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COBRA NEWS

CLEVELAND PROFESSIONAL SOCCER, INC.

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PLAYER PROFILE: ROBY STAHL

The Roby Stahl story is one of the triumph of perseverance and hard work over the lack of natural ability.

He is a native of Broadview Heights. He had been a basketball fan until he saw a few of the World Cup Soccer games on television. At the age of 14, Roby switched his allegiance from basketball to soccer.

"I always wanted to be a professional athlete. I used to love basketball, but I realized that you had to be tall to get anywhere in that game, and by the time I wa 14, I realized that I just wasn't going to be big enough.

"Then I saw the Cup games and I really got interested in soccer. It was a game for all sizes," recalls Stahl.

So at 14, Roby began to work at his new love. His high school, Normandy did not field a team, however.

"I played in the Broadview Heights Junior Soccer Leagues. I used to practice about four hours a day in my back yard. I'd dribble, kick the ball off a wall, anything to develop my skills. I was determined that I would make it in soccer," continued Stahl.

Roby played well enough in local amateur leagues to earn a scholarship to Akron University. In college, he was selected to the All-Ohio team, and he lasted until the final cut of the 1972 Olympic Tryouts which were held at Southern Illinois University. The Cobras tabbed him in the fifth round of the 1975 collegiate draft.

"I was really pleased to be picked by the Cobras. I had finally made the pro's and it was a realization of my dreams," said Stahl.

His rookie season was very rocky as Roby was switched by Coach Haller from his natural

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position as a midfielder to fullback.

"I had a rough first year. The pro's were so much more physical than college ball. For a time, I lost my confidence, but Coach Haller stuck with me and now things are on the way up."

One of the things Roby did in preparation for this season was to participate in an extensive weight lifting program over the off season.

"Lifting weights will give me more confidence this season. I feel stronger and I won't get pushed around as much this year by some of the stronger players in the League. Also, I'm back to playing midfield again."

Roby has also adopted Transendental Meditation as one of his daily activities.

"TM helps me to relax. Last season, I would get very nervous before a game. TM has helped me overcome this. It just makes me feel better about myself, makes it easier to rest, and I've grown to a broader awareness of myself through it," explained Stahl.

"It's like 'Welcome Back Kotter'," is the way Stahl describes his job as a teacher of occupational work adjustment at Brecksville High.

"The kids are not exactly college bound, and I try to keep them interested in school and help them see the connection between going to school and finding a good job. This can be very difficult at times. It takes a lot of hard work," said Stahl who is also that school's assistant soccer coach.

Roby has always been a hardworker, and his students at Brecksville High along with the Cobras reap the benefits.

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