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1. Trip leaves lasting impressive on Stammler

By: Stefan Bondy
Herald News
June 18, 2008

The boy in the photo is nameless, his tight-lipped stare showing traces of a smile.

Seth Stammler estimates the boy is 10 years old, just one of many impoverished children the Red Bulls midfielder encountered during a trip to Haiti two years ago. The unlikely pair shared a brief friendship and a paneled ball on a soccer field that November day, then posed together for a photo that hangs in Stammler's home. A language barrier made it difficult for Stammler to get further details.

"We just hit it off. We kicked the ball around, we juggled, we bonded," Stammler said. "I was touched by the whole thing."

Meeting the boy is a special memory for Stammler, and it has inspired his charity work in Haiti. Although they couldn't converse, Stammler understood full well the child's disadvantaged upbringing. Most kids in

Haiti don't attend school, and roughly 45 percent of adults are illiterate. The majority of schools are private and expensive, out of reach for the boy in the photo.

Stammler witnessed this daily struggle during a six-day trip with Haitian-American rapper Wyclef Jean and former teammate Jozy Altidore, whose parents were born in Haiti. About eight months after returning, Stammler launched Sporting Chance Foundation - a charity run out of his family home in Columbus, Ohio. The purpose is to provide scholarships and clean water to Haitian children.

"My first intention was just to go down there and see what life was like. It was pretty random," said Stammler, who conducted soccer clinics during the trip and was involved in food and clothing distribution. "But being there was inspiring. I started thinking that I wanted to do more to give back."

Stammler, 26, is a consistent face in an otherwise revolving Red Bulls lineup, playing in 77 games since being drafted in the second round by the MetroStars in 2004. He also was also help through personal time commitment rather than just money.

Literacy and health are the goals. Soccer provides the means.

"I have time outside of practice," he said. "Financially, it's not like I'm an NBA player who has enough money to just give away. But I do have extra time, and I figured I should use that to give back.

"I wanted to do more than speak at a school."

Like most athletes in MLS, Stammler needs a career after soccer, a way to earn a living after his modest salary ends. With a finance degree from the University of Maryland and an eye for business, Stammler believes the legwork involved in establishing the foundation is part of that future.

"I've had to register [the charit] with the IRS, organize the fund-raisers," he said. "It's one thing to go to school and read books, but here I've put those theories into practice."

Stammler plans to return to Haiti in December with his father, Bradley, the treasurer of Sporting Chance Foundation. In the meantime, they've organized fund-raising events in Ohio, New York and New Jersey.

He estimates a \$60 donation can send a child to school for one year. And maybe that will put a bigger smile on the face of the young boy he befriended. Reach Stefan Bondy at bondys@northjersey.com

2. SBI MLS Power Rankings: Week 12

By: Steve Cangialosi –
MSG GameOn! Blog
June 18, 2008

Foxborough isn't the Red Bulls' destination of choice right now, but that's what the schedule serves up this week as New York looks to avoid a dip under the .500 mark for the first time this season and compete with the first-place Revolution.

Before boarding an AMTRAK train for New England Tuesday afternoon, Head Coach Juan Carlos Osorio insisted that his team's performance Saturday night against D.C. United was "unacceptable," and that it's time to figure out whether certain players belong on his team.

Redbulls_061708reWhile Osorio would not publicly reveal his entire starting lineup (he never does), he did confirm that Dave Vandenberg will move to left back for Saturday night's clash with the Revolution, and that he would prefer to leave the Dutchman at that position for the remainder of the season.

The Red Bulls are anticipating the arrival of at least three new players next month, including a left-sided midfielder.

Osorio said the team has already begun the process of procuring visas for potential additions to the team, a clear indication that he is anxious to bring in new blood, and that his present roster is inadequate.

Striker Juan Pablo Angel was reported to be "pain free" Tuesday for the first time since suffering a disc herniation, but did not make the trip to New England. Osorio holds out hope that he'll suit up for Saturday's home game versus FC Dallas. Jeff Parke will not be in the starting lineup; Kevin Goldthwaite and Andrew Boyens will make up the central defense tandem.

