NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE
NASL

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NEWS RELEASE

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TORONTO WINS NASL CHAMPIONSHIP...RECORD CROWD AT SOCCER BOWL-76 CONCLUDES MOST SUCCESSFUL SEASON

NEW YORK, August 31---The Toronto Metros have captured the 1976 North American Soccer League title defeating the Minnesota Kicks 3-0 in Seattle's Kingdome before a championship-game record crowd of 25,765 and a national television audience.

The attendance figure at the Seattle championship game brought the NASL's playoff average to 24,937 for the 11 post-season games. Minnesota established a single game record of 49,572 in their Pacific Conference Championship Game win over San Jose.

Toronto advanced to the championship game via a most difficult route. Finishing second in the Northern Division in regular season play gave Toronto the home game vs. Rochester in the first round. A last second goal advanced the Metros to the second round in Chicago against the division champion Sting. Toronto won 3-2 on a tie-breaker.

The next step was in Tampa and an Atlantic Conference championship meeting with Tampa Bay, the NASL defending champions. Toronto upset the Rowdies 2-0 to advance to the final.

Minnesota advanced by defeating Seattle and San Jose in Pacific Conference playoff games.

The experience of the Toronto team was evident in the title match. Eusebio got the Metros into the lead with a direct kick goal in the 40th minute of the first half.

Second half goals by Ivan Lukacevic and Ivair Ferreira, the leading scorer in the playoffs, provided the margin of victory. Goalkeeper Zeljko Bilecki recorded the shutout and midfielder Wolfgang Suhnholz was named the game's outstanding player.

The appearance of the Metros was their first in an NASL championship game. They were eliminated in the playoff quarterfinals last year and in the semifinals in 1973.

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The victory by Toronto kept in tact the NASL's apparent tradition that no champion repeats. The Metros are the league's 10th different champion in as many years.

1976 PLAYOFF RESULTS

Date	Teams & Results	Attendance
August 17	Washington 0 at New York 2	22,698
August 18	Vancouver 0 at Seattle 1	30,406
August 18	Los Angeles 0 at Dallas 2	9,413
August 18	Rochester 1 at Toronto 2	6,852
August 20	New York 1 at Tampa Bay 3	36,863
August 20	Toronto 3 at Chicago 2	8,150
August 20	Dallas 0 at San Jose 2	15,135
August 21	Seattle 0 at Minnesota 3	41,405
August 24*	Toronto 2 at Tampa Bay 0	28,046
August 25**	San Jose 1 at Minnesota 3	49,572
August 28***	TORONTO 3 Minnesota 0	25,765

* Atlantic Conference Championship Game
** Pacific Conference Championship Game
*** NASL Championship Game

Total Playoff Attendance: 274,304 (24,937 avg)

LEADING SCORERS IN PLAYOFFS

Player	Games	Goals	Assists	Total Points
Ivair Ferreira (Tor)	4	4	2	10
Ade Coker (Minnesota)	3	3	0	6
Ilija Mitic (San Jose)	2	3	0	6
Eusebio (Toronto)	4	2	2	6
Pele (New York)	2	2	1	5

Wolfgang Suhnholz Named MVP of Soccer Bowl-76

Midfielder Wolfgang Suhnholz of the champion Toronto Metros has been named the most valuable player in the North American Soccer League's championship game, Soccer Bowl-76.

The 5-10, 163 pound native of Berlin, controlled the midfield and the pace of the game during the Metros 3-0 win over Minnesota in Seattle's Kingdome.

Suhnholz joined the Metros at midseason in a trade from Vancouver. Before coming to the NASL, Suhnholz was on two Bayern Munchen teams which won German championships.

NASL Annual General Meeting Set for Minneapolis-October 11-15

The annual general meeting of the North American Soccer League will be held in Minneapolis, Minn. October 11-15.

Such items as the 1977 schedule and format, the site of the 1977 championship game, and possible expansion are scheduled to be discussed during the gathering of owners and general managers.

NASL Photo Contest Entries Due

Entries in the 1976 NASL photo contest are due in the league office by mid-September for judging. All entries should be postmarked no later than September 13.

Professional photographers may enter photographs and/or slides in each of four categories: black and white action, black and white feature, color action, and color feature.

Cash prizes are awarded in each category for the top three entries. In addition, the winner of each category receives an expense paid trip to the 1977 NASL championship game.