

Club sponsors show of world soccer greats

Four members of the Birmingham Athletic Club, including three Birmingham residents, provided the money to bring Pele, the world's greatest soccer player, to Pontiac Stadium for a Labor Day game. Several of us put a few bucks together and we're bringing him here," said Lane, the one Southfield resident of the BAC quartet.

Lane simplified the amount of money involved. Gordon Preston, the copromoter of the event, said it took \$85,000 to put on the game between Pele's team, the New York Cosmos, and the Dallas Tornado at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 6 at Pontiac Stadium.

Monday will be a tough day to draw a crowd, but we'll try it anyway," Lane said. "The reason I'm personally inter-

ested in the game is to give some fellow who play soccer a chance to really see top-flight soccer players more than any economic gain.

"He'll return in one year, and this may be the last time kids from this area have a chance to see him."

Lane, who became a soccer fan while working in Europe for the Ford Motor Co., said that he hopes that the Detroit Tiger game against Baltimore that same night will not detract from the soccer attend-

ance.

THE IDEA for the special soccer game originated between Preston and Tru resident Roger Faulkner, who is helping to promote the game. Both are natives of England, where soccer is a national sport.

Gordon and I met downtown a couple months ago and whenever we met, we talked about putting a soccer game on Faulkner said. "He made a chance call to New York to see what the chances of getting Pele and the Cosmos were. He came back with the figures and said, 'There's no way we can raise the money.'

I said, 'Let's look at the attendance requirements, and that I could probably raise the money in two or three days. I sat on the patio of the BAC and talked with some members and I had raised the support in about four days.'

Faulkner said the biggest soccer crowd ever before in Michigan was 12,000. He added that the people at the BAC were worried about bringing in the expensive Pele to an expensive facility like Pontiac Stadium but decided to go ahead hoping that the popularity of the world's greatest soccer player would attract a good crowd.

The 40,000-seat Pontiac Stadium was built with soccer in mind. Preston said the stadium architect called him to make sure

the playing field would be large enough for soccer games.

A turnout of 20,000 was needed for the group to break even. Pele has drawn 50,000 fans in Seattle and record crowds in Minnesota, Tampa and Portland.

DAVID WILLIAMS, a Birmingham resident and a native of England is one of those persons Faulkner talked to on the BAC patio.

"We're anxious for the game of soccer to flourish in this area," Williams said. "We know the schools are starting up with the sport, and I'm glad to believe that there are 14,000 youngsters playing soccer in England."

"We feel that teenagers more interested in the sport," Williams added, "we have to show them a good brand of soccer."

Williams called the Detroit Cougars a defunct professional soccer team, a third-rate team that did not play a good brand of soccer.

The vice-president of Power Process Piping, Williams said he once played semi-pro soccer in England.

"The advantage of soccer is anyone can play and it's relatively inexpensive," Williams said. "If you can afford a pair of soccer boots and a ball, you've got all the equipment. You don't have to be any particular size to play. You can play whether you're light or heavy."

"We're changing one step beyond," Williams added. "It's a new era ready for a professional soccer team." This game will perhaps tell us that. If we have a good showing, we must take the next step."

STAN KEND, a Birmingham resident and divisional sales manager for Investors Diversified Services, said he had never heard of Pele until talk about the special

game began. His nine-year-old son, who plays in the growing 22-member Birmingham Soccer Association, knew who Pele was and told his father.

"I got interested in soccer when my son wanted a soccer ball instead of a football all of a sudden," Kend said. "I am 40 years old, and when I went to high school, the sport was football. I'm trying to relate to this new generation, and so I got interested."

"I go to my son's practices and I'm really getting involved," Kend said. "By the time Pele gets here, I think I'll know what's going on and be able to enjoy the game."

DR. LEE BERTLING, a Birmingham dentist, is another member of the BAC group with soccer playing experience. He said he played at Cranbrook in the early 1940s and then stopped playing because the other schools he went to did not offer the sport.

His interest in the group began with a conversation with Faulkner, and he grew more confident about the game after hearing enthusiastic comments from some of his patients who play soccer.

"It's an inexpensive sport," Dr. Bertling said. "All you need is a pair of shoes and a ball. You don't even need soccer shoes, and you don't need pads, helmets or skates. From that standpoint, I feel it will become one of the major sports."

"My son," he added, "is a neophyte, 12 years old, and I'm anxious for him to see another sport. He sees nothing but football, hockey and baseball. A lot of kids will be able to see a soccer game with two of the best teams in the business, and I feel it's really going to stimulate interest."

"I HAVE no intention in participating in a professional soccer program," he added.

"I personally would like to see soccer become a major sport in Detroit inasmuch as there are so many kids playing."

The Windsor Star soccer team in Canada and a Royal Oak man, Scott Woodward, who is not a member of the BAC, are also helping to bring about the Cosmos-Tornado game.

Illias also features a star player in Kyle Rote Jr., twice winner of the ABC-TV Superstar competition. Rote was a North American Soccer League scoring champion and won the rookie of the year award in 1973.

Tickets are on sale at Pontiac Stadium and at all Hudson stores. All seats are reserved at \$4, \$6, \$8 and \$10.

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Dick Vitale offers
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Dick Vitale has done it again. The University of Detroit's dynamic 36-year-old basketball coach and resident of West Bloomfield, the man who introduced Titan Roundball Lunches, midnight intramural basketball games, programing, routines and spotlight player introductions to Detroit basketball fans has topped all his previous efforts.

Vitalie announced Thursday, Aug. 26 that the University of Detroit has offered an athletic scholarship to Detroit Tiger rookie pitching sensation Mark "The Bird" Fidrych, pending confirmation that he meets National Collegiate Athletic Association regulations. A ruling a few years ago allows a student athlete to participate in a professional sport yet compete at the college level in other sports.

Fidrych, who has captured the hearts of Tiger fans this year with his outstanding pitching, the now holds a 15-5 record and a 2.11 earned run average and has an ace on the mound of talking to the ball, would enter the University of Detroit this fall if he meets the requirements and he accepts the scholarship offer.

The move would bring together two of Detroit's most flamboyant sports personalities. Vitale, a former Rutgers University assistant, has rejuvenated the University of Detroit basketball program over the past three years, more than doubling season ticket sales, recruiting some of the area's best prep basketball stars and compiling a 52-26 win-loss record.

"WE ARE SERIOUSLY interested in Mark attending UD if he meets the NCAA standards," Vitale said. "The primary regulation involves a 2.0 grade average upon completion of high school."

"I personally feel that from a publicity standpoint, the university will benefit immensely," Vitale said. "However, from the other viewpoint, you must consider that Mark is going to be presented with many financial offers during the next few years."

"I believe our business school is one of the finest in the country," Vitale added. "And a business management degree would help him tremendously. Not only would he receive a college education, but

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