Bad news for Red Bulls' fans: Word from New England is that Matt Reis, who leads MLS with five shutouts this season, will be in goal after reporting for U.S. National Team duty over the weekend (he was the backup to Brad Guzan in a U.S. rout of Barbados).

Revs' All-Star midfielder Shalrie Joseph is also expected to play after an unexpected departure from the Grenada team that tied Costa Rica 2-2 in a World Cup qualifier over the weekend.

3. Bull market for Revs

By: John Connolly
Boston Herald
June 18, 2008

FOXBORO - The New York Red Bulls might be the Revolution's nearest foe, but the rivalry hasn't been that close in recent years.

The Revs hold the upper hand in the all-time series at 23-16-8, are unbeaten (6-0-3) in the last nine regular-season matches against the Red Bulls and own a 15-4-3 mark in games played in Foxboro, site of tonight's contest (7:30, Ch. 38). New York has not posted a win here since June 29, 2002.

What's the secret?

"I really don't know how to explain it," Revs midfielder Jeff Larentowicz said. "It's just one of those things where you've kind of got their number. I think them being a city nearby and them being a conference rival, there's just that extra bit of concentration and effort that comes out of everybody when we play them."

Revs coach Steve Nicol is wary of the challenge the visitors pose. Star striker Jozy Altidore is pending a transfer to Villarreal of Spain's La Liga and fellow forward Juan Pablo Angel is battling a nagging hamstring. Adding fuel to the fire is a 4-1 loss to D.C. United in New York's most recent outing.

"They're kind of wounded at the moment," Nicol said. "They had a bad result in a game, so I think most coaches, when you have a result like that, want to come out with fire and see what they've got in the belly. So we have to be on our guard about that. I think they'll come out physical. At the very least, the coach will expect them to have some fire in the belly, so they'll be strong at the start and try and win the battle before they start and play the football.

"It's a new game against a new team and we just have to go out and concentrate on things that are relevant to us winning the game and try not to think about rivalries or anything like that."

The Revs enter the game riding a six-game (5-0-1) unbeaten streak.

"I think the main thing that we've tried to think about is not only staying strong defensively throughout the whole game and concentrating, but trying to score first in these games," Larentowicz said. "Our success rate when we score first is pretty high (8-0-0). I think that's something we like to do is to get out and really

attack the game and try and get that first goal. Then we can settle into that passing game and being more patient with the ball.”

Meanwhile, the recently signed Pat Phelan, acquired in a June 4 trade with Toronto, gives the Revolution another option at defensive midfield and in the backline. Phelan started in Thursday’s win at Houston.

“I think we have so many games coming up that we’re going to need the depth,” said Nicol.

Phelan was initially penciled into the starting lineup for tonight’s game, but Shalrie Joseph, who was expected to miss the game in order to represent Grenada in a World Cup qualifier at Costa Rica on Saturday, returned to the Revs. Joseph, who played in a 2-2 tie between the two countries last weekend, will rejoin Grenada’s national team in Costa Rica.

4. Red Bulls tie; glass half-empty or half-full?

By: Brian Lewis
New York Post Blog
June 18, 2008

How do you look at the Red Bulls’ 1-1 draw at New England? As a hard-earned point in a place where they rarely earn any, or a golden opportunity for a landmark win squandered?

“It’s probably a little bit of both,” said Dave van den Bergh, who moved from left wing to left fullback and played a perfect far-post cross to Seth Stammers for the go-ahead goal in the 37th-minute. But they had to watch the red-hot Revolution get the equalizer in the 79th at Gillette Stadium.

The tie extended the Red Bulls’ winless streak in Foxboro to 14 games, a sorry 0-10-4. They haven’t earned a victory there since June 29, 2002, and they let one slip through their grasp tonight.

“This is a place where this franchise didn’t have a whole lot of success,” van den Bergh said, showing off his talent for understatement. “At the beginning of the game, going in (with the injuries) you’d say if we can come away with a point, we’d take it.

“(But) I think we could’ve hung on. We had some chances to put it away. Oscar Echeverry had a great opportunity to put it to two (goals) before halftime. But coming off the disappointing performance in D.C., we played good soccer against one of best teams in MLS, we fought for every ball, and in the end I thought it was pretty good.”

