NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE

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NEWS RELEASE

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82 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SIX PLAYOFF BERTHS CLINCHED...TAMPA BAY's SMETHURST TAKES SCORING LEAD...SAN JOSE SETS ATTENDANCE MARK, BECOME FIFTH TEAM OVER 200,000

NEW YORK, August 2---With two weeks remaining on the regular season schedule, six teams have clinched playoff berths although no division champions have been assured.

The top two teams in each of the four divisions automatically qualify for the playoffs. As of Sunday, Chicago, New York, Tampa Bay, Minnesota, Vancouver, and San Jose have qualified.

Seattle can assure itself a spot by defeating Hartford on Wednesday. Also on Wednesday, Chicago will become the first team to win a division championship if they gain two points in their game vs. Toronto.

Only five teams have been eliminated from the playoff picture.

SMETHURST TAKES SCORING LEAD

Tampa Bay's Derek Smethurst took over the NASL scoring lead with five goals in two games over the weekend. He became the first NASL player to score four in one game (vs. Hartford on Friday) and took over the scoring lead from New York's George Chinaglia.

Chinaglia had replaced teammate Pele as the leader with a hat-trick vs. Dallas on Wednesday. In the same game, Pele had set a new league record for assists. He now has 14.

Three teams have two players each in the top ten scorers: New York (Chinaglia-2nd, Pele-3rd), San Jose (Ilija Mitic-5th, Paul Child-tied for 6th) and Minnesota (Alan Willey-tied for 6th, Ron Futcher-9th).

ATTENDANCE RECORDS CONTINUE TO FALL

San Jose set a new stadium record with a crowd of 21,225 for their win over Minnesota. The Earthquakes, who have added 2,500 seats to Spartan Stadium, became the fifth team over the 200,000 mark with Tampa Bay expected to exceed it on Saturday vs. Minnesota.

THE PLAYOFF PICTURE

Playoff fever has brought out the best in a number of teams. In the North, Chicago has gone on a six game winning streak--and gained a maximum nine points in each. Rochester has won four in a row--and eight straight at home--to fight their way from last place into playoff contention.

In the East, Tampa Bay, the defending champion, has won five in a row and closed to within two points of New York.

Minnesota is on a six game win streak and Seattle has won their last four to keep the Western Division race up in the air.

ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

Assured Playoff Spots: Northern Division-Chicago;
Eastern Division-New York, Tampa Bay

Eliminated from Playoffs: Northern Division-Boston;
Eastern Division-Miami

EASTERN DIVISION

Tampa Bay and New York continue their battle for first place and the first round playoff bye that goes with it. The Rowdies have won five in a row and eight of their last nine while the Cosmos have won seven of their last eight. Tampa Bay trails by two points but has a game in hand.

Washington cannot catch either of the leaders but is in a strong position for a playoff berth as a "wild card".

Remaining games:

New York (15-7, 138 points)
August 7 @ San Jose
August 10 Miami

Tampa Bay (16-5, 136 points)
August 7 Minnesota
August 11 @ Rochester
August 14 @ Portland

NORTHERN DIVISION

Chicago's six maximum-point wins in a row have all but clinched the division title for the Sting. Two points in the standings are all they need in their last two games. Rochester, who has moved from last place to second on the strength of a four game winning streak, Hartford and Toronto are left to battle for the last two spots.

Toronto appears to have an advantage having played less games.

Rochester (11-10, 96 points)
August 7 @ Boston
August 11 Tampa Bay
August 15 @ Toronto

Hartford (10-11, 92 points)
August 4 @ Seattle
August 6 @ Vancouver
August 14 St. Louis

Toronto (11-9, 89 points)
August 4 Chicago
August 6 @ Philadelphia
August 11 Boston
August 15 Rochester

PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Assured Playoff Spots: Western Division-Minnesota, Vancouver
Southern Division-San Jose

Eliminated from Playoffs: Western Division-Portland, St. Louis
Southern Division-none

WESTERN DIVISION

Minnesota's sixth win in a row, a 2-0 decision over Portland, moved the first year Kicks into first place ahead of Vancouver and Seattle. Ron Futcher scored both goals for Minnesota and moved into the top ten scorers in the NASL.

Both Seattle (4) and Vancouver (3) are also on modest winning streaks but one of these must end on August 13 when they meet in the season finale.

Minnesota has an advantage in the standings, two points, and has played one less game than Seattle and two less than Vancouver.

Remaining games:

Minnesota (12-8, 113 points)
August 4 Portland
August 7 @ Tampa Bay
August 10 Los Angeles
August 13 @ San Diego

Seattle (12-9, 105 points)
August 4 Hartford
August 7 @ Portland
August 13 @ Vancouver

Vancouver (13-9, 111 points)
August 6 Hartford
August 13 Seattle

SOUTHERN DIVISION

San Jose moved into a nine point lead with a 3-0 win over Miami, their seventh win in the last eight games. Dallas, Los Angeles, and San Antonio, all still in the playoff race, lost. Dallas and Los Angeles appear to have the inside track with more points in fewer games played.

Remaining games:

San Jose (13-8, 114 points)
August 7 New York
August 10 @ Chicago
August 13 @ San Antonio

Dallas (12-9, 105 points)
August 7 San Antonio
August 8 San Diego
August 14 @ Los Angeles

Los Angeles (11-10, 96 points)
August 7 @ St. Louis
August 10 @ Minnesota
August 14 Dallas

San Antonio (10-12, 90 points)
August 7 Dallas
August 13 San Jose

1976 PHOTO CONTEST

The second annual North American Soccer League Photo Contest is currently underway with entrants vying for cash prizes, awards and a trip to Soccer Bowl-77.

The increasing interest in soccer is expected to produce a record number of entries in the four categories: black and white action, black and white feature, color action and color feature. Last year 26 photographers submitted 157 pictures.

The prize structure for each category is

First Place	$150 each prize, special plaque and all expense paid trip for two to Soccer Bowl-77
Second Place	$75 cash and special plaque
Third Place	$50 cash and special plaque
Honorable Mention	special plaque

Last year's first place winners - Hugh Jones (Tampa Bay Rowdies), W.R. Everly (Philadelphia Daily News), George Tiedemann (Philadelphia Bulletin) and John McDermott (UPI San Francisco) will be guests of the NASL at Soccer Bowl-76 in Seattle on August 28.

The contest is open to all professional and NASL club photographers shooting NASL games. A maximum of ten black and white photographs and/or color slides may be entered by one photographer. All entries must be postmarked no later than September 13, 1976.

A panel of distinguished photography experts will judge the photographs in September. Winning entries will be displayed in the NASL office.

TAMPA'S SMETHURST - PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Derek Smethurst of Tampa Bay led his team to two wins on the road which brought the Rowdies within two points of the New York Cosmos in the race for the Eastern Division title. Smethurst became the first NASL player to score four goals in one game this season when he did it against Hartford in Friday's 7-0 victory. In 1975, Smethurst finished in a tie for second in the league scoring race. His offensive production in the last week moved him into first place in the scoring race five points ahead of George Chinaglia of New York.

Joining Smethurst on the NASL team of the week are forwards George Chinaglia-New York, Mike Stojanovic-Rochester and John Kowalik-Chicago; mid-fielders Ilija Mitic-San Jose and Daryl Samson-Vancouver; defenders John McLaughlan-Seattle, Miro Pavlovic-San Jose, Nikola Mijatovic-Rochester and John Webb-Chicago; and goalkeeper Tony Chursky-Seattle.

GAMES THIS WEEK

Wed.	8/4	Chicago at Toronto	Sat.	8/7	Los Angeles at St. Louis
		Portland at Minnesota			Dallas at San Antonio
		Hartford at Seattle			New York at San Jose
Fri.	8/6	Toronto at Philadelphia	Sun.	8/8	San Diego at Dallas
		Hartford at Vancouver	Tues.	8/10	Miami at New York
Sat.	8/7	Rochester at Boston			Los Angeles at Minnesota
		Washington at Miami	Wed.	8/11	San Jose at Chicago
		Minnesota at Tampa Bay			Tampa Bay at Rochester
		Seattle at Portland			Boston at Toronto

LAST WEEK'S RESULTS (Home Team is Capitalized)

