stay in the Bay Area.

In 1974, the NASL decided to try capturing the Bay Area market. Owner Milan Mandaric and general manager Dick Berg fought all day to convince other owners that San Jose, rather than Oakland or San Francisco, was the ideal site.



1974-75 ESTIMATED HIGH SCHOOL SOCCER PARTICIPANTS



558,000 COMPETED ON SOCCER TEAMS in 1974-75, a 1,080% rise over 10-years. Highest concentrations are in Middle Atlantic, North Central and West Coast States.

Soccer Participation Jumps 1,080% In Ten-Year Period

By Gerry L. Ginsburg, associate editor

NEW YORK CITY — Formal soccer participation in the United States increased 1,080% between 1965 and 1974-75. Nearly 558,000 soccer players competed for high schools, National Collegiate Athletic Association colleges and National Junior College Athletic Association teams, compared with slightly over 47,000 in 1965.

"The American market is overlooking a growing sport, not a fad," commented Gerald G. Roraback, consumer products marketing development, Uniroyal, who compiled the study and offered it to **SPORTING GOODS BUSINESS**. "Soccer is a growing athletic activity. Participation figures for 1975 through 1977 should convince retailers, if they're not already convinced, that there's a lot of money to be made in stocking soccer equipment."

The number of high schools having formal soccer programs rose from 2,582 in 1972 to 4,176 in 1974-75 according to information he gathered from the National Federation of State High School Associations. That amounts to a 62% increase.

High school participation is concentrated in the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast. Strong gains were also reported in the Southern market.

At the college level, the NCAA and NJCAA reported 120% in-

creases in outdoor soccer facilities during the 1957-1974 period. Even from 1972 to 1974, facilities had a 30% jump, from 744 to 967 playing fields.

Intercollegiate soccer participation has also seen sharp rises. For that same 1957-1974 period, the NCAA saw a gain of 145%. The sharpest rise occurred from 1957-1962 when the number of players jumped to 8,270, a rise of 35%. The second largest percentage jump took place between 1972 and 1974—25%. Over 15,000 men compete in NCAA intercollegiate soccer.

According to state-by-state breakdowns, also furnished by the National Federation of State High School Associations, the Pacific region has the most male high school soccer players, 166,000. California leads that region and the rest of the country, with 89,000 male soccer players at the high school level.

Here is the state-by-state high school breakdown:

New England

- **Massachusetts:** Boston is the hub of activity in the state with 8,000 players in the Greater Boston area. The Springfield area is next with 3,500, followed by Fall River and New Bedford with 1,500 apiece. Worcester reported 800 players in the area high schools. Both Boston and Springfield were rated by Roraback as excellent soccer regions (on a fair, good, excellent basis).

- **Connecticut:** 8,000 participants are reported in the state. The Hartford area claims 3,000, while the combined Hamden, Clinton and Madison region tallies 1,500. Both Fairfield County and Wilton add 1,000 players to the state totals. Greenwich and Stamford both report 500 participants.

- **Rhode Island:** The Providence area reports 2,500 male soccer players in area high schools.

- **Maine:** The state's 2,400 soccer players are equally divided between Portland and Sanford.

- **New Hampshire:** 1,000 players are reported in New Hampshire, with 500 claimed in the Keene area. Manchester, Hanover and Concord each have 200 males in high school soccer programs.

- **Vermont:** Burlington and Middlebury contribute 200 each to the state's 400 total.

Middle Atlantic

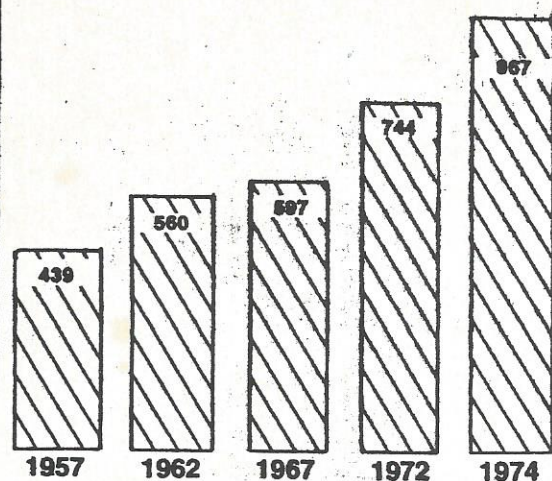
- **Pennsylvania:** 38,000 of the entire region's 95,700 players are from this state. 20,000 are in the Philadelphia area including Upper Merion, King of Prussia, Delaware County and Levittown. Montgomery and Bucks counties register 8,000 male high school soccer players. Another 5,000 come from Reading and Berks counties, while the Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton area contributes 2,500 to the state total. Suburban Pittsburgh adds another 2,500. Two regions in Philadelphia are rated excellent by Roraback: Philadelphia and Montgomery and Bucks counties.

- **New York:** Second in the region, the Empire State has approximately 34,700 males playing high school soccer. That soccer population is concentrated near New York City. 12,000 are enrolled in Long Island teams, 2,500 in Westchester County and 5,000 in Bayside, Yorkville and Long Island City sections of the City. Rochester, which has an excellent rating in the state, has 10,000 playing soccer in the region. The state capital, Albany, checks out at 2,500 players. Binghamton adds 1,500 to the total while Syracuse has 1,200.

