MINNESOTA KICKS

MEDIA RELEASE

MINNESOTA SOCCER, INC. 7200 France Avenue South Minneapolis, Minnesota 55435 (612) 831-8871

November 12, 1980

BRITISH GROUP PURCHASES MINNESOTA KICKS.....

The Minnesota Kicks, a five-year-old North American Soccer League franchise, has been sold to a group of British businessmen for an undisclosed purchase price. The new corporation, known as Minnesota Kicks Inc., will be headed by Ralph Sweet, an Englishman with an extensive background in professional soccer.

Joining Sweet as partners of the Kicks' new ownership group are Jim Collins and Arthur Wood, who are both real estate executives in Dublin, Ireland.

Jim Ruben, an original owner of the Minnesota Kicks, has agreed to remain with the organization as vice-chairman and will continue in his roles as the club's League Representative and as a member of the North American Soccer League's Executive Committee. Ruben is a resident of Edina, Minnesota and is employed as a vice-president of General Mills.

Freddie Goodwin will continue as president of the organization with the same responsibilities that he had in the past. He will also continue as coach for the 1981 outdoor season.

Sweet recently resigned as vice-chairman of England's Notts County Football Club to devote his time as the new Kicks' Chairman of the Board. He said that his love for the game and an opportunity to be involved in the North American Soccer League were major reasons in the purchase of the Kicks.

"I love the game," said Sweet, who retired from the real estate and car dealership

business 14 years ago at age 36. "In 12½ years at Notts County I had missed only three games while attending over 600. That includes all of our games, both home and away. I guess it's safe to say that I'm a soccer enthusiast.

"For some time our group has had a strong desire to own a soccer team in the United States. After a thorough examination of the Minnesota Kicks, we feel that we have purchased a club that has built the strongest foundation of any, a club that has the best reputation and awareness factor within its community, and a club that has the best market potential."

Sweet added, "We commend the previous ownership of the Kicks for an outstanding job in developing soccer in this state. Their business principles were sound which has been reflected by the club's success both on and off the field.

"We are committed to further strengthen this franchise and make every effort to bring a championship team to the people of Minnesota. We understand that success may not be immediate but our commitment is one of long term and we are confident that it will become a healthy situation for all parties concerned."

Jack Crocker, the former chairman of the Kicks who announced nearly five years ago on November 25, 1975 that professional soccer would be coming to Minnesota, expressed on behalf of the previous ownership a sincere thank you to the community, fans, and media for their support the past five years.

Since the franchise became a reality, the Kicks have won four divisional titles, gained a Soccer Bowl berth (1976), and attracted over two million fans for a 26,000 per game average.

The original ownership consisted of: Jack Crocker, Donald Byerly, Jim Ruben, Tom Dekko, Carl Nipp, Steve Barlow, Morris Lewis, Celian Lewis, Ron Randall and F.D. Randall.