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1. On sale; individual tickets for L.A., Beckham game

Big Apple Soccer
June 23, 2008

Individual tickets Monday went on sale for all remaining Red Bulls regular season games, including the Los Angeles Galaxy July 19 match that will feature David Beckham. You get buy them through Ticketmaster outlets, Ticketmaster.com and the Red Bulls front office by calling 1.877.RBSOCCER.

2. Henry to Join Ultimate Pick-Up Game

By: Jack Bell
New York Times Blog
June 23, 2008

A small patch of artificial turf in downtown Manhattan will be the location for the ultimate pickup soccer game Wednesday evening.

“The Showdown in Chinatown,” a charity game for the benefit of two professional athletes’ foundations, added a big name to the roster of players.

“We’ve been lucky because I had dinner with an old friend, Thierry Henry, and he’s going to play on Wednesday,” Steve Nash, one of the game’s principal organizers, said Monday in a telephone interview from a taxi in Manhattan. “It’s exciting for New York to have one of the best players in the world to come down and play on Chrystie Street.”

Nash, a four-time N.B.A. all-star and the point guard for the Phoenix Suns, spends his summers in New York because “it’s an amazing city and it’s a place my wife and I love.”

Through his foundation, Nash helped to finance the construction of a hospital in Paraguay, his wife’s native country.

The match will be 8-on-8 and will kickoff at 5:30 p.m. on the Nike field at the Sara D. Roosevelt Park on Chrystie Street (between Rivington and Stanton Streets). Admission is free. In addition to [Nash’s foundation](#), the game will benefit the foundation of the Red Bulls midfielder Claudio Reyna. Other players include Dallas Mavericks guard Jason Kidd, who was just named the Team USA Olympic roster; former Liverpool stars Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler; and the N.B.A. players Leandro Barbosa, Raja Bell, Baron Davis and David Lee.

“Leandro Barbosa is Brazilian and one of my close friends, so I think it’s a natural for him,” Nash said. “Raja Bell’s wife was a top scorer at Florida International, so he’s hopeful it’s rubbed off on him. Baron Davis wants to play in goal, so that tells you a bit about him!”

Nash, whose father was a professional soccer player in South Africa and whose brother Martin plays for the Vancouver Whitecaps in the U.S.L. First Division, is part of a group that hopes to bring an M.L.S. team to Vancouver, British Columbia.

“I’ve been a fan of the team since I was six,” Nash said of the Whitecaps. “I haven’t invested money yet, more like human capital. It’s a spectacular city. We’re really optimistic and we’re hoping to have some good news at the M.L.S. All-Star game in Toronto.”

That game will be played on July 24.

3. Cards’ Rackers to practice with Red Bulls

AZcentral.com
June 23, 2008

Cardinals kicker Neil Rackers will practice with Major League Soccer’s New York Red Bulls on Tuesday at University of Phoenix Stadium.

The Red Bulls are in the Valley to play Chivas De Guadalajara at University of Phoenix Stadium at 8 p.m. Wednesday. Rackers also will attend the match to participate in the opening coin toss and present the MVP trophy afterward.

Rackers played soccer through high school at Aquinas-Mercy High School in St. Louis, leading the school to consecutive state titles.

The game between the Red Bulls and Chivas, Mexico's most popular team, is part of Chivas' preseason schedule. It will be Chivas De Guadalajara's second trip to University of Phoenix Stadium and the first for the Red Bulls.

4. Soccer stars step up on big stage

By: Jane Havsy

Daily Record

June 23, 2008

Giovanni Zammiello couldn't help but frown, if only for a moment. After all, New Jersey had just lost to New York, 2-1, in the Red Bull New York High School Cup. But then Zammiello glanced around him again, taking in the artificial turf and now-empty stands at Giants Stadium, and his face brightened.

"We lost," said Zammiello, a recent Morris Catholic graduate. "It's not good. I hate losing. ... But the experience was good. I felt like a pro."

Zammiello and Morris Hills senior Rodrigo Santiago both started in New Jersey's midfield in the second annual High School Cup on Saturday night. They played about 70 minutes apiece, drawing a chorus of cheers every time they touched the ball.

Some of Santiago's Morris Hills teammates had made announcements about the match at school for weeks, drawing a big crowd. He had brought nearly 60 friends and family to Giants Stadium, including his mother Adriana Santiago; sisters Leticia, 19, Tatiana, 23, and Karina, 13; niece Camila; and grandmother Mary Rodriguez. Even Santiago's father, Alvaro Santiago, who was visiting from Uruguay, came to the match.

"I can't picture him doing anything else but soccer," Adriana Santiago said. "I don't see him working in an office or selling cars or being a doctor. He has a great future. ... He's got my 100 percent support. It keeps him out of trouble, and he loves it. He's loved it since he was a little kid, and I love to watch him play."

Though normally a central midfielder, Zammiello lined up on the wing on Saturday night. Santiago, a striker, played more of a withdrawn role for Team New Jersey. The duo drew on their experience with the New Jersey State Cup champion Parsippany Revolution, and tried to work together.

Zammiello would make runs up the outside of the field, get the ball from Santiago, and try to play it back so his teammate could take a shot.

"It's like one step closer to his goal, a touch at his toes, his laces," said Giovanni Zammiello's mother, Angela, who formed another vocal Morris County cheering section with her husband, Carmine, and children, Agostino and Nina Maria. "He's been playing since he's in my stomach. He was in a walker at nine months old, didn't even walk yet, and he was pushing the ball."

Santiago and his large fan base had an anxious moment midway through the second half, when he cramped up and went down in a corner of the field. Zammiello and Christian Nogueira of Kearny hovered nearby and tried to help him stretch his right leg, and a small cluster of his former teammates from Wharton watched anxiously from the front row.

Santiago was helped from the field and given ice, but came back into the match about 20 minutes later.

"It's unreal," said Morris Hills goalkeeper Adam Porcelan, part of a group who painted their chests and stomachs with "We 'heart' Lolo!" "We're playing next to him on that crabgrass we call a field, or in the park, just fooling around, and now he's at Giants Stadium."

Team New Jersey had just one practice on Friday afternoon at Giants Stadium. However, several of the players had been on the field together before -- though sometimes on opposite sides.

Santiago and Zammiello were part of Morris United with Seton Hall Prep striker C.J. Crooks about four years ago. Santiago and defender Kevin Brown of Wayne Valley are both going to Montclair State University in the fall. Zammiello has played against midfielder Marco Zanfarnido from St. Benedict's Prep, as well as goalkeeper Grant Schoenberg of Pingry, a Colonial Hills Conference opponent.

Crooks converted a penalty kick with 17 minutes to go for New Jersey's lone goal. Nathan Bourdeau of Baldwinsville and Craig Santangelo of Sayville scored New York's goals in the first half.

"Everybody hates losing, but it was just for fun and a beautiful experience," said Santiago, who slotted a great pass to Ibrahim Kamara of North Brunswick right in front of the goal in the final moments of the match.

"The feeling you get on the field motivates you to get to the next level. Playing under the lights in a stadium with so many fans, it was the experience of a lifetime."

5. Striker is the latest hero for Red Bulls

By: Stephan Bondy

Herald News

June 23, 2008

The standout player was difficult to recognize from high above in the Giants Stadium press box. But after his brilliant side volley nearly produced a goal, I caught a glimpse of the small Mohawk that revealed his unlikely identity.

"Who was that?" I asked an equally dumbfounded reporter. "Was that Ubiparipovic?"

Forgive me if this was tough to swallow. The Sinisa Ubiparipovic I remembered never pulled off such a display of skill, let alone on goal. He had the "deer-in-the-headlights" look in his previous eight appearances, converting nervous energy into silly fouls and poor touches. The Red Bull striker was more of a physical enforcer than a playmaker.

But Saturday's 1-0 win over FC Dallas unveiled a different Ubiparipovic, a confidence he seemed to ascertain overnight. His four shots were just one short of his total in the previous eight games, and his perfect corner kick in the 16th minute assisted on the game-winner.

He attacked with purpose, with calm and calculated movements. In what was the team's best first half this year, Ubiparipovic was the King of Giants Stadium -- the latest unlikely hero of an unpredictable Red Bull season.

"Being the new kid last year, you just come in and learn how to be a professional and learn a new game, because it's very different than the college game," said Ubiparipovic, the 2006 Mid-American Conference Player of the Year for the University of Akron. "Now I'm prepared and fit and just looking for my chances when I play."

Added coach Juan Carlos Osorio: "We want to instill in him that he has the ability to take shots." As the majority of the team's salary is locked up in two players on extended injury reserve, Ubiparipovic's humble background and modest compensation (\$33,000 this year) are becoming the story of Red Bulls' success.

Danleigh Borman was the hero last month, a South African native and supplemental draft pick whose salary (\$12,900) is in poverty-line territory. His goals against Kansas City and Los Angeles lifted a team in desperate need of offense.

Kevin Goldthwaite, Luke Sassano and Dane Richards -- all earning \$33,000 or less -- also have contributed special moments.

Then there's Ubiparipovic, a Bosnian immigrant whose family fled a war-torn nation nine years ago to find peace and safety in the suburbs of Cleveland. He made 12 appearances off the bench as a rookie in 2007 and became a fill-in starter this season, picking up more yellow cards (four) than shots on goal before Saturday. Osorio said the 24-year-old was pressing, trying to be flashy when simplicity suited him best.

"This is not luck with Sinisa, this is all pure hard work," Osorio said. "We've been working a lot in trying to convince him that when he plays effective football -- meaning no back heels, no outside flicks and giving simple inside passes -- he can compete and play at this level."

The Red Bulls could have folded without Claudio Reyna, Jozy Altidore and Juan Pablo Angel in the lineup. Their youth and inexperience might have succumbed to the weekly uncertainty of an injury-plagued roster. They could have allowed an embarrassing loss against D.C. United to carry over last week.

It made sense to doubt the Red Bulls.

But success is not always predicated on perception, and players like Ubiparipovic don't always have to resort to their prior standard.

Tied for fourth place in the Eastern Conference with 17 games remaining, the Red Bulls are looking for a few more surprising performances.

6. Thierry Henry coming to NY ... kind of

By: Brian Lewis
New York Post Blog
June 24, 2008

Thierry Henry is coming to play in New York -- but the French star isn't trading in his Barcelona jersey for a Red Bull kit just yet. He's coming to town to play in a [star-studded charity pick-up soccer game](#) at 5:30 p.m. tomorrow at Nike Field on Chrystie Street in Chinatown. It's co-hosted by Steve Nash and Claudio Reyna.

Even without the Barcelona star -- who'd been linked with a possible move to the Red Bulls down the road -- it's a loaded lineup.

[Knicks](#) Nate Robinson and [David Lee](#), ex-Net Jason Kidd, Chicago's Joakim Noah and Golden State's Baron Davis are among the NBA standouts playing; the soccer stars include Juan Pablo Angel, ex-Red Bull phenom Jozy Altidore, and Liverpool greats Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman.

Now, I'm at Shea covering the Met game and I can hear the bitter amongst you screaming all the way over here, "How can Angel and Captain Sicknote play a pickup game and not for us?????" But it is for charity, after all.

Nash is a huge soccer nut who spends his summers playing in New York, and has become friends with Reyna. They're co-hosting the charity pickup game, and a private auction in SoHo to benefit their respective foundations, calling it the "The Showdown In Chinatown."

(No, I didn't fine a karate flick with that title, just some kind of monthly 24-hour short film challenge. I can't believe it either. How Jackie Chan and Jet Li have both missed using that title yet I'll never know).

After becoming an investor in the Women's Professional Soccer League, Nash said he hopes to get involved with favorite club Tottenham Hotspur on an ownership level and is working with MLS commissioner Don Garber to bring an expansion club to Vancouver in his native British Columbia.

7. Red Bulls coach Osorio stays positive

By: Jose E. Garcia
Arizona Republic
June 24, 2008

The New York Red Bulls are at least getting their money's worth from coach Juan Carlos Osorio.

The Major League Soccer squad landed in Phoenix on Monday with probably as many flight-crew members as players. Injuries have decimated the team that will play one of Mexico's forces, Chivas de Guadalajara, at 8 p.m. Wednesday at University of Phoenix Stadium in an international friendly.

Despite the injuries, Osorio has his team (5-4-4) tied with Chicago for the Eastern Conference's final playoff berth heading into the midway point of New York's regular season. New York beat FC Dallas 1-0 Saturday without its marquee players, Claudio Reyna and Juan Pablo Angel, who account for two-thirds of the team's salary, according to the Herald News (Hackensack, N.J.).

Angel and Reyna are out with injuries and likely won't play Wednesday.

Reyna's contract has bothered Red Bulls fans because the organization knew he was prone to injuries, but the blame for acquiring Reyna last year is being placed on the club's former sporting director, Bruce Arena.

Osorio is in his first season with the Red Bulls. When asked Friday during a phone interview if Wednesday's friendly comes at a good or bad time for his injured squad, Osorio took the optimistic route.

"It (playing a friendly during the regular season) is modern-day futbol," Osorio said. "I look at it as a good opportunity to see the younger players play against a good team."

Osorio came to New York after helping Chicago reach the Eastern Conference final last year, replacing fired Dave Sarachan during Chicago's midseason.

After last season, Osorio bolted to New York, a move that bothered the Chicago organization. Family and personal reasons originally were cited for the move, but Osorio said Friday that he didn't sense the support from Chicago's management.

"The (player) changes weren't made," Osorio said.

Osorio also said his wife has relatives in Queens, N.Y., which he said was another reason for the move.

Osorio was an assistant/conditioning coach with the New York MetroStars in 2000 and 2001.

