CLEVELAND COBRAS

COBRA NEWS

CLEVELAND PROFESSIONAL SOCCER, INC.

404 HOYT BUILDING • WEST 6th STREET and ST. CLAIR
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44113 • TELEPHONE: (216) 771-KICK
CONTACT JOHN IRVINE

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PLAYER PROFILE: VITO COLONNA

"I've been scoring goals ever since I started playing soccer, and that includes back in Italy when I was only seven or eight," said the Cobras leading scorer for the past few years, Vito Colonna.

Colonna joined the Cleveland Stars in 1972, after completing a brilliant career at Cleveland State. During his collegiate career, he set three school records, most goals in a season with 22, most points in a career with 65, and most points in a career with 98. Interestingly, his Cobra teammate, Jimmy McMillan, is right behind Vito in each of those categories.

"I really don't know why I've been able to score while some guys just can't. Some of them seem to have better speed and more ability than me, but I manage to score more. I just don't have an explanation for it," said Colonna.

Last season, he was named to the All-A.S.L. first team (as he was in 1974) as he slammed 15 goals past various goaltenders. He also had three assists which gave him a total of 33 points, good for third place in the league's scoring race.

"I have a strong shot and certainly that is essential to being a good scorer. Also, I'm not afraid to challenge the defense. I like physical play so maybe that is the key to my success," concluded Colonna.

Vito came to America from Beri, Italy in 1962. After spending two years in Cleveland with part of his family, he returned to Italy to play soccer and continue his education. He played professional soccer at 16 in his homeland, and he tore the cartilages in his right knee. This happened in 1967 and almost ended his career.

"In '67 when I hurt my knee, I decided to come back to Cleveland. Most of my family

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was here and the major reason that I returned to Italy was to play soccer. Now that I couldn't play, I wanted to be with my family," explained Colonna.

Returning to America in 1967, Vito enrolled in night school at West Tech in order to prepare for college. He earned a scholarship to Cleveland State in 1968 on the strength of his reputaion in Europe. At C.S.U., he teamed up with the same person he plays next to on the Cobras.

"I've always enjoyed playing with Jimmy McMillan. We've been playing together for eight years now so we know each other pretty well. That really helps because you know where he'll be in a certain situation," noted Colonna.

After graduation, Vito taught French and Spanish at Bedford Junior High. After two years in the teaching profession, he decided that he was cut out for some other type of endeavor.

"When I left my job at Bedford, I went to work for the Northern Ohio Tractor Company as their sales representative. I like what I'm doing because I get to meet a lot of new people," said Colonna.

"Vito is a highly emotional person. People either react very positively or negatively to his personality. On the field he is the key to our offensive," surmised Cobras general, Dr. John Gyekenyesi.

Once again the Cobras will be relying on Vito to do what he has done ever since he can remember. Score.

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