The Revs are actually the best team, with a league-leading record and a 5-0-1 mark over their last six. Saine Nyassi’s pace gave the Red Bulls fits at times; but after rolling over in a 4-1 pasting in D.C. last weekend, and playing without Juan Pablo Angel and Claudio Reyna, the Red Bulls showed the cojones missing at RFK.

“That’s huge. If we do that, we give ourselves a chance against any team in the league,” said van den Berg. “We showed if we go and compete, challenge for 50-50 balls and make it tough on our opponent to play, we get to play our game. It was good.”

There was plenty of good.

There was the physical play and tight defense that'd been lacking vs. D.C., with former defender Carlos Mendes shutting down Steve Ralston.

There was the fact they earned their first point in New England since May, 2004, a span of eight games, and did it with a makeshift lineup, sandwiched between two weekend games.

Coach Juan Carlos Osorio benched Chris Leitch for Hunter Freeman, rested Jeff Parke, moved van den Bergh back and Kevin Goldthwaite into the middle. Dane Richards pushed up next to Oscar Echeverry, with Mendes, Mike Magee and Sinisa Ubiparipovic in the midfield.

And of course there was rookie Chris Megaloudis getting his MLS debut, coming on in the 57th minute for Richards.

The bad? Well, there was the aforementioned Jamaican limping off the field, taking a big part of their offense.

The ugly? Echeverry missing a sitter after Richards set him up perfectly following a great individual run. Now we see why Echeverry never scored in Colombia; he just can't finish. Fortunately for the Red Bulls, Stammler didn't have that problem, volleying home van den Bergh's cross.

"We got a good sequence in the middle of the field. Sinisa got the ball, turned Nyassi around and played the ball to me," van den Bergh said. "I knew the back post was the most vulnerable since they were playing with three in the back, and since (Chris) Albright was coming to close me down I knew it was only two.

"I put it on the second post and Stammler put it away well. He almost looked like a forward."

5. On his mark; Mendes stymies Ralston in Red Bulls' draw

By: Dylan Butler
Big Apple Soccer
June 18, 2008

Foxborough, Mass. -- Playing time for Carlos Mendes has been a lot less frequent than the fourth-year defender has liked under Juan Carlos Osorio. After starting 71 out of 78 games in his first three years, the Mineola, N.Y., native has played the entire 90 minutes just once this year heading into Wednesday night's game against the red-hot Revolution at Gillette Stadium.

But on Wednesday Osorio started Mendes for the second time and challenged him. His job? Only to try and mark Steve Ralston out of the match.

"Obviously he's an unbelievable player," Mendes said of Ralston. "He's got a lot of experience and if you give him time, he can hurt you. I wasn't man-marking him all over the field, but coach told me to keep an eye on him and keep that defensive midfield spot for us, make sure there's no gaps and I fought hard. He's a good player and you always have to have an eye on him or he'll hurt you."

Mendes did just that, and if not for a 79th minute goal by Ralston, who pushed up front, the Red Bulls would have snapped a 14-game winless streak at Gillette Stadium.

"If you look throughout the 90 minutes, I think Carlos did a very good job against Ralston," Osorio said. "If you take away the goal he scored it's difficult for me to remember that he had any other opportunities."

Seth Stammler, who scored his first goal in two years, knows how difficult it is to deal with Ralston. He did it successfully in a 1-0 victory in the opening leg of the Eastern Conference Semifinal Series in 2005.

“Carlos did real well,” Stammler said. “To make matters worse for Carlos, there’s a lot of interchanging with Ralston and Shalrie (Joseph) and (Jeff) Larentowicz getting up there. All credit to him to sniff out all the dangers and give a good defensive effort.”

With Mendes marking Ralston and Osorio utilizing a diamond formation in the midfield, the Red Bulls clogged up the Revs’ attacking options through the middle of the field, allowing Ralston and Joseph few touches on the ball.

“He did a great job as a stopgap in the midfield, really neutralizing their midfield for most of the game, getting in on tackles, plugging a hole,” Jon Conway said of Mendes. “It was a great effort from him.”

6. Nothing in reserve; Red Bulls reserves trounced by Revs, 5-0

Big Apple Soccer
June 18, 2008

Foxborough, Mass. -- The New England Revolution rolled to a 5-0 victory over their Red Bulls in an MLS Reserve Division match Wednesday night.

