NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE INC

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PHOENIX TOPS CHICAGO IN ASL-NASL TILT

New York, N.Y. - Paced by the offensive power of Terry Shanahan, and the acrobatic goalkeeping of Keiron Baker, Phoenix Fire defeated the Chicago Sting, 2-1, in a special ASL - NASL exhibition match on Friday night in Phoenix. Phoenix, a 1980 ASL expansion team, made its successful debut before a crowd of 9,807, who turned out for the first pro soccer match played in the Southwestern city.

Chicago wasted no time in scoring, as midfielder Arno Steppenhagen of the Sting latched onto an errant clearance by the Fire defense, and ran through to beat Baker one-on-one after only 4:45 of the match. Both teams applied pressure throughout the remainder of the opening half, but Baker twice turned away fine efforts from Chicago's Steve Long, and Shanahan fired high and drew a shot wide on two close-range opportunities for Phoenix.

The second half saw Chicago again apply early pressure, and a header from Rudy Glenn rebounded off the crossbar in the 56th minute. The game then turned into a very physical confrontation, and following the issuance of yellow cards to Glenn, Steppenhagen, and the Sting trainer, a flagrant foul by Steppenhagen on Phoenix' Roger Verdi led to his ejection and a caution to Chicago coach Willy Roy.

With Chicago forced to play a man short, Phoenix wasted no tim in equalizing, as Shanahan beat two defenders on the left baseline, and centered for Fire centerback John Rowland to head home from eight yards in the 72nd minute. With the game moving towards what seemed to be an inevitable tie, Shanahan slipped behind the Sting defense to collect a pass from teammate Tim Logush and beat Chicago keeper Paul Coffee from four yards out with only three minutes remaining.

Chicago desperately pressed for a tying goal in the last three

minutes, but two remarkable saves by Baker kept them out, and Baker ended up having to leave the game in injury time with a broken hand, the result of a foul by one of Chicago's frustrated forwards. Baker, who was acquired by Phoenix from Ipswich Town of the English First Division was named Defensive Player of the Game, while Shanahan grabbed offensive honors for his goal and assist.

Phoenix will continue their preseason exhibition schedule with games against the Golden Gate Gales, the ASL's other 1980 expansion franchise on March 1st, and against the Mexican National Team on March 11th.

ASL NOTES - California Sunshine, 1979 Western Division champs, have announced the re-hiring of coach Derek Lawther, who coached the team during the 1978 season. Bob Ridley manned the helm for Sunshine in 1979, when they recorded the best record in the ASL at 22-3-3, but will be replaced for the upcoming campaign by Lawther, who has announced a total commitment to "Americanization". ...Sacramento Gold, the 1979 ASL Champions, have been nominated by the U.S.S.F. to represent the United States in the CONCACAF cup tournament, featuring teams from all of North and Central America and the Caribbean. Sacramento will be the first U.S. pro team to carry the American banner in the international tourney in many years, and their entry should prove an important step in the future of club competition with other nations and the U.S. on a professional international level.

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