8. For cancer research; Bulls adult tournament Aug. 10

Big Apple Soccer
June 24, 2008

The Red Bulls' Adult Soccer Tournament to benefit the American Cancer Society will be held prior to the Red Bulls-D.C. United game at Giants Stadium Sunday, Aug. 10.

For the past three years, the Red Bulls and other teams have generated more than \$80,000 for ACS cancer

research.

The event is open to all members of the soccer community, with teams in both competitive and recreational categories vying for titles. Since the event began three years ago, the 6 v. 6 tournament has grown from 24 teams to 48 teams.

Each team is guaranteed three matches during round-robin play. Each team also receives 25 tickets to watch the Red Bulls game after the tournament.

For more information and to register your team, call 1-877-RBSOCCER.

9. You write the caption: The Osorio edition

By: Ives Galarcep

Soccer by Ives

June 24, 2008

It has been a good while since the last installment of You Write the Caption but I can tell you that this week SBI will have at least two contests.

Today's photo, courtesy of ISIpotos.com, is of New York Red Bulls head coach Juan Carlos Osorio, who has done an admirable job leading his new club to a 5-4-4 mark despite a myriad of injuries and the transfer of Jozy Altidore.

As you know, Osorio likes to take notes during matches and the practice has garnered snide remarks from plenty of opposing fans. With this in mind, here is your chance to figure out what he's thinking and what he's writing in that notepad of his.

You know the drill. Submit your caption suggestion and I will choose the ten best entries, with the reader whose entry is the best winning a t-shirt courtesy of SBI sponsor Objectivo Apparel. For those of you who haven't visited Objectivo Apparel before, they have a good selection of soccer-themed t-shirts, and more importantly, SBI readers get free shipping on their orders. Just type in IVES in the promo code section for your free shipping.

Now, back to the contest. Try and figure out what's going through the mind of the Colombian tactician. Try to be funny and please keep it clean (I'm looking at you Chicago Fire fans):

"Things-to-do list: Sign a forward, sign a midfielder, sign a defender, Call Wilman Conde back and contact the LA Galaxy for tips on circumventing the salary cap."

Now it's your turn. What do you think Osorio is writing in his notepad? Share your caption suggestion below and if it's good enough, you could win a free t-shirt.

Fire away.

10. Long winding road; Red Bulls face 5 road games in 16 days

By: Michael Lewis

Big Apple Soccer

June 24, 2008

The Red Bulls hit the road this week for their longest and worst road stretch of the season. And to make matters even more confounding, two of the games do not count in the MLS standings.

They will play five games in 16 days away from Giants Stadium starting Wednesday. While they will return home to rest and practice, it is never fun playing on the road and traveling, especially during the summer.

If you add three games earlier this month, they will have played seven of eight matches on the road.

"That's a tough one mentally," defensive midfielder Carlos Mendes said. "On your off days you've got to rest and make sure you recover. Just mentally be ready. If we can compete and play the way we're doing now on the road, the next two weeks shouldn't be a problem. We've been fighting and everyone is looking forward to the challenge."

The challenge begins Wednesday when the Red Bulls take on Chivas Guadalajara in a friendly in Glendale, Ariz. (TeleFutura, 11 p.m.).

It continues in Carson, Calif. as they play another Chivas team in an MLS match -- Chivas USA Saturday (10:30 p.m.).

The Red Bulls jet back to New Jersey to train, but will hit the road game to play the winner of Tuesday night's encounter between Crystal Palace Baltimore and the Harrisburg City Islanders (both USL Second Division) in the Lamar Hunt/U.S. Open Cup Tuesday, July 1.

The Red Bulls are far from through. After that game, they fly to Commerce City to meet the Colorado Rapids in an MLS encounter Friday, July 4 (MSG, 9:30 p.m.).

And they finish off their travel, visiting the Kansas City Wizards Thursday, July 10 (MSG, 8 p.m.).

The Red Bulls don't play another home game again until they host the Los Angeles Galaxy and David Beckham Saturday, July 19.

If the Red Bulls are complaining about the ridiculous schedule -- and they have every right to -- they aren't -- at least not publicly.

To goalkeeper Jon Conway, it is a matter of survival and keeping healthy.

"You've got to be smart," he said. "Obviously the exhibition isn't as big a priority as maybe the league games. We've got to get the boys healthy. We're obviously thin already with the injuries. So hopefully, we can get through those games without picking up any more to be ready to go for the league games."

"We all know that it is tough," midfielder Sinisa Ubiparipovic said. "We have to take care of ourselves. We've got to get our rest."

11. For a noble cause; Henry, Fowler join Nash, Reyna for a special soccer game in Chinatown Wednesday

Big Apple Soccer
June 24, 2008

Some big names from two sports -- basketball and soccer -- will take to the field in Chinatown for a good cause Wednesday at 5 p.m.