Amaechi Igwe, Brandon Manzonelli, Geoff Walker, Chase Hilgenbrinck and Chris Tierney scored for the Revs.

Five players scored goals for the Revs, which included three successful penalty kicks.

With the win, the Revolution reserves improved to 1-3-2 (five points) on the season, while the Red Bulls reserves fell to 1-3-0, three 3 points).

Amaechi Igwe put the Revs up in the 39th minute, converting the first of the three penalty-kick attempts. Chris Tierney earned the spot kick for the Revs after Red Bulls defender Luke Sassano tackled him just inside the penalty area on a breakaway.

Brandon Manzonelli doubled the Revs' lead two minutes later in the 41st minute when he slipped past his defender on the left side of the area and curled a shot under the crossbar to the far post, beating keeper Caleb Patterson-Sewell.

After taking a 2-0 lead into the half, guest player Geoff Walker staked the Revolution to a 3-0 lead in the 63rd minute, slotting home a Joe Germanese headed pass under Patterson-Sewell.

Chase Hilgenbrinck extended the lead to 4-0 in the 77th minute, converting the Revolution's second penalty kick of the evening. Referee Niki Bratsis whistled Red Bulls defender Huge MacDonald for a handball in the penalty area after a Manzonelli shot.

In the 84th minute, Bratsis whistled the Red Bulls for the third and final penalty-area infraction, again against MacDonald, who tackled Walker down on a breakaway. Tierney stepped up and converted for the final goal of the match.

Revolution goalkeeper Doug Warren earned his first shutout of the season, making five saves including a stop in the 22nd minute and saves on 34th- and 53rd-minute free kicks by Danleigh Borman and Sassano, respectively. David Roth's shot across the face of the goal in the 60th minute went just wide, and in the 80th minute, Warren deflected Ricky Schramm's re-direction of a Roth shot from the left wing.

Patterson-Sewell recorded four saves in the loss.

The Revolution reserves return to action Sunday, June 29, when they host the Toronto FC Reserves at 10 a.m. The Red Bulls reserves see their next action on July 11, when they travel to face the Kansas City Wizards reserves.

7. Eight is enough; Red Bulls tie Revs, 1-1, stop Gillette Stadium losing streak at eight games

By: Michael Lewis

Big Apple Soccer

June 18, 2008

Foxborough, Mass. -- On paper, losing a one-goal lead late in the match and settling for a 1-1 draw might not sound the most encouraging of results.

For the Red Bulls, it's considered progress when they play at Gillette Stadium.

Their tie with the New England Revolution snapped an eight-game losing streak at Gillette. The draw extended their winless streak here to 14 games (0-10-4), but they walked out of the stadium with a well-earned point in wake of Saturday's 4-1 shellacking at D.C. United.

The Red Bulls (4-4-4, 16 points), who moved into a fifth-place tie with United (5-7-1, 16) in the Eastern Conference, definitely looked at the bright side of the game against the conference-leading Revs (8-3-3, 27). The Revs extended their unbeaten streak to seven games (5-0-2).

"If you told us before that we'd come in and get a point, we'd be happy," said midfielder Seth Stammler, who scored the Bulls' lone goal in the 37th minute, his first MLS goal in two years. "But to have the lead for so long, to give up the type of goal we did was a bit unfortunate."

Coach Juan Carlos was encouraged by the team's effort in front of 10,596 spectators.

"When we compete like we did today, we have a chance," he said. "The guys put everything on the field. That's what we always ask for. It was a very good effort and a very good result."

But it was effective enough to take home a rare regular-season point from Gillette. The last time they had secured a point was in a 1-1 draw May 22, 2004. The losing streak encompassed four coaches and four seasons.

Defender-turned-defensive midfielder Carlos Mendes, who stifled Steve Ralston's playmaking for most of the match, felt it was a gut check on he and his teammates' part.

After a performance like that we had to look in the mirror and really come out and give a better effort," he said. "We knew we had to compete better today, come in fighting and we did that. There's obviously a lot of positives. Now we move forward, we got a point and now we get ready for Dallas."

The Red Bulls host FC Dallas Saturday, which will be their third MLS match in eight days.

