BALTIMORE BLAST™

Member, Major Indoor Soccer League

Contact: Drew Forrester
Public Relations Director

February 14, 1986

MEDIA RELEASE

TO ALL MEDIA

Attached is the pertinent information concerning the Blast's upcoming appearance at the Maryland Correctional Institute in Jessup. That visit, scheduled for this Monday night, February 17, will feature Blast players Paul Kitson, Michael Collins, Richard Chinapoo, and Keith Van Eron in an "assembly program" format. The four players will play volleyball and soccer with inmates of the prison, and afterwards sign autographs and talk with those who wish to meet them.

Another special part of the evening will be the Blast's interaction with a group of young adults in a program called J.O.I.N.T., which stands for Juvenile Offenders In Need Of Treatment. Approximately 50 members of the J.O.I.N.T. program will be on hand at the prison Monday night to learn first hand about decision-making in everyday life. They will talk to inmates and Blast players about the particular decisions they have made, and how they got where they are today.

Originally, Kenny Cooper was expected to be a part of Monday's prison visit, but he will be in Chicago with the Eastern Division All-Star team and obviously won't be able to attend. Instead, Cooper has written a personal letter to the members of the Juvenile Offenders program which will be hand-delivered to them on Monday. I have included a copy of that letter in this press package. Cooper drafted the letter and signed each copy himself.

If any of you are interested in covering this event, please contact me Monday before 2:00 p.m. I have already received clearance for quite a few media members to attend, but the prison officials need at least 3 hours Monday to gain security clearance for anyone else.

Thank you for your interest.

Drew

BALTIMORE BLAST™

Member, Major Indoor Soccer League

Feb. 10, 1986

Contact: Drew Forrester
Public Relations Director

MEDIA RELEASE

BLAST TO VISIT MD. CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE IN JESSUP THIS MONDAY, FEB. 17
"ASSEMBLY" TO AID JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN NEED OF TREATMENT PROGRAM

This Monday, February 17, the Baltimore Blast will once again perform its ever popular "Assembly Program" for a group of about 500 curious on-lookers. Not interesting, you say? Well wait just one minute and please read on.

This Monday, beginning at 6:00 p.m., four members of the Blast will travel to the Maryland Correctional Institute in Jessup, where they will spend the evening playing volleyball and soccer with the inmates at the Anne Arundel County-based correctional facility.

Young men from J.O.I.N.T. (Juvenile Offenders in need of treatment) will be in attendance Monday. The program is designed to alert the youngsters of the direction they should choose; that of an inmate, men who have made the wrong choice, or that of a professional athlete, winners and law abiding citizens. This event was a huge success last year, and for some inmates it is their only contact with the outside world.

The entire "assembly" will consist of a volleyball game, soccer skills and a contest between Blast and inmates, and an autograph session. Blast players Keith Van Eron, Juan Carlos Michia, Paul Kitson, and Michael Collins will represent the Blast.

Clearance for all media wishing to attend should be arranged through Ida Erlich, the Correction Institute's Director of Community Relations. She can be reached at 799-7610, extension 261.

NOTE TO ALL MEDIA: I had the pleasure of participating in this event two years ago, and I can assure you that it is indeed gratifying to see the reaction of the inmates when the Blast conduct the assembly program. I truly believe it is indeed special when professional athletes take time from their schedule to appear at a correctional institute. I would appreciate any support you, the media, can lend. Although these inmates won't become ticket holders, it's our way of showing that we care about them.

Thanks for your support and cooperation!

Drew

BALTIMORE BLAST INDOOR SOCCER
Baltimore Civic Center 201 W. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201 (301) 528-0100

Kenny Cooper
Vice President/Head Coach

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU FALL DOWN,
BUT HOW MANY TIMES YOU PICK YOURSELF UP !!

As coach of the Baltimore Blast, I can tell you there is a close parallel in competing on the athletic field, and competing in life on a daily basis. To win a soccer game, there are three important elements involved; preparation, application, and execution. I guess you can say there's a price we have to pay for success.

Just like in our soccer team, there must be a foundation to build on. We must have a plan and a goal. Unfortunately, we don't always reach our goal. Maybe we didn't prepare well enough, or maybe we didn't apply ourselves to the fullest of our potential. Consequently, we fail. But the bottom line is we must always try. I believe that people who feel good about themselves generally get good results. A coach or an athlete is measured by wins and losses. For the businessman, it's measured on profit and loss. And there is even a bigger price to pay for being a good, responsible citizen. And sometimes we fail too.

At the end of the day, we all have choices to make pertaining to the direction we want our lives to go. I believe the Good Lord put us on this earth to contribute and serve. We are all very priviliged, and do have a responsibility, no matter what race, culture, or social or economic background, to grow and give life our best shot.

As we face the challenge of a new day, we can be tempted to take the wrong turn, or make the wrong decision. Once again, if we fail, we must pay the price. The athlete is punished by losing. The businessman, by making bad decisions, is punished by going bankrupt. And in certain instances, bad decisions are punished by removed from society. However, the true test of a person's character can, and does, surface under pressure. Sometimes setbacks, such as these I have mentioned, can inspire a person to reach heights they never thought were possible. Whatever experiences one goes through, the key is to grow and learn from them.

I've always been grateful for a second opportunity and I hope you are too. (And believe me I've had many which I took full advantage of.) Just remember, it's not how many times you fall down, but how many times you pick yourself up!

In closing, let me say that I would have loved to have been here tonight to visit with each of you. Unfortunately I have a prior commitment to coach the Eastern Division All-Star team in the All-Star Game in Chicago tomorrow night. I hope this letter will serve as a source of inspiration and motivation as you travel down life's path and make your day-to-day decisions. Best of Luck to each and every one of you!

Yours truly,

Kenny Cooper
Executive Vice President/
Head Coach

MISL

The Juvenile Offenders in Need of Treatment (J.O.I.N.T.) Program, evolved from nationally known Juvenile Diversion Programs which have gained acceptance within Juvenile Justice Systems thoroughout the country. This acceptance is based on the desire to acquaint juvenile offenders with the reality of society's reaction to those who commit crime.

The purpose of JOINT goes well beyond the simplistic idea that juveniles can be scared out of delinquent life style. J.O.I.N.T. is a didactic program designed to teach decision making. It attempts to replace the delinquent behavior with a responsible life style by revealing to youth the consequences of a life of crime, and the real impact incarceration has on people's lives. The program instills a perception of self worth in the youth and contrasts that perception to the dehumanizing aspects of a correction system. J.O.I.N.T. provides a foundation for individual growth by giving insight into the common elements which created the inmate's situation, and which exist in the youth's involvement in delinquent activity. It encourages the youth to take advantage of the counseling and educational activities available to him. It challenges the youth to make responsible decisions.

J.O.I.N.T. benefits both youths and inmates. Youth benefit from the learning experience provided by the program. Inmates benefit by giving of themselves in a program that gives some purpose to the time they are serving. Support of programs like J.O.I.N.T. both improve current correctional efforts and provide a preventive mechanism as well.