Wed.	7/28	CHICAGO 4, Washington 3 TB	Sat.	7/31	SEATTLE 1, Los Angeles 0 TB
		ROCHESTER 2, Hartford 1			SAN JOSE 3, Miami 0
		NEW YORK 4, Dallas 0			San Diego 3, SAN ANTONIO 2
Fri.	7/30	Tampa Bay 7, HARTFORD 0	Sun.	8/1	Tampa Bay 4, BOSTON 2
		Vancouver 3, PHILADELPHIA 1			CHICAGO 3, St. Louis 1
		SAN DIEGO 4, Miami 3			ROCHESTER 2, Washington 1
Sat.	7/31	Vancouver 5, ST. LOUIS 0			Minnesota 2, PORTLAND 0

NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE STANDINGS
(as of Monday, August 2)

	GAMES				GOALS	BONUS	TOTAL
NORTHERN DIVISION	PLAYED	WON	LOST	GOALS FOR	AGAINST	POINTS	POINTS
Chicago	22	14	8	50	29	40	124
Rochester	21	11	10	30	28	30	96
Hartford	21	10	11	34	54	32	92
Toronto	20	11	9	25	26	23	89
Boston	21	7	14	29	50	27	69
EASTERN DIVISION							
New York	22	15	7	56	30	48	138
Tampa Bay	21	16	5	52	25	40	136
Washington	22	13	9	40	32	37	115
Philadelphia	22	8	14	28	43	28	76
Miami	21	4	17	19	44	19	43
WESTERN DIVISION							
Minnesota	20	12	8	44	28	41	113
Vancouver	22	13	9	35	27	33	111
Seattle	21	12	9	34	28	33	105
Portland	21	8	13	20	32	20	68
St. Louis	22	4	18	25	54	25	49
SOUTHERN DIVISION							
San Jose	21	13	8	44	25	36	114
Dallas	21	12	9	37	35	33	105
Los Angeles	21	11	10	36	35	30	96
San Antonio	22	10	12	33	30	30	90
San Diego	22	9	13	26	42	25	79

(Total points: Win-6 pts., Loss-0 pts.: Bonus Points - one point is awarded for each goal scored up to a maximum of three per team per game.)

LEADING SCORERS	Games	Goals	Assists	Points
Derek Smethurst-Tampa Bay	21	19	4	42
Giorgio Chinaglia-New York	17	14	9	37
Pele-New York	20	11	14	36
Mike Stojanovic-Rochester	21	15	6	36
Ilija Mitic-San Jose	21	13	9	35
Alan Willey-Minnesota	18	14	6	34
Paul Child-San Jose	20	13	8	34
George Best-Los Angeles	21	14	5	33
Ron Futcher-Minnesota	20	13	6	32
Jeff Bourne-Dallas	19	13	3	29

LEADING GOALKEEPERS *	Minutes	Saves	Goals	Shutouts	Average
Mike Hewitt-San Jose	1372	122	13	5	0.85
Paolo Cimpiel-Toronto	1698	132	18	8	0.95
Tony Chursky-Seattle	1801	124	20	7	1.00
Arnold Mausser-Tampa Bay	1882	181	23	6	1.10
Bob Rigby-New York	1182	103	15	5	1.14
Shep Messing-New York	1548	151	20	5	1.16
Mervyn Cawston-Chicago	1977	153	26	6	1.18
Phil Parkes-Vancouver	1656	107	22	6	1.20
Van Taylor-Miami	1275	126	17	3	1.20
Geoff Barnett-Minnesota	1714	92	23	6	1.21

(*need 990 minutes to qualify)

LAST WEEK'S RESULTS (Home Team Listed Last)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28

