

# Football to you: soccer to me

by David Hermanson

## Post NASL Drip

Truly a fascinating event last spring was Peter Pocklington's whirlwind purchase of the Oakland Stompers franchise. The Stompers are now the Edmonton Drillers who, despite a constantly shifting tide of management and player personnel, managed to stomp their way through an inaugural season in North American Soccer League.

Any fans familiar with traditional association football would no doubt be horrified as they were drawn into the strange and wacky world of the NASL; where standings are calculated on a mysterious six-points-per-win-plus-goals-scored basis; where a terrifying beast called the shootout makes sudden death overtime look boring; and where ostentation seems to be the order of the day.

Obviously, in the view of many Edmontonians the arrival of the Drillers on the scene, however sudden, was worthy of some investigation. For now that we can look back on it, we can see that this initial Drillers season was a successful one: the more successful in the quest for recognition, though, than in the quest for the Soccer Bowl.

One way to look at it is that the Drillers have a season behind them that they can improve upon. Their lamentable debut in the NASL features such lowlights as a record 14-game losing streak — half a season of

winless soccer — and a 9-0 shellacking at the hands of the Seattle Sounders — the second biggest margin of victory in the league's history.

But all was not gloom and desperation. On a team with something of a talent deficiency, two talented standouts on the roster were West German striker Lorenz Hilkes and Alberta-born defender Dwight Lodeweges.

These players, at the completion of the season, were deservedly named the team's offensive and defensive MVP's respectively. They were also the first to be signed on for next year.

Fiery Lorenz Hilkes, a 12-year veteran of European pro soccer, proved himself to be the mainspring of the Drillers attack almost from the day coach Hans Kraay brought him to the club early in the campaign. As Edmonton's top forward, Hilkes was naturally keyed on constantly by the opposition.

But not even two broken toes, a sprained ankle, and numerous red-card suspensions could stand in the way of his scoring exploits. In short, Hilkes takes a licking but keeps on kicking. His crowning achievement was a spectacular three-goal outburst against the Memphis Rogues in Commonwealth Stadium.

One irritating carry-over from the European style of play that the Canadian soccer fan will invariably witness in the still foreign-dominated NASL — and one to which he will just have to inure himself — is the play acting intended as a device to prompt a caution card, an

expulsion, a free kick, etc. Once the referee has made up his mind whether the performance is convincing or whether it was just blatantly bogus, the "injured victim" miraculously recovers.

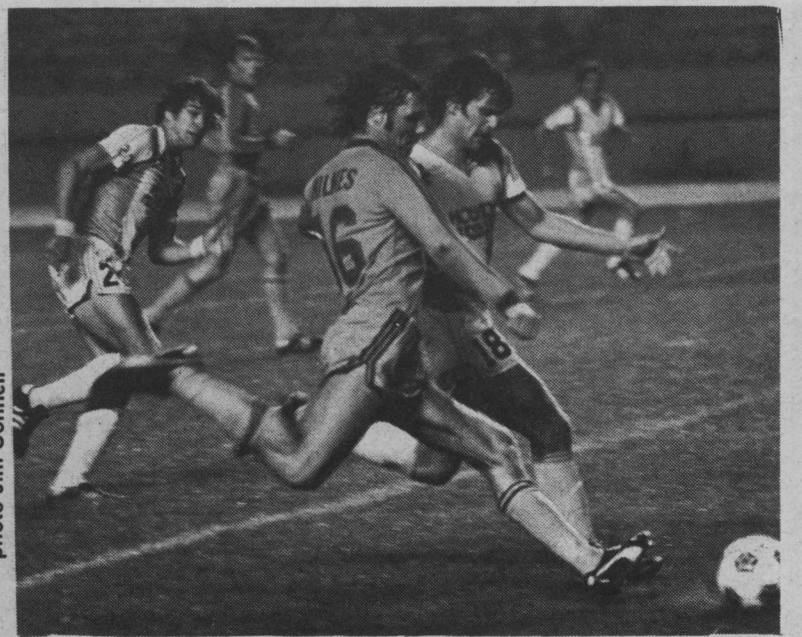
The result is that when a player falls to the turf grasping a knee or an arm or a face (hopefully his own), apparently in some degree of pain, any consolation from the fans is prudently withheld until they are sure the injury is legitimate.