From the soccer world, French striker Thierry Henry and former Liverpool stars Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman are expected to play. From the NBA universe, Jason Kidd, a former Net, and Leandro Barbosa, Raja Bell and David Lee are scheduled to perform as well.

Other well-known local players will be part of the game, including Red Bulls striker Juan Pablo Angel, former Red Bulls forward Jozy Altidore, who recently signed to play with Villarreal in Spain after an American soccer record \$10 million transfer, and former U.S. National Team defender Gregg Berhalter, who plays for 1860 Munich in Germany.

The game -- billed as "The Showdown in Chinatown -- is to benefit the foundations of Phoenix Suns all-

star guard Steve Nash and Red Bulls captain and midfielder Claudio Reyna.

The game is open to the public and will be held at the Nike field at Sara D. Roosevelt Park on Chrystie Street.

It certainly won't be your usual soccer game in more ways than one. It will be 8 v 8 venture.

12. Henry can see himself playing in MLS – someday

By: Ronald Bloom

Associated Press

June 25, 2008

NEW YORK(AP) Thierry Henry can see himself following David Beckham's path and leaving Europe to join Major League Soccer - someday.

"Why not?" he said Wednesday night following a charity soccer match. "I love America. I love it here. And whenever I come here, I feel free. Hopefully, one day. You never know what's going to happen. But at the moment, I'm still over there."

Following France's first-round elimination at the European Championship last week, the elegant 30-year-old forward came to the United States. The celebrity match, played on a tiny field in the Chinatown section of Manhattan, benefited the foundations of Phoenix Suns guard Steve Nash and New York Red Bulls midfielder Claudio Reyna, the former U.S. national team captain.

Fans crowded into the small field, ringing the playing area. Chelsea's Solomon Kalou, who played for Ivory Coast on Sunday in a World Cup qualifier at Abidjan, was a late addition. Participants included former Liverpool stars Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman, the NBA's Leandro Barbosa and Baron Davis, and Jozy Altidore, who just left the Red Bulls to join Spain's Villarreal.

"I'm here on vacation, enjoying the town," Henry said. "It's an amazing town. I love New York. It's not the first time I say it. I come here quite often. It's pretty nice."

Henry said he can walk the streets of New York and not be bothered.

"Sometimes I do get recognized, but I feel free when I'm here, so that's the most important thing," he said. "I love it."

He left Arsenal after the 2006-7 season and signed a four-year contract with Barcelona, which finished third in La Liga behind Real Madrid and Villarreal.

Henry has a French record 45 goals in 102 international appearances. Since Les Bleus were eliminated with a 2-0 loss to Italy last week in Zurich, Switzerland, he has not watched Euro 2008.

"It has nothing to do with painful. The memory is gone," he said. "I know who won today, but that is it."

Henry is friends with Nash, who invited him to play just before Reyna was able to contact him.

"Because he got to him quicker, he was on his team," Reyna said outside Replay, the SoHo store where the post-match party and auction was held.

Reyna hopes to get Argentina's Lionel Messi for next year's charity event. Reyna used the match as part of his rehabilitation from a back injury, and noted the level of play was not too fierce.

"A few of the boys were out late last night," he said. "You knew that was going to happen."

13. Red Bulls sign Gordon Kljestan of Seton Hall

New York Post

June 25, 2008

SECAUCUS, N.J.(AP) Former Seton Hall midfielder Gordon Kljestan, the brother of U.S. national team player Sacha Klejstan, signed a developmental contract with the New York Red Bulls on Wednesday.

The Red Bulls waived midfielder Kevin Mesa to make room for Kljestan.

"Gordon has impressed us since joining our team on trial a few weeks ago," Red Bulls sporting director Jeff Agoos said. "We think that he can make a contribution to our squad and we're excited to have him on board."

The 24-year-old was drafted by the Los Angeles Galaxy in the first round last year. He started in six games for the Galaxy reserve team. Kljestan started two reserve league matches for the Red Bulls prior to signing with the MLS team.

Mesa signed with the Red Bulls on March 20 after training with the team in preseason. The New York City product played in four reserve games this season.

Sacha Klejstan is a midfielder with Chivas USA and could be part of the U.S. Olympic team this summer.

14. Thornton, Gilkerson start for the Red Bulls

Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

Glendale, Ariz. -- For the first time this year, a goalkeeper other than Jon Conway was in the nets for the Red Bulls Wednesday.

Backup Zach Thornton started the exhibition game against Chivas de Guadalajara at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

Rookie defender John Gilkerson also made his first start of the year.

The Red Bulls lineup:

Goalkeeper -- Zach Thornton.