DALLAS	0	
NEW YORK	4	Mifflin (Pele) 21:21; Chinaglia (Mifflin, Smith) 26:24; Chinaglia (Pele) 34:13; Chinaglia (Garbett, Mifflin) 87:23
Dallas		Cooper, Moffat, Wright (Cohen 37:00), Hall, Ley, Kewley, Turner (McLaughlin 45:00), Hope, Ryan, Bourne, Tynan (Rote 82:00)
New York		Messing, Smith, Roth, Eddy, Aitken, Garbett, Morais, Mifflin, Field (Siega 78:00), Chinaglia, Pele (Tinnion 82:00)
		Attendance - 19,119 Referee - Ernest Dingesz
HARTFORD	1	Foggon 51:25
ROCHESTER	2	Stojanovic (Odoi) 3:00; Stojanovic (I. Silva, Reynolds) 67:00
Hartford		Sherwood, Michalik, Thomson, L. Coyne, Formoso, Pike, Pires, O'Neill, McCully, Foggon, J. Coyne (Welsh 61:30)
Rochester		Tamindic, C. Silva (Reynolds 9:00), Fazlic, Mijatovic, Pollihan, Pedro, Escos, Odoi, I. Silva, Stojanovic, Archibald
		Attendance - 4,795 Referee - Paul Avis
WASHINGTON	3	Spavin 21:47; Trickovic 60:09; Macken 70:17
CHICAGO	4	(TB) Davies 3:05; Lowey (Kowalik, Davies) 11:12; Kowalik (Davies) 66:08
Washington		Martin, Jefferson, McConville, Ellam, Minton, Kerr, Macken, Spavin, Cannell, Ingram, Trickovic (Wilner 93:15)
Chicago		Cawston, Skotarek, Griffiths, Alon, Webb, Waldron, Robertson, Kelly, Kowalik, Davies (Geimer 87:13), Lowey
		Attendance - 3,725 Referee - Gordon Hill

FRIDAY, JULY 30

TAMPA BAY	7	Smethurst 14:55; Smethurst (Scullion) 21:42; Best 24:44; Smethurst (Scullion) 53:25; Smethurst (Marsh) 65:40; Jump (Best, Fink) 70:30; Lindsay (Marsh) 83:55
HARTFORD	0	
Tampa Bay		Mausser (Stetler 80:39), Quraishi, Jump, Smith, Pringle, Cantillo, Best (Wit 70:30), Scullion, Lindsay, Smethurst (Fink 66:00), Marsh
Hartford		Sherwood (DuChateau 65:16), L. Coyne, Pires, Michallik, Thomson, Formoso, Foggon, Pike, Taylor (J. Coyne 51:12), McCully, Horton
		Attendance - 3,800 Referee - Jim Highet
VANCOUVER	3	Budd 36:10; S. Lenarduzzi 63:50; Silvester 86:54
PHILADELPHIA	1	Luna 54:40
Vancouver		Parkes, Wilson, B. Lenarduzzi, S. Lenarduzzi, Robinson, Koeppel, McAndrew (Johnson 63:50), Alberts (Samson 59:45), Parson, Budd, Silvester
Philadelphia		Vizcaino, J. Gomez, Navarro, L. Perez, Straub, Medina, Herrada, Luna, V. Perez (Engerth 66:20), W. Gomez, B. Lopez
		Attendance - 2,285 Referee - Gino D'Ippolito
MIAMI	3	Fearnley 17:33; Bodonczy (Rosul, Fearnley) 25:35; Lawler (Baumann, Bodonczy) 62:11
SAN DIEGO	4	Minnock (Welch) 18:45; Roboostoff (Joy) 39:43; Wark (Welch, McGill) 51:55; Stephens 67:48
Miami		Taylor, Lawler, Holton, Aguirre, Hamlyn, Mulroy (Baumann 45:), Evanson (Shields 88:50), Sharp, Fearnley, Rosul, Bodonczy (Marshall 83:10)
San Diego		Mayer (St. Clair 45;00), Stephens, Napier, Trevis, Hockey, Joy, McGill, Welch, Wark, Roboostoff, Minnock
		Attendance - 6,200 Referee - Enrique Ruvalcaba

SATURDAY, JULY 31

LOS ANGELES	0	
SEATTLE	1	(TB)
Los Angeles		Mishalow, Fagan, Smith, Davies, Moraldo, Marsh, Mason, Cooke, McAlinden, Sorgic (M. Lopez 77:53), Best
Seattle		Chursky, Webster, Gillett, England, McLaughlan, Skeels, Jenkins, Gabriel (D'Errico 72:34), Butler, Hurst, Redknapp
		Attendance - 25,810 Referee - John Davies

LAST WEEK'S RESULTS (Home Team Listed Last)

