

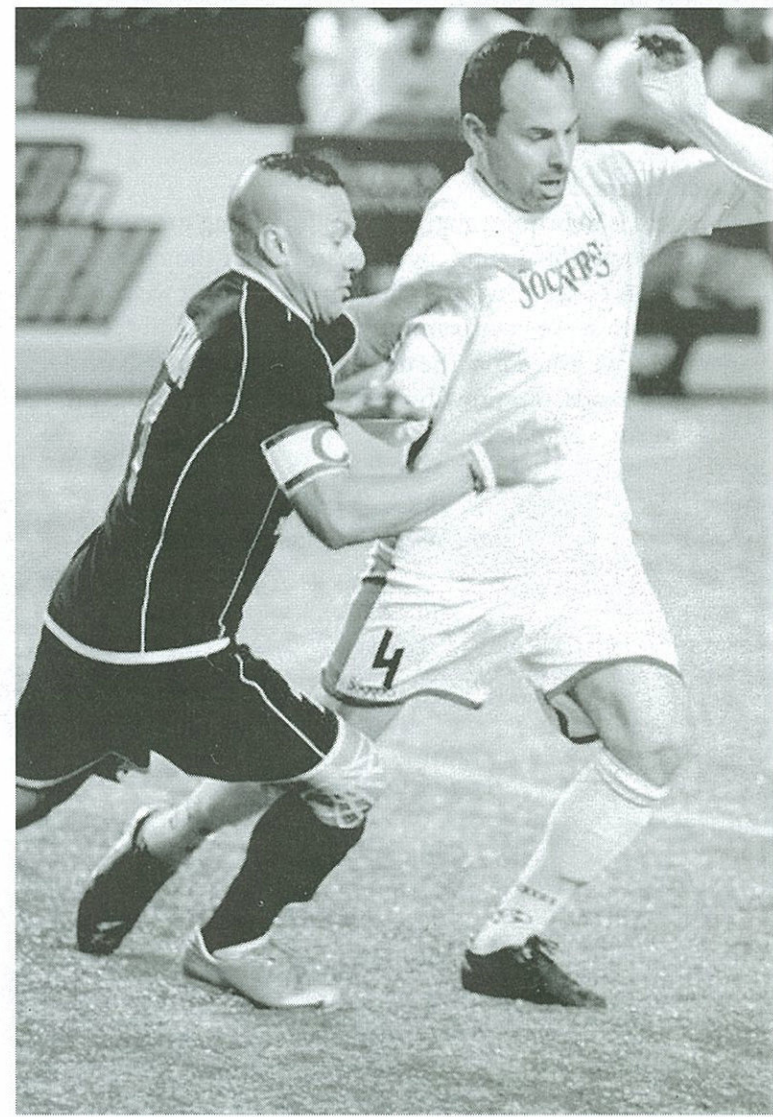
Best-kept secret Sockers ready for second Del Mar season

By Jeanne Ferris

There's a new kid in town — well, maybe, not a kid. OK, maybe not new either. Maybe call it the area's best kept secret — the San Diego Sockers pro indoor soccer team, playing its matches at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. The newly hired general manager for the San Diego Sockers is "Coach" John Kentera, pre-and-post game host for the San Diego Padres, as well as daily talk-show host at XX 1090-AM sports radio. He has been "Coach" for more than 20 years, mentoring and coaching student athletes before his radio career, including guiding draftees and/or signed professional baseball contract players. On board with the Sockers for one year, the affable, hard-working veteran radio personality Kentera, is at the helm to run business and game day operations while retaining his Padres voice and to help the Sockers defend their 11th professional indoor soccer championship, the PASL-PRO title. Phil Salvagio, co-owner and head coach will continue

with the Sockers to focus on coaching for the 2010-2011 season, with the home opener against Tacoma on Nov. 20, at 6:15 p.m. The home games are played right here in the Del Mar Arena at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. An affordable family entertainment and with ample seating for 3,500, early bird tickets (as in buy it before 11/20) begin at \$15 for a floor seat or \$8 for grandstand. According to the Sockers' website, children (5-12 years old) can become a Jr. Socker for only \$70 per season. This includes their own grandstand ticket, Sockers t-shirt, Sockers hat and encouraged to be on the field and high five the players as they run through the tunnel. For date night, there is a full bar available. Purchase season tickets by calling (619) 799-GOAL or go to HYPERLINK "<http://www.sdsockers.com>" www.sdsockers.com. Hopes are high for the Sockers and not just because Kentera is navigating behind the scenes. Another dream team has been assembled with veteran midfielder and San Diego local, Paul Wright, 41, signed for

his third tour of duty with the team. Wright scored a goal and four assists in the championship season closer against Guadalajara in a gum-chomping 9-8 win, which resulted in the North American crown. He was ranked seventh in the league in scoring and ranked third in assists. Also, back on board the championship team sans three players, is charismatic team co-captain, Aaron Susi whom, Kentera has called, "The next David Beckham." Susi, 36, is a San Diego local, grew up in Pacific Beach and attended Mission Bay High School. He has played pro soccer for 14 years and in the off-season, works at a sales job for his dad's contracting company. Susi is a fine example of clean living and who could consider mentorship as his next vocation. Susi chuckled when asked if he had as many tattoos as Beckham and replied, "No, I don't have any tattoos, but yes, I can bend it like Beckham." Susi's advise to aspiring young pro soccer players? "Practice makes permanent, keep your head on straight and stay away from bad people. Go to



The San Diego Sockers play their pro soccer matches at the Del Mar Fairgrounds Arena. (Courtesy)

school." In kinship with the L.A. Galaxy, the scheduled voice of the Sockers is Phil Tutino. Coach Kentera's excitement is infectious and has unabashedly been working around the clock recruiting team spon-

sors. "Everybody on the team is playing for the pure love of the game and we hope the fans reward them by filling the seats," he said.