Defenders -- Hunter Freeman, Jeff Parke, Andrew Boyens, John Gilkerson.

Midfielders -- Carlos Mendes, Seth Stammer, Dave van den Bergh, Sinisa Ubiparipovic.

Forwards -- Dane Richards, Oscar Echeverry.

15. On the road yet again; If Bulls win, they play in NE or Richmond

Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

If they win next Tuesday's Lamar Hunt/U.S. Open Cup third-round game at Crystal Palace Baltimore, the Red Bulls will hit the road for the quarterfinals regardless their opposition will be.

If the Red Bulls and New England Revolution emerge victorious, they will meet at Veterans Stadium in Willow Brook Park in New Britain, Conn. at 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 8.

If the Richmond Kickers defeat the Revs and the Red Bulls win, they'll play at the University of Richmond Stadium in Richmond, Va. at 7 p.m. that Tuesday.

Another road game is the last thing the Red Bulls need these days. On Wednesday they started a five-game stretch over 16 days in which they play away from home. A July 8 encounter would make it six games -- all

road encounters -- during the same span.

If the Red Bulls advance to the July match, they will have but one day to rest and travel for their MLS game at the Kansas City Wizards July 10.

16. Change of venue; Bulls Open Cup moved to Annapolis

Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

There is a change of venue for the Red Bulls-Crystal Palace match in the third round of the Lamar Hunt/U.S. Open Cup Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

It will be moved to Annapolis, Md. will be played at Lawrence E. Knight Stadium at Broadneck High School (address is 1265 Green Holly Drive, Annapolis, MD 21409).

"With our home stadium not being available, we are extremely pleased to find a suitable, alternative venue," Palace USA president and co-manager Pete Medd said. "I think it will provide a great atmosphere for this historic match."

The stadium has a new Field Turf surface and seats 3,000.

CP advised fans to buy tickets now as the game is expected to sell out.

Tickets are priced at \$16 - the same as for Crystal Palace's home league matches -- and children aged five and under are admitted free. Individual tickets can be purchased in advance at <http://www.crystalpalaceusa.com>. Group tickets are also available (minimum 10) at \$14 per ticket by calling 1-410 933-8326. Parking is available at a cost of \$5 per vehicle.

17. Chivas celebration spoiled

By: Jose E. Garcia
Arizona Republic
June 25, 2008

The spectacle starts as soon as they park and the tailgates go down.

Once they get their fill outside, the soccer fans head to the stadium and are greeted by loud [music](#).

Soccer matches with an international flavor bring a party atmosphere from beginning to end.

Chivas de Guadalajara was the reason to celebrate Wednesday night for a majority of fans, as they got their annual 90-minute fill of their favorite team at University of Phoenix Stadium.

The celebration in the stands didn't stop despite the low fan turnout and the New York Red Bulls' 1-0 victory.

The game's promoters were expecting a crowd of about 30,000, but only 10,154 were in attendance.

Cardinals kicker Neil Rackers took care of the pregame coin toss on his home turf, but the biggest pregame ovation was for Chivas' Ramon Morales.

The mood was festive off the field, but it got a bit ugly on the field in the first half, as Chivas midfielder Edgar Solis and Red Bulls captain Seth Stammers were red-carded after a shoving match between several players in the 43rd minute.

Many fans, some dressed in Mexican wrestling masks, whistled and cheered for the skirmish to continue.

Besides that and New York's goal, the first half was relatively uneventful.

Colombian Oscar Echeverry scored in the 22nd minute off an assist by Sinisa Ubiparipovic, who had eluded a defender.

"It was a good play on the part of Sinisa," Echeverry said. "He did most of the work, and I took care of the easy part when I was alone."

Red Bulls defender John Gilkerson and Chivas forward Javier Hernandez missed most of the match because of injuries when their heads collided after a free kick that was awarded to Chivas after the shoving match.

Twenty-six fouls were called in this so-called friendly match.

The young Chivas team struggled to put together scoring attempts, and the Red Bulls, playing without some of their best players, also lacked some offensive pizzazz.

But the Red Bulls, who are 14 matches into their regular season, created the most scoring opportunities.

Chivas' struggles were expected during their first preseason match, but that didn't keep Phoenix resident Mario Montes from taking daughter Mariana, 3, to the match.

"The Chivas are the No. 1 team in Mexico," Montes said.
"I have to give my kid some proof."

New York will get a second chance to knock off another Chivas team when it travels to Los Angeles this weekend to play Chivas USA of Major League Soccer.

The next soccer party in the Valley is Nov. 12, when Mexico's national team hosts either Chile or Egypt at Chase Field.