For the second consecutive match, the Red Bulls played without forward Juan Pablo Angels and midfielder Claudio Reyna, who missed the game with injuries.

"We are coming to terms with that," Osorio said. "Hopefully, in the next four weeks, we get two or three players and we'll be a better team."

Right now, Osorio must deal with the players he has.

He obviously liked what he saw many occasions, especially when Stammler scored his goal.

Goalkeeper Jon Conway started the play by lofting a long ball down the left side. Dave van den Bergh, who was switched from midfield to left fullback, eventually got to the ball. He sent a left-wing cross into the

penalty area that Stammler, the team captain for the game, rammed home off a volley from the right side past goalkeeper Matt Reis from some six yards out.

"I put in an early cross," van den Bergh said. "We knew that at the second post, because they only play with three in the back, that's where the space is. Fortunately Stammer was there and he put it away beautifully."

It was Stammler's fourth MLS goal and first since May 24, 2006.

When asked when he last scored a goal, Stammler replied, "I'd say around two years? That's sad, a sad thing."

The Red Bulls almost doubled their lead in the 44th minute when Dane Richards made a marvelous 50-yard run down the right wing and through three Revs defenders. He sent an open Oscar Echeverry a pass at the top of the area, but the forward shot wide left.

Ralston connected on the equalizer in the 79th minute. Defender Jay Heaps sent in a left-wing cross that Kheli Dube knocked down. The ball went to Ralston, who slotted it home past Conway.

"I thought he (Dube) was going to shoot it," Conway said. "It just kind of popped over to (Ralston) in an opportune position. Obviously it was a bit unfortunate, but we can all do better and get tighter on the ball, especially on (Ralston) so close in. He's deadly from there."

Conway made two key saves in the 89th minute, stopping Ralston's header and then Dube's follow-up shot on the rebound, getting a hand on the ball, to preserve the draw.

8. Scrambled lineup; Magee, Mendes in, Parke, Woly out (Big Apple Soccer)

Big Apple Soccer
June 18, 2008

Foxborough, Mass. -- After Saturday night's 4-1 loss at D.C. United, Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio juggled his team's lineup against the New England Revolution Wednesday night.

Five new starters were in the lineup for the MLS match at Gillette Stadium.

Osorio retained Andrew Boyens and Kevin Goldthwaite on defense, but replaced Jeff Parke and Chris Leitch with Dave van den Bergh and Hunter Freeman.

Rookies Luke Sassano and Danleigh Borman were benched in favor of Sinisa Ubiparipovic and Mike Magee. Carlos Mendes and Seth Stammler remained in the lineup from the D.C. clash.

John Wolyniec was benched as Oscar Echeverry took his spot at forward. Dane Richards joined Echeverry up front.

Jon Conway started again in goal.

9. Red Bulls' tie extends winless streak against New England

By: Michael Lewis
New York Daily News
June 19, 2008

FOXBOROUGH - Depending on your vantage point, the Red Bulls' 1-1 draw with the red-hot New England Revolution Wednesday night was either a major success or a bitter disappointment.

The Red Bulls played their hearts out and played well, a marked improvement over the 4-1 pasting they suffered at D.C. United on Saturday.

But they let a quality victory slip away on Steve Ralston's 79th-minute goal as their winless streak in New England increased to 14 games (0-10-4).

The Bulls (4-4-4, 16 points), who moved into a fifth-place tie with idle United (5-7-1, 16) in the Eastern Conference, definitely looked at the bright side against the conference-leading Revolution (8-3-3, 27). The Revs extended their unbeaten streak to seven games (5-0-2).

"If you told us before that we'd come in and get a point, we'd be happy," said midfielder Seth Stammers, who scored the Bulls' goal in the 37th minute, his first MLS goal in two years. "But to have the lead for so long, to give up the type of goal we did was a bit unfortunate."

Goalkeeper Jon Conway made a pair of bang-bang saves on Ralston and Kheli Dube to preserve the tie in the 89th minute.

10. Player ratings: Red Bulls vs. New England

By: Jack Bell

New York Times Blog

June 18, 2008

Two teams — the Red Bulls (4-4-4, 16 points) and the Eastern Conference-leading New England Revolution (8-3-3, 27) — heading in opposite directions were on the (plastic) field at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass., in another midweek game in Major League Soccer. They ended the match — a 1-1 draw — in virtually the same place they started.

New England, which has lost to Houston in the last two league championship games, has not lost in league play since the beginning of May, winning five of its last seven games (including Wednesday night) and has the best record in M.L.S. The Red Bulls have won one of their last five games and are in sixth place in the conference.

New York was again without the services of Claudio Reyna (herniated disk) and Juan Pablo Ángel (hamstring). The Revolution's Taylor Twellman, who has only played 45 minutes this season, was out with a sprained right ankle. In addition, the Revolution was expected to be missing three players — Shalrie Joseph (Grenada), Kenny Mansally (Gambia) and Khano Smith (Bermuda) — who were away for World Cup qualifying matches. But Joseph left his national team and turned up at training on Tuesday morning and said he was available to play against the Red Bulls. Grenada plays at Costa Rica on Saturday after playing a 2-2 draw in the first leg of the regional qualifying series. New England also got a boost when goalkeeper Matt Reis, the No. 1 keeper in the league this season, returned from national team duty after last Sunday's World Cup qualifying victory over Barbados, in which he did not play.

The Red Bulls were desperate to find their scoring touch ... the club had only scored five goals in its past five games and has not scored more than two goals in any M.L.S. game so far this season. What is worse is that the team, led by the defensive guru Juan Carlos Osorio, had allowed 10 goals in its last four games. New York had not won at Foxborough in its past 11 regular-season games dating to the 2002 season, when the club was called the MetroStars.

The Red Bulls are back in action on Saturday against visiting F.C. Dallas. One day off, light training on Friday, then back to the wars.

Final Score: Red Bulls 1, Revolution 1

The Ratings (on a scale of 1, diabolical; to 10, world class):

Red Bulls

Goalkeeper

Jon Conway

Fingertip save on a rocket by New England's Jim Larentowicz. Chest save and a beauty on a misplay in the defense that allowed Adam Cristman to walk in alone. Left naked on New England goal, ending bid for fourth shutout of the season. Game-saving save on Steve Ralston, who was left alone in the 89th minute. Grade: 8

Defenders

Dave van den Bergh

Inswinging corner kick needed to be placed closer to the penalty spot. With a Revolution player on the turf injured, lugged the ball up the left flank and sent a long, diagonal ball that found an unmarked Seth Stammler. Lost track of Sainey Nyassi, whose shot from a sharp angle skittered wide. Grade: 7

Kevin Goldthwaite

Moved into the central defense with Dave van den Bergh on the left and Jeff Parke on the bench. Lost Kheli Dube on a cross that led to the tying goal. Grade: 4

Andrew Boyens

Needs to be more aggressive and challenging after last week's disaster against United. Good positioning all game, read the game well; plus some good hard challenges. A step behind as Steve Ralston converted a short pass from Kheli Dube for his fourth goal of the season. Still had his best game in a Red Bulls uniform. Grade: 6

Hunter Freeman

Made fifth start of the season. Misplayed a throw-in that led to New England's best chance of the game early in the second half. Grade: 5

Midfielders

Mike Magee

Important that this talented player start to show his talent. Some decent distribution to the flanks. Replaced by Luke Sassano in the 89th minute. Still needs to do more. Grade: 5

Sinisa Ubiparipovic

Early goal waved off on a justified offside call. Inswinging corner kick too close to the goalmouth. Unmarked at far post, should have done better with open header in the 57th minute. Strong game, good movement. Grade: 6

Seth Stammler

Wore captain's armband. Latched on to a long cross from Dave van den Bergh to strike a right-footed shot from about 12 yards out to the right of Matt Reis that beat the keeper to his short side in the 37th minute. First goal of the season. Tenacious defense. Grade: 7

Carlos Mendes

Slotted in at the bottom of the diamond in the midfield. Performed well as a credible link between the defense, midfield and strikers. Grade: 6

Luke Sassano

Subbed in for Mike Magee in 89th minute. Grade: Incomplete

Forwards

Óscar Echeverry

Good movement and aggression. But should have put away pass from Dane Richards late in the the first half. Replaced by John Wolyniec in the 62nd minute. Grade: 5

