THE GRAPEVINE

STOMPERS SIGN LEAGUE'S TOP ACTIVE GOALKEEPER; MESSING SIGNS ONE-YEAR PACT WITH CLUB 2-27-78

The Oakland Stompers of the North American Soccer have announced the signing of goalkeeper Shep Messing to a one-year contract which will make him the highest paid American player in the league. Messing played last year with the NASL champions, the New York Cosmos and became a free agent when he could not reach terms with the Cosmos earlier this year.

"We have landed what is perhaps our most important player signing yet," commented Stompers GM Dick Berg from New York where he signed the 28-year old goalkeeper. "He will lend experience and leadership to our first-year club and we are very pleased we were able to reach an accord."

Messing, a 1972 graduate of Harvard University where he was an All-American goalie, leads all active NASL goalkeepers in the category of goals-against average per game over a career. In five years and nearly 6,000 minutes of play, Messing has earned a 1.29 GAA. Mirko Stojanovic, head coach of the Stompers, leads all goalkeepers with a 1.11 mark in over 7,000 minutes of action.

Messing, contacted in New York, expressed satisfaction with his 1978 pact. "I was looking at three very important things when I signed with Oakland. The area is perfect as far as soccer support is concerned, the Stompers management is top-notch and is led by one of the greatest goalies to play the game, and, third, the money was right. I am very excited about playing for the Stompers."

Messing's best season as a pro came in 1975 when he played with the now-defunct Boston Minutemen. That year, the 6-0, 170 lb. netminder led the league with a 0.93 goals-against average. He also held the top slot for the most saves, detouring 144 of the opposition's shots.

The signing of Messing, who is well-known for his centerfold appearance in VIVA Magazine in 1974, brings to nine the total of players signed by the Stompers. The club has begun its second week of practice at Cal State Hayward and Messing will join the club later this week.

#end

Oakland Stompers Soccer
7901 Oakport Street, Suite 140 South
Oakland, CA 94621

For more information contact:
Steve Des Georges—Public Relations Director
(415) 632-GOAL, (415) 865-2062

MEMBER NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE