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

RELEASE DATE

PLAYER PROFILE: MLADEN LAUS

Yugoslavia can be a terribly repressive place for an 18 year old boy born into a lower class family. People spend 10 to 12 hours a day toiling in industrial conditions which rivals the "sweatshops" that dotted the American historical landscape around the turn of the century.

Mladen Laus was 18. He worked for $25 per month as an auto mechanic. His father was employed in a depressing factory job and his mother spent most of her day in a match-making plant. All three of them worked very hard, yet they made little progress towards a decent life. At 18, Mladen knew that he had to get out. There was nothing that indicated that the future would be any better than the present.

"I knew that I had to go somewhere where I might be able to get ahead. My brother was living in Cleveland and I wanted to join him, but getting to America was very difficult," recalls Mladen.

Laus took his problems to a Yugoslavian priest who arranged for him to get to Italy. From there, it was believed that he would have no problem in getting to Cleveland.

"I ended up spending 9 months in Italy, just waiting for papers in order to go to Cleveland. It was a very hard time for me because I was anxious to get to Cleveland and start a new life," added Laus.

Finally, he managed to get his bureaucratic affairs in order, and he joined his brother in 1972.

Soccer had always been something which Mladen did well. In Yugoslavia, he was one of that country's outstanding young players. Once he came to Cleveland, he continued in the game as he joined the Croation Rebels of the Lake Erie Soccer League. In the 1975 Cleveland State Indoor Soccer Tournament, he electrified the fans with a scoring outburst

-more-

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

RELEASE DATE

of 11 goals in four games.

"After seeing Mladen in the Indoor games I knew that he was a player of professional caliber," noted Cobras general manager, Dr. John Gyekenyesi who then signed him with the Cleveland franchise.

Laus is the fastest player on the squad. He possesses a strong shot and has excellent ball control. He played only sparingly last season, yet managed to pick up a pair of goals.

"The biggest adjustment which I had to make in the A.S.L. was to the game being very physical. It is much more physical here than anywhere else that I've played. I really think that I'll do much better this season because I have a job which I really like and I feel more settled," explained Laus who now works in a machine shop for a good deal more than $25 per month.

"Mladen has everything it takes to become a star. A good shot, he is very fast, and he can dribble past most defenders. It all depends upon how quickly he adjusts to the physical side of professional soccer," observed Cobras Coach Herbie Haller.

At 22, Mladen has been called upon to make a number of adjustments, ranging from the changing cultures to different styles of soccer. He seems to have put his life in order and now is able to look to the future with optimism.

"I really think that this is going to be my year. I'm confident that all I need to do is play regularly and everything will fall into place."

The Cobras are hoping that Mladen's self-assessment is correct because they will be relying upon him quite heavily this season. After all, anyone who has the fortitude to wait nine months in Italy to get a chance at a new life should have no problem getting accustomed to American soccer.

# # # #