SATURDAY, JULY 31

VANCOUVER 5 Parsons (Hetzke) 32:04; Koeppel (Woof) 63:16; Parsons (Wilson) 75:34; Sampson (Wilson) 83:09; Sampson (Parson) 84:03

ST. LOUIS 0

Vancouver: Parkes, Wilson, Hetzke, Wilson, Robinson, Koeppel (Alberts 66:39), McAndrew, Sampson, Woof, Parsons, Johnson

St. Louis: Bond, Matteson (ejected 81:57), Hudson, Rensing, Verdi, Fear, Clarke, Trost, McBridge, Vaninger (Humphreys 45:00), Bokern

Attendance - 4,137 Referee - Bob Evans

SAN DIEGO 3 Wark 26:50; Welch 38:49; Wark 46:16

SAN ANTONIO 2 Counce (Thomson) 27:37; Hood 66:02

San Diego: Mayer, Hockey (Renery 45;00), Napier, Trevis, Stephens, Joy, McGill, Wark, Welsh, Minnock, Roboostoff

San Antonio: Mannos, Berico, Moore (Carenza 60:11), Matosas, Stahl, Moreira, Thomson, Hood, Counce, Martin (Kodelja 60:11), Callaghan

Attendance - 4,500 Referee - Manuel Ortiz

MIAMI 0

SAN JOSE 3 Mitic (Calloway, Moore) 52:45; Mitic 57:16; Child (Molnar, Moore) 79:25

Miami: Nuttall, Hamlyn, Shields (Holton 60:00), Aguirre, Sharp, Mulroy (Lawler 65:30), Fearnley, Baumann, Marshall, Rosul, Bodonczy (Evanson 60:00)

San Jose: Hewitt, M. Demling, Pavlovic, Rowlands, Calloway, Mitic, Kemp, Molnar, Moore, Child, Simoes

Attendance - 21,225 Referee - George Craggs

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1

TAMPA BAY 4 Best (Smethurst) 56:05; Marsh 61:20; Best 75:05; Smethurst (Marsh) 75:45

BOSTON 2 Borges 55:10; Garcia 85:05

Tampa Bay: Mausser (Stetler 84:05), Quraishi (Bluem 75:45), Smith, Jump, Pringle, Lindsay, Cantillo, Marsh, Scullion (Wit 78:00), Best, Smethurst

Boston: Carais (Guerry 75:00), Oliveira (Garcia 62:10), Soroa, Wooler, Scanlon, Gomez, Walsh, Jelinek, Borges, Bowery, Forte

Attendance - 986 Referee - Gordon Hill

MINNESOTA 2 Futcher (Bick) 13:17; Futcher (Netsolengue, Willey) 40:25

PORTLAND 0

Minnesota: Barnett, Webster, Litt, Merrick, Spraggon, Bick, Brine, West, Netsolengue, Willey, Futcher

Portland: Cumbes, Martin, Rioch, Smallwood, Hoban, Dangerfield, Hendrie, Betts, Smith (Carey 49:46), Rogers, Kelly

Attendance - 17,153 Referee - John Davies

ST. LOUIS 1 Vaninger (Fear) 17:08

CHICAGO 3 Kelly 54:10; Kowalik (Webb, Robertson) 58:50; Kowalik (Davies, Griffiths) 89:35

St. Louis: Jokerst, Matteson, Hudson, Rensing, Verdi, Clarke, O'Leary, Trost, McBride (Dorsey 80:42), Vaninger, Fear

Chicago: Cawston, Redmond (Waldron 45:00), Lamptey, Griffiths, Webb, Robertson, Skotarek, Kelly, Peplow, Davies, Geimer (Kowalik 45:00)

Attendance - 4,357 Referee - Mike Wuertz

WASHINGTON 1 Macken (Thomson) 80:34

ROCHESTER 2 Stojanovic (Pedro, Calado) 5:40; Stojanovic (Escos, Moia) 13:55

Washington: Martin, Minton, Ellam, Jefferson, Thomson, Darrell, Kerr, Cannell, Ingram, Macken (McCully 80:34), Trickovic

Rochester: Tamindic, Calado, Fazlic, Mijatovic, Pollijan, Pedro (Gannon 19:10), Escos, Odoi, Moia, Stojanovic, I. Silva

Attendance - 4,640 Referee - Jim Highet