

SHORT PASSES



LYNN BERLING-MANUEL

Rings for Home Depot Center

... The U.S. Olympic Committee has designated the **HOME DEPOT CENTER** in Southern California an "official training site." The move, which will draw athletes, Olympic officials and world-class events to the Center, positions Los Angeles as an Olympic business center as the USOC embarks on what appears to be a major restructuring, reports **ALAN ABRAHAMSON** of the *Los Angeles Times*. "Immediately, the USOC's designation, formally announced [Feb. 7], means enhanced training opportunities — and matches and meets — for soccer, track, cycling and tennis athletes at the \$140-million, privately financed complex, developed by AEG, the firm backed by Denver billionaire Philip Anschutz," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. AEG gets to use the five-ring Olympic symbol at the facility. Most significantly, the designation carries the possibility of further development of what AEG president **TIM LEIWEKE** a few months ago described as a massive shopping/hotel/entertainment complex. The Home Depot Center is on the Cal State Dominguez Hills campus in Carson. There's still a long way to go in the development's approvals process by campus and city officials, but during the annual Honda Symposium in Beverly Hills last October, Leiweke described his vision of a sports/entertainment mecca that would become a prime destination for the great international soccer teams of the world. The soccer stadium is scheduled to open on June 1, 2003. ...

Donovan signs with Pepsi

... **LANDON DONOVAN** will be one of three pro athletes to be part of **PEPSI'S** "Get Out There and Play" program. The 20-year-old U.S. and **SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES** star will appear alongside Major League Baseball's **TROY GLAUS** and the National Football League's **DONOVAN McNABB**. The six-month blitz by Pepsi (March through September) will use Donovan, Glaus and McNabb in a nationwide

campaign targeted at middle-school students to raise their level of fitness through sports. A skills poster sponsored and produced by Pepsi will include the three athletes and will be distributed to about 10,000 junior high schools and 2,000 Wal-Mart stores in the United States. As part of the "Get out There and Play" program, Donovan will be the league's athlete representative for the 2003 Pepsi MLS Dribble, Pass & Score, the largest national grassroots soccer skills competition in the country, which targets 150,000 children. Donovan will present the award to the winners at the national finals and lend his name and signature, with MLS Commissioner **DON GARBER**, on each child's certificate of participation. Hopefully, this is the just one of many product endorsements to come for Donovan.

Woog changing roles

... **DAN WOOG**, who has long served as the esteemed executive editor of *Soccer America's* Youth Soccer Letter, is leaving that role. We're delighted that Dan has agreed to continue contributing to *Soccer America* on a periodic basis. Because of changes in our editorial direction, starting with this issue, Soccer America's in-house editorial team will take on the duties of covering the rising stars, innovative programs and breaking news of youth soccer. Dan, who recently appeared on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" and "The Phil Donahue Show," is an author, speaker and popular newspaper columnist. He is also the new head varsity soccer coach at his alma mater, **STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL**, in Westport, Conn. ...

Congrats to Accelerade winners

... Congratulations to **KATIE GAVENUS** of Homer, Alaska, and **ANDRES LEON** of San Diego — the first winners of the **ACCELERADE TEEN PLAYERS OF THE MONTH**. They represent about as far north and south as you can go in the USA! The Accelerade folks want to let you know it's not necessary to re-nominate a player. Players not selected for this month's award stay in the pool for future monthly selections. Nominations should be sent to soccernominations@yahoo.com. ...

Marcos to wed

... **UNITED SOCCER LEAGUES** founder and

soccer visionary **FRANCISCO MARCOS** is tying the knot with his longtime love, **BEVERLY WRIGHT**, July 27 in Portugal. A gala, international event is planned with family and friends traveling in from around the world. Our congratulations and warmest wishes go to the couple. ...

USL signs with Demosphere

... The USL, which recently won a lengthy legal battle to regain its Web site address usl.com, has signed **DEMOSPHERE** to be the power behind its new Web site. Demosphere is the Web partner for a vast array soccer folks, including FIFA, U.S. Youth Soccer, the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and the U.S. Soccer Foundation. The USL's revamped site is due to debut in early March. ...

U.S. U-17s to play in Dallas Cup

... Coach **JOHN ELLINGER** will bring the U.S. U-17 team to **DALLAS CUP XXIV** in April to play in the Super Group Tournament in preparation for the Under-17 World Cup in Finland in August, for which it will hopefully have qualified. With **BENFICA** (Portugal), **RIO GRANDE DO SUL** (Brazil), **NEWCASTLE UNITED** (England), **SAPRISSA** (Costa Rica) and other top international opponents, the U-17s will gain valuable experience for the ultimate test in Finland. Ten members of Coach Ellinger's squad have already played for their club teams in Dallas Cup tournaments. Ellinger may consider the Dallas Cup a good luck event. In 1999, Ellinger brought the U-17s to Dallas Cup XX before finishing fourth in at the U-17 World Championship — the best U.S. finish ever. With teams from Brazil, Mexico, England, Germany, the Netherlands and Colombia competing, the Dallas Cup exposed the U-17s to the various styles of play that they would encounter in New Zealand. The Americans beat New Zealand, drew with Poland, beat Uruguay in the first round. They beat Mexico in the quarterfinals to advance to the semifinals, where they lost to Australia in a shootout. Landon Donovan won the Golden Ball (MVP) and **DaMARCUS BEASLEY** took the Silver Ball. ...

(People, power, politics, products ... do you have news for Short Passes? Send the inside scoop to lynn@socceramerica.com. Not receiving exclusive Soccer America subscriber-only e-letters SoccerAmericaDaily, MLS Confidential or Women's Soccer Insider? E-mail your name, ZIP code and preferred e-delivery address to Janet@socceramerica.com. Or you can call Janet directly at 510-559-2230.)