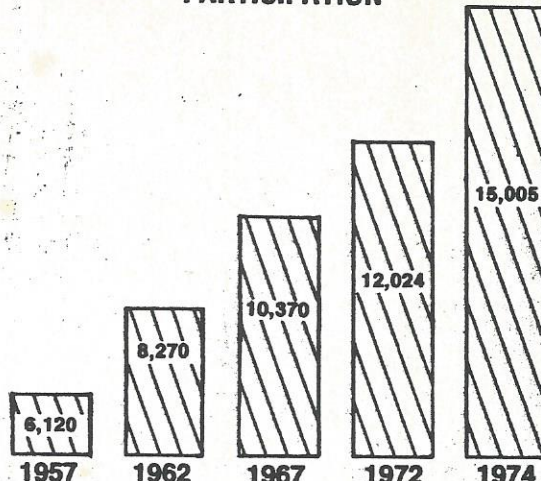
- **New Jersey:** 10,000 of the state's 23,000 soccer players are in the Trenton area. Ocean and Monmouth counties, Union and Orange counties, and Hudson and Bergen counties each add 3,000 to the total. The Paterson area has 1,200 playing soccer while Essex and Morris counties have 2,000. Cherry Hill, Collingswood and Deptford each claim 500 in their area. Warren adds another 300 to the total.



COLLEGIATE SOCCER FACILITIES



MEN'S INTERCOLLEGIATE SOCCER PARTICIPATION



South Atlantic

- **Maryland:** Baltimore leads that state with 12,000 booters in the area. Another 1,000 players are reported from Dundalk and Glen Burnie. 500 are registered in College Park, Annapolis, Townon and Catonville.

- **Virginia:** The Fairfax and Annapdale areas account for 12,000 soccer players. Lynchburg and Harrisburg each have 500 in high school soccer programs.

- **Georgia:** The Atlanta soccer market is growing. In 1972 it reported 2,250 players. Its 1974 figures, however, read 15,000 participants.

- **South Carolina:** Figures are not available.

- **North Carolina:** Durham reports 500 male soccer players.

- **West Virginia:** Morgantown and Elkins contribute 500 players apiece to the 1,300 players in the state. The Philippi area enrolls 300.

- **Delaware:** Wilmington leads the state with 2,000 participants. Newark and Milford add 1,000 players each while another 500 are playing in Seaford.

- **Washington, D.C.:** 5,000 are playing soccer in the District, in Prince Charles and Montgomery counties.

- **Florida:** Miami has 2,000 males playing high school soccer. St. Petersburg-Tampa adds 1,000 to the total, while Orlando and Jacksonville each have 500 in the soccer program.

East South Central

- **Kentucky:** The Louisville area has 1,000 in the soccer program.

- **Tennessee:** 1,000 are active in soccer programs across the state.

- **Not Available:** Statistics from Alabama, Mississippi.

West South Central

- **Texas:** Over 20,000 males participate in high school soccer programs across the state. The bulk of these, 15,000, are in the Dallas-Highland Park-Arlington area. Fort Worth and Houston each have 2,000 playing soccer, while San Antonio adds 1,500 to the state total.

- **Louisiana:** Approximately 1,500 play soccer in the state, mostly in the New Orleans vicinity.

- **Oklahoma:** There are 1,000 soccer players in the state, centered near Tulsa.

- **Arkansas:** No statistics are available.

East North Central

- **Ohio:** Ohio leads the region in participants with 31,000. The majority of participation is near Cincinnati, with 15,000 soccer players. Cleveland and its suburbs add 6,000 to the total. Shaker Heights, a Cleveland suburb, adds another 1,000. Dayton has 4,000 in its soccer programs, while Columbus and Akron add 2,000 apiece. Wooster enrolls 1,000 in its high school soccer schedules. Both Cleveland and Cincinnati are rated as excellent areas by Roraback.

- **Indiana:** Gary and Indianapolis lead the state with 2,000 soccer players apiece. Fort Wayne adds 1,000 to the total.

- **Michigan:** Over 2,200 players are enrolled in male, interscholastic soccer competition.

- **Illinois:** Chicago and its suburbs (including Evanston, Wilmette, Elmhurst, Park Ridge, LaGrange, Wheaton, Elgin and Highland Park) enroll 15,000 in soccer programs. Quincy adds 8,000 to the state total. East St. Louis has 2,000 participants, while Macomb has 1,000. All areas, except Macomb, are rated excellent.

West North Central

- **Missouri:** St. Louis, long a soccer capital, leads the state in soccer participation. Over 27,000 play soccer at the high school level in Missouri.

- **Minnesota:** The Twin Cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, have 1,500 players in the soccer programs.

- **Nebraska:** Omaha leads the state in total participants. Approximately 4,000 play interscholastic soccer in the state.

- **Not Available:** Statistics for Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota, North Dakota.

Mountain

- **Colorado:** Littleton leads the state with 8,000 players, followed closely by Denver with 5,000. Englewood and Colorado Springs each has 2,000 in the soccer program.

- **Nevada:** Las Vegas heads the state, which has 2,000 soccer players.

- **Arizona:** Phoenix has the bulk of the 2,000 soccer players in the state.

- **Utah:** Most of the soccer play is around Salt Lake City, where 1,200 males are part of the interscholastic soccer program.

- **New Mexico:** Approximately 400 play high school soccer in the state.

- **Not Available:** Statistics for Idaho, Wyoming, Utah.

Pacific

- **California:** California has the most soccer players of any state in the nation, with 89,000. The Los Angeles area is the center of that activity, with 46,000 participating in formal soccer play. Fresno has 15,000 enrolled, while San Francisco and San Diego have 10,000 apiece. San Jose and Sacramento each have 4,000 players. All areas, except Sacramento, are rated excellent.

- **Washington:** Approximately 25,000 play soccer in that state, with the majority playing in greater Seattle (21,000). Another 4,000 are playing in the Tacoma area.

- **Oregon:** Most of the soccer play is concentrated around Portland. Over 2,000 play soccer in that state.

Women's soccer is not included in any of the above figures. Participation by women is known to be growing, although no figures are currently available. ■ SGB