Dwight Lodeweges, coming to Edmonton from Holland's Go-Ahead Eagles, excelled in a defensive role, his pin-point sliding tackles fast becoming his trademark and twice helping him earn Player of the Week honors in the NASL.

## Enough to Make a Grown Man Kraay

As a team, perhaps the Drillers best performances came in two instances against heavily-favored opponents. First, in losing 1-0 in overtime to Tampa Bay, Edmonton became the only visiting team ever to shut out the high-powered Rowdies — Soccer Bowl finalists this season — for a full 90 minutes.

Second, in upsetting the Los Angeles Aztecs 4-3 at Commonwealth Stadium, the Drillers not only ended their embarrassing string of 14 losses but also beat a team with possibly the world's finest soccer coach at the helm, namely Rinus Michels. A small additional note is that the Aztecs had at the time just acquired Johan Cruyff, generally acknowledged to be the world's greatest active soccer player.



The incredible Hilk — Driller's Lorenz Hilkes

A true blemish on the first Drillers season was the unfortunate resignation of head coach Hans Kraay. Kraay, a former star player on the Dutch national team and a crack coach highly respected in soccer circles, came with the team from Oakland, with intentions of building a contender from scratch.

With just five games remaining in the season, however, he vacated his post for reasons of ethnic tension within the team as well as what he felt was mismanagement by his superiors. For the remainder of the season, assistant coach Joe Petrone took on the head coaching duties.

During both Hans Kraay's reign and Petrone's interim coaching, the Drillers more often than not played good soccer only to be frustrated again and again as a tying or go-ahead goal would be yielded during the dying seconds of either half.

Nonetheless, this knack for heart-breaking losses hardly stemmed the flow of Driller supporters into the stands.

The club averaged just under 10,000 spectators per home game, remarkable for a first-year franchise in the NASL. Taking into consideration the sky-rocketing popularity of soccer and the examples set in the other Canadian soccer centres of Vancouver and Toronto, doubtless the time will come when the Drillers will rival the Edmonton Eskimos in terms of fan support.

With Peter Pocklington's decree that there will be nothing second-rate about the organization next year and the subsequent signings of a new general manager — former Scottish international Graham Leggat — and a new coach — NASL coach of the year Timo Liekoski, dare we quip: the Drillers auger well for Edmonton?

# Bears almost ready

by Shaune Impey

Golden Bears' hockey coach Bill Moores slimmed his roster to 29 players, including four goaltenders, as training camp continues this week at Varsity Arena.

The latest cuts came after a pair of regulation length intrasquad games on Thursday and Friday which included both veterans and rookies. On Thursday, the Whites scored at 8-4 victory. Second-year man Grey Skoreyko led the Whites with four goals, while rookie center Joel Elliot picked up a hat trick. Ex-pro Danny Arndt had a pair of goals for the Green team.

In Friday's game the White team won 6-3 with rookie defenceman Rod Tordoff notching a goal and two assists. Five other newcomers — Elliot, Terry Lecision, Rob Daum, Steve Gagnon, and Garnet Brimacombe — scored singles. The Greens got two goals from veteran Michael Broadfoot and a single from returning regular Bruce Rolin.


The three rookie netminders left are Brad Hall, Lee Arthur and Brad Bergh. They will be fighting for a spot alongside returning allstar goalie Ted Poplawski.

Coach Moores said he was pleased with what was happening on the ice and expects it to be extremely tough making a final decision as to who will play for the defending CIAU champion team.

First exhibition action for the team comes next weekend with three games in three nights against opposition from the Alberta college league. The Bears visit NAIT, Red Deer and Camrose on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.



Ted Olson is not back this year. Instead he is involved with the NHL North Stars.



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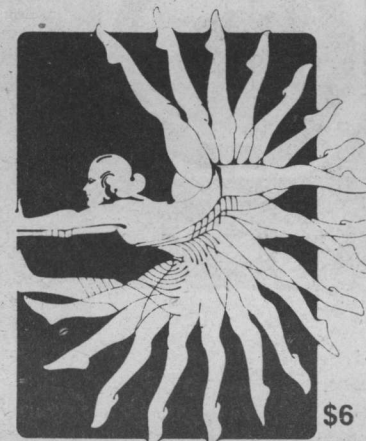
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