18. Interesting 'development'; Red Bulls sign Kljestan, cut Mesa

Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

The Red Bulls announced Wednesday they had signed midfielder Gordon Kljestan to a developmental contract. The MLS club waived midfielder and Queens, N.Y. product Kevin Mesa to make room for Kljestan.

He is the brother of Chivas USA and U.S. National Team midfielder Sacha Kljestan.

"Gordon has impressed us since joining our team on trial a few weeks ago," sporting director Jeff Agoos said in a statement. "We think that he can make a contribution to our squad and we're excited to have him on board."

Kljestan, 24, was drafted by the Los Angeles Galaxy in the first round, 10th overall in last year's MLS supplemental draft out of Seton Hall University.

The Huntington Beach, Calif. native started six games for the Galaxy reserve team and logged 513 minutes. He had played in two Red Bulls reserve matches this year prior to the signing.

Kljestan also played for the New Jersey Ironmen this past Major Indoor Soccer League season.

Mesa signed with the Red Bulls March 20 after practicing with the team in the pre-season. He played 251 minutes in four games for the team's reserve team this season.

19. He loves New York; But will he play here one day?

By: Dylan Butler
Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

New York, N.Y. – In a galaxy of soccer and basketball stars on the tiny turf field in downtown Manhattan Wednesday, he was the brightest. Thierry Henry received the largest ovation from the massive crowd assembled inside and outside Sara D. Roosevelt Park.

And after the Showdown in Chinatown, the charity soccer game benefiting the foundations of Claudio Reyna and Steve Nash, the Barcelona star admitted he isn't opposed to playing in Major League Soccer.

"Yeah, why not? I love America, I love it here," Henry said outside of Replay, the SoHo store where the after-party and silent auction were being held. "Whenever I come here I feel free. Hopefully one day, you never know what's going to happen. But at the moment, I'm still over there."

Over there, of course, is Barcelona, where there appears to be a fire sale following a disappointing third-place finish in La Liga, 18 points behind Real Madrid. But while there are rumors that Barca is ready to part with Brazilian stars Ronaldinho and Deco, Henry is staying put. At least for now.

Could Henry be wearing a Red Bulls uniform in the future? The French international wouldn't go that far, but he couldn't stop raving about the Big Apple.

"I'm on vacation, enjoying the town. It's an amazing town," Henry said. "I love New York. It's not the first time I say it. I'm here quite often. It's pretty nice."

One of the things that Henry likes the most about New York is the anonymity he can enjoy walking around the city.

"Sometimes I do not get recognized," Henry said. "But I feel free when I am here. That's the most important part. I love it."

Of course, that wasn't the case when he arrived at Sara D. Roosevelt Park where he was mobbed by fans and media alike.

"I think it was great," Henry said. "I didn't know it was going to be like a lot of people around the Astroturf. But I guess they wanted to see Steve, Baron and the other guys there. I don't know, I think it was a great environment. It was pretty special to come here and play with the guys that I see on TV usually because I'm a great basketball fan. It was pretty nice."

Henry said he will be here on vacation until July 14, when he returns to Spain for preseason. And he'll be back to New York Aug. 6 when Barcelona faces the Red Bulls in an international friendly at Giants Stadium.

20. Chivas, part one; Red Bulls take on Mexicans in friendly

Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

Over the long haul and for MLS standings, the game doesn't mean a thing. Yet, the Red Bulls are looking forward to playing Mexican power Chivas de Guadalajara in an international friendly in Glendale, Ariz. Wednesday night (TeleFutura, 11 p.m. ET).

The Red Bulls will become the first MLS team to play at the University of Phoenix stadium. The stadium has hosted the U.S. National Team.

"The team is really excited to come down here for the game, especially to play a team like Chivas which has such a storied history," said midfielder Seth Stammers, who has captained the team the last several games. "I think it's an honor just to test ourselves to see where we stand against some of the top players internationally."

With the Red Bulls playing five games over a 16-day period and with injuries to several key players, they might not put out a full lineup. Forward Juan Pablo Angel (hamstring) and midfielder Claudio Reyna (herniated disc) were left back in New York nursing their injuries.

Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio could give some of the younger and rookies players playing time. The Red Bulls have a game at the Mexican club's sister team, Chivas USA, at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif. Saturday night.

"The younger guys, rookies and secondary guys who are getting a little bit more playing time -- that's how you get your foot in the door and it's up to you to take that opportunity and make the most of it," Stammers said. "I think for the most part, the guys have done really well to come in and contribute in a positive manner."

Mexican National Team players Ramon Morales, Alberto Medina, Johnny Magallon and Luis Ernesto Michel perform for Chivas, which has won 11 Mexican league titles. In fact, the popular club finished atop in the 2008 Torneo Clausura with a 9-2-6 regular-season record prior to losing to Monterrey in the opening round of the playoffs.