Dane Richards

Speed and skill looked like a good fit up front, especially since he would not be responsible for trying to hit a useful cross coming out of the midfield. Fifty-yard run with the ball late in the first half set up Óscar Echeverry for a shot he has to bury. Took on defenders. Replaced by Chris Megaloudis after taking a knock in the ankle. Grade: 7

Chris Megaloudis

Replaced an injured Dan Richards in the 54th minute, his first action in an official game for the Red Bulls. Scored a goal last weekend for Puerto Rico in a World Cup qualifier, choosing to go with his national team rather than staying with the Red Bulls and probably getting his first start, against D.C. United. Grade: 5

John Wolyniec

Entered in the 62nd minute for Óscar Echeverry. No chances. Grade: 5

Coach

Juan Carlos Osorio

Not a lot of options. Wholesale changes to the starting lineup (five new players from last week's debacle in D.C.) with Óscar Echeverry making his third start of the season up front. Dave van den Bergh returned to the back line, and Carlos Mendes and Mike Magee earned the starts at the bottom and top of the midfield diamond. Leading by 1-0, made a curious substitution when Dane Richards left the game with an injury, replacing him with another striker, Chris Megaloudis. And then another, replacing Óscar Echeverry with striker John Wolyniec. Then brought on Luke Sassano very late in the game. Escaped with a point, but 3 were really necessary. Grade 7

Substitutes/Did Not Play

Caleb Patterson-Sewell (GK), Danleigh Borman, Chris Leitch, Jeff Parke.

11. Megaloudis set to make MLS debut

By: Brian Lewis
New York Post Blog
June 17, 2008

Chris Megaloudis could well make his MLS debut tomorrow in New England. Heck, it's not like coach Juan Carlos Osorio has much choice.

The rookie hasn't played a second yet, but the 24-year-old Queens native has scored twice in six caps for Puerto Rico, including a goal in this weekend's 2-2 World Cup qualifying draw with Honduras in San Juan. (It's about the :50 mark of the video). Now, the injury-riddled Red Bulls may give him his first taste of MLS action.

"We're so thin up in the front line it might be time for me to get my opportunity, get my chance to play, and I'm looking forward to it," Megaloudis said after today's practice.

"I think I'm ready. I know I'm ready. When I go in the game I want to be able to contribute something; hopefully he'll take a chance on me and when I get my opportunity it works out well."

There was a question where Megaloudis would play last weekend. Knowing the Red Bulls were playing without Jozy Altidore (transferred) and Juan Pablo Angel and Claudio Reyna (injured), Megaloudis said he'd wanted to stay and help his team. But he said he could've faced suspension if he didn't go and the Red Bulls FIFA sanctions if they didn't release him.

"That was a stressful week," Megaloudis said. "I really wanted to stay because (Puerto Rico) didn't have a chance to come back from 4-0. Unfortunately we were playing at the same day. I didn't want to get in trouble with FIFA, because I heard that I could get suspended if I wasn't going, so once I heard that I went.

"That was the main issue I was concerned about. I know how thin we are up front and I would've loved to have helped Red Bull out. This game would mean a lot more than the Puerto Rico game, because we were already out; but I made my decision based on that, to not get in trouble."

Turned out to be a good call. He scored the equalizing goal with a header at the back post in the 31st minute, ripping off his jersey in celebration. But Honduras went through after having won the home leg 4-0 earlier this month.

"It's a World Cup qualifier playing against a top team like Honduras which has players like (David) Suazo at Inter Milan and Amado Guevara, really big-time players," Megaloudis said. "You always benefit from playing against them. I've gained good experience going over there and playing those games. It was really good for me. I'm happy I had that experience."

Megaloudis _ who scored his first international goal in January against Trinidad & Tobago _ flew back and scored again in the 2-1 reserve win over the Long Island Rough Riders Monday, showing off a nice stepover before slotting the ball far post.

Osorio talked about how injuries have forced developmental players Danleigh Borman and Luke Sassano into starting roles, and how Megaloudis could be the next to be thrown into the fire.

"He's playing with the Puerto Rico national team and getting good experience against top competition like Honduras," Osorio said. "Hopefully he'll benefit from it."