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AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE
PROFESSIONAL MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER
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The Spirits of '76 . . . Sacramento Soccer Style!

The American Soccer League has received a warm and enthusiastic welcome in Sacramento, the capitol city of California. One of five new western franchises in the oldest professional league in the United States, the Sacramento Spirits are the first major league team in the Sacramento area.

Charles Carlen, founder of the Carlen Construction Company of San Francisco, is president and majority owner of the Spirits. The 66 year old determined businessman-sportsman has promised the soccer followers of northern California a 'new look' American type of soccer. The Spirits, organized in recent months, are ready to unleash an exciting brand of soccer that promises to capture the imagination and loyalty of sports followers everywhere.

Carlen's first step in building a dream into reality was the hiring of Dick Ott as head coach for the Spirits. Ott, a 40 year old native of Hamilton, Ohio and a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, is a 'natural' to build the true look of native American style of soccer. Ott's background includes both playing and coaching football and soccer. He believes in the future of soccer played with United States talent.

A quick look at the Spirits roster reveals a total of 15 U.S. residents. The lineup is also heavy with college players, 12 of the 17 members having advanced to the collegiate level. American Soccer teams are limited to an 18 man roster and thus, the Spirits present a basic American look, not only from the head coach, but the players as well.

The style of play is developing on schedule, although not at the pace some officials had hoped. The older players, more experienced, are finding it hard to disregard old habits and adopt new principles. Many of the Spirits practice sessions have been a lesson in temporary frustration for coach Ott. Yet, the talent is present and the Spirits have . . . well, the spirit.

The veteran soccer fan, usually tinged with foreign influence toward the old method of play may find the 'American style' a refreshing new look to the ever increasing popular sport.

Carlen explains his deeply ingrained ideas about the Sacramento pattern of action with a hint of championship expectations.

"I can see crystal clear how we in America can build teams - not one or two, but many - that can take on the best in the world and beat them," Carlen states. "We must incorporate the expertise of professional football and baseball coaching, and adapt it to soccer, that will be the basis of how we will beat them," he adds.

The Spirits have already recorded a 'first' in the game of soccer by introducing two innovations borrowed from American coaching techniques. Sacramento's Americanization of soccer includes the use of a video tape camera from the roof of the pressbox and communication between two coaches with CB walkie-talkies.

"We feel that both of these operations will help us a great deal during the season," Ott stated, "Of course we are learning and improvements will be expected as we get deeper into the schedule," he added.

American style of soccer for Americans, in the spirit of '76 - - - the timing is perfect.