



NEWS RELEASE

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CRUYFF NAMED NASL MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

LOS ANGELES--North America has become the latest continent to acknowledge the incomparable soccer brilliance of Johan Cruyff, as the North American Soccer League today named the Aztec superstar the winner of its Most Valuable Player Award for 1979.

The MVP Award, which is voted on by the NASL players, will be formally presented to Cruyff at the NASL Awards Dinner this Thursday night (September 6) in New York.

By winning the league's top award, Cruyff now becomes perhaps the only athlete on earth who truly can be called "All-World". Prior to joining the Aztecs this season, the 32-year-old Dutchman had been named Player of the Year in Europe three times (a record) and the World Cup Most Valuable Player in 1974.

"It's really quite an honor to win the award," said Cruyff. "Especially since I've been in the NASL such a short period of time. But I feel that the entire Aztecs team is being honored because it's impossible to win this type of award alone.

"It's a great award for the Aztecs because it shows that we are really improving. Now we have a great responsibility next year to improve even more."

Winning the MVP Award makes it a clean sweep of top NASL honors for Cruyff this year. He has already been named the NASL Offensive Player of the Year and received the most votes as a First Team All-Star selection.

Cruyff, considered by many to be the greatest soccer player in the world, proved to be just that in his initial season in the NASL.

He came out of retirement to join the Aztecs on May 22, and on May 23 he made his NASL debut with two goals in the first seven minutes against Rochester. He went on to score at least one point in 19 of the 23 games in which he appeared and finished the regular season with 13 goals and 16 assists for 42 points, fifth best in the National Conference.

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Add one -- Cruyff Named NASL Most Valuable Player

Cruyff's value to the overall team results was equally impressive, as the Aztecs set seven team records enroute to an 18-12 mark, best in the history of the franchise. In the first seven games of the season, prior to Cruyff's arrival, the Aztecs managed to score only eight goals. In the next seven games, with Cruyff, the Aztecs scored 22 goals and went on to score a division-leading 62 goals on the year.

As brilliant as he was during the regular season, Cruyff was even better in the playoffs. In the second game of the quarter-finals against Washington, he dribbled 70 yards through six Diplomat players to score the winning goal in overtime. He finished with one goal and two assists in his four playoff games.

Cruyff was named NASL Player-of-the-Week in his first week with the Aztecs and also won the NASL Goal-of-the-Week Award for his game-winning goal against Vancouver on July 11.