

Soccer captain Loeber picked in first round of MISL draft

By GREG STREHMEL
Staff Writer

At 5-foot-5, Tommy Loeber was the smallest person on this past season's Gamecock soccer squad. However, the former team captain and star defender's play was big enough to land him a spot in the world of professional soccer.

Loeber was selected in the first round of the Major Indoor Soccer League draft in Kansas City this past Wednesday by the San Diego Sockers. The defending champion Sockers drafted Loeber with the final (eighth) pick of the first round.

The defender had been participating in the East-West Indoor Classic sponsored by the MISL, in which he was chosen as the Defensive Star of the all-star game on Feb. 12. Loeber tallied two assists for the West squad in a 6-5 defeat.

Loeber had been an iron man for the Gamecock kickers since arriving in Columbia from Arlington, Tex. in 1986. As a freshman he stepped into USC's lineup and played every minute of every game except for part of an NCAA tournament contest against Duke when he suffered a concussion.

In the summer of 1987, Loeber played on the U.S. Olympic Festival South squad and he was looking forward to a big sophomore season when disaster struck. Playing in a game in Texas, he was

fouled from behind and a ligament in his right knee was torn apart.

Some people said he'd never walk again, much less be able to run and play soccer. However, he hadn't become one of the top players in the United States by being a quitter.

Loeber returned to USC in the fall of 1987 and began the grueling, painful, slow process of rehabilitating his leg.

When the fall of 1988 rolled around he was back on the field for the Gamecocks. That year Loeber again played every minute of all 22 games and was a key figure in leading USC all the way to the Final Four.

Again Loeber led the way in 1989, playing 22 straight games without a break. The Gamecocks advanced to the final eight that year.

In 1990 Loeber set a new career record by starting 87 games for USC. The old mark was held by Billy McMullan with 79.

Loeber has been a prime reason that USC's program has made giant leaps in getting national recognition the past few years.

"There's a huge sense of pride in what we've been able to do," Loeber said. "It's changed greatly since I first came here. Now we are starting to get recognized on the street as soccer players and we

have people wanting our autographs. That's definitely not the reason we play, but it does make you feel that all of the hard work is for a purpose, and that one day you might become an All-American."

Loeber did earn All-American honors as a freshman and senior. He even scored — something which is unusual for a defender.

"It was great getting a goal, but the best thing was it couldn't have come at a better time," Loeber said. "We were playing Erskine in 1988 and with just a minute left they led 2-1. I got a pass from Jeff Love and headed it in the net to tie things up."

That goal forced an overtime period and the rejuvenated Gamecocks exploded for a 5-2 win. That was Loeber's one and only goal, but he did have two assists this past year, one each in games against UCLA and Wake Forest.

Defense, though, is really Loeber's trademark and he was recognized as the Most Valuable Defensive Player in the Met Life Classic in 1988. Being a good defensive player is to a large degree a matter of pride, according to Loeber.

"You have to put aside wanting to push up and trying to score," he said. "You have to concentrate on your man and you have to be



File photo

USC captain Tommy Loeber demonstrates the fine defensive ability that earned him a first round selection in last week's MISL draft.

aware of what his strengths are. Is he really fast or does he have a good left foot? You have to evaluate him in the first five minutes and then you have to try to take away his strong point.

"If he has a strong left side you

don't let him shoot with that foot and if he's very fast, you smother him and keep the ball away. As a defender you must be especially smart," he said.

Loeber was not only smart

enough on the field to have the opportunity to play in a professional

league, he had a 3.2 grade point average and was a Dean's List student this past spring. He plans to graduate with an HRTA degree.

90.5 WUSC-FM 90.5

So, Gamecock ads are a waste?

Then why are you reading one?
Advertise in The Gamecock and get results! Call 777-4249 for details.

Balfour
College Rings

One Hundred Reasons
to Buy Your College Ring
NOW!



Up to **\$100 OFF!**

Save \$100 on 18K, \$50 on 14K and \$25 on 10K gold rings, in great designs only from Balfour. Order yours today—this special Age of Reasons won't last forever!

Where: University Bookstore Russell House When: Wed., Thurs., Fri. Feb. 27, 28, Mar. 1

Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Balfour: Your Local Class Ring Company
1226 Pickens St. Suite 5
254-5330

BR-93

**LOOK
CLOTHING
STORES**

602 BUSH RIVER RD.
798-9026
BELOW DUTCH
SQUARE MALL

4714 FOREST DR.
787-7022
BETWEEN RICHLAND
FASHION MALL
AND TRENHOLM PLAZA.



FASHION WIMPS GET WHAT THEY DESERVE.

BUCKLE UP!
It's Our Law

"The United Way works 365 days a year, not just the day they take up the money."

The United Way is
The Way Of Love.

**LADIES!
YOU BE THE JUDGES!**

NO BUTTS

ABOUT IT....



1990-91 CALENDAR COMPETITION

**IS THE HOTTEST
LADIES NIGHT
EVENT**

OF THE YEAR!

You're In For An EVENT-FULL Experience!

BUNS N' ROSES NIGHT

Starting February 14th

Finals March 28th

Each and Every Thursday in Feb. & March at **Saints** in the Sheraton
I-20 & Bush River Rd. 731-0300

Sponsored by Laroux Schnapps, Sarah Ann's Undercover World, Gold's Gym, and Saints

**Lizard's
Thicket**

real

'Country Cooking'

Breakfast-Lunch-Supper

BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE!

Please bring this coupon to
**LIZARD'S THICKET, 921 SUMTER STREET
CORNELL ARMS BUILDING (across from HORSESHOE)**

buy ONE meal and get SECOND meal of equal or lesser value **FREE!**

(Does not include beverages or desserts)

OFFER GOOD EVERYDAY 4PM-10PM.

FOR EAT-IN ONLY. NO CARRY-OUTS.

Expires 3/4/91

Concrete Blonde
bloodletting

Johnette Napolitano - vocals, bass

James Mankey - guitars, bass

Paul Thompson - drums

Features the lead track

"jOey"

**OPENING
FOR STING!**

Saturday,
March 2



SALE 7.99 13.99 CD

TRACKS
MUSIC & VIDEO
Record Bar

On Sale
Through March 6th.

RECORD BAR
TRACKS

COLUMBIA Dutch Square Mall

COLUMBIA Harden St., Five Points 779-6046, Richland Fashion Mall

I.R.S.