"It's going to be a friendly and we have to treat it as such," Red Bulls midfielder Dave van den Bergh said. "It's a great team, great honor to play against them. It's a good opportunity to measure ourselves. For them, it's pre-season so they're going to be trying some things out and getting their fitness in."

For the Red Bulls, it will be a matter of staying away from injuries and being prepared to take on the other Chivas side in a game that really matters Saturday night.

21. Bulls' next cup foe; Baltimore outlasts Harrisburg in PKs, 3-1

Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

Harrisburg, Pa. -- Harrisburg City Islanders goalkeeper Danny Cepero won't be spotlighting his goalkeeping skills to his MLS team after all.

Cepero, loaned to the Islanders by the Red Bulls, and his Islanders teammates were eliminated by Crystal Palace Baltimore in a Lamar Hunt/U.S. Open Cup second-round encounter Tuesday night.

Crystal Palace prevailed in penalty kicks, 3-1, after playing to a 2-2 draw.

CP Baltimore will host the Red Bulls Tuesday, July 8.

Kevin Antonio King and Andongcho Mbuta scored for Crystal Palace.

One-time Islanders goalkeeper Matt Nelson returned to haunt his former teammates by making three saves in the shootout.

The Islanders appeared headed for a Red Bulls' confrontation until Mbuta scored in the final minutes of extratime.

Each team had a player sent off in regulation.

22. Captain charity; Reyna plays, scores in Chinatown exhibition

By: Dylan Butler
Big Apple Soccer
June 25, 2008

New York, N.Y. – It was surely a surreal site for the fans that occupied every square inch of expensive real estate inside and out of Sara D. Roosevelt Field Wednesday afternoon. There, on the tiny turf field in downtown Manhattan, a collection of soccer and basketball stars played in a remarkable pickup charity soccer game.

And those fans, some of whom climbed the chain link fence and trees and stood on vans and even on the roof of an adjacent apartment building just to catch a glimpse, saw something for the first time.

There was Barcelona star Thierry Henry passing a soccer ball to Steve Nash, the two-time NBA MVP. On the other team, Jason Kidd and Solomon Kalou combined on a goal and Baron Davis, wearing a blue baseball cap and Air Force 1 sneakers, was called for a pair of hand balls in the box.

And just as bizarre for Red Bulls fans in attendance, many of whom were there to give Jozy Altidore a sendoff to La Liga's Villarreal, was seeing Claudio Reyna scoring a goal on U.S. soil – from the penalty spot.

The Red Bulls captain, who has been sidelined by a herniated disc, played the entire 60-minute match and appeared to do so without pain.

"I knew I could get through that today," Reyna said. "I wasn't going to extend myself. I'm having back issues where I had injections. I've been training this week, so this turned into a training session for me. I had to take it easy."

Reyna said he was allowed to participate in the Showdown in Chinatown, a charity match Nash and his foundation, by Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio, who was with the Red Bulls in Phoenix, Ariz., where New York defeated Chivas de Guadalajara, 1-0, in a friendly at University of Phoenix Stadium.

"They knew I was playing in this," Reyna said. "They knew I've been training this week, not ready to play 90 minutes or travel with the team, but I needed a week of fitness. This fit in perfectly. I talked to coach and they knew what I was doing so there was no problem."

While Reyna played the entire match, Juan Pablo Angel never stepped onto the playing field, with the exception of being introduced to the massive crowd before the match. Angel has missed the last three matches with a hamstring injury suffered in the dying moments against Chivas USA June 5.

As for the match, it was entertaining as it was surreal. Kidd set up Kalou for the game's first goal. Davis, the Golden State Warriors guard, crashed the net to make it 2-0 in favor of Team Reyna. Davis likely got his sports mixed up with a pair of hand balls in the box, resulting in penalty kick goals by Henry.

While Nash is an accomplished soccer player, the other NBA players didn't disappoint. Kidd certainly looked like he played before and Raja Bell and Leandro Barbosa both were better than anticipated.

Davis? Well, he provided the comic relief.

"I knew Steve could play," Henry said. "Baron was himself, pretty funny, as usual. I knew Leandro coming from Brazil had to have some skills. It was pretty nice. It was just about having fun."

The match ended appropriately enough – with Nash taking a ball off his chest and scoring on a beautiful full volley. Team Nash came away with a 9-4 victory, but no one was really keeping score.

“I couldn’t have scripted it any better,” Nash said of the ending. “I guess that was the treat for all the hard work we put in it.”

With this first game a clear success, are there plans in the works for Showdown in Chinatown, Part II?

“Next year hopefully we can get five or six more guys. I’m going to hit up my South American crew and hopefully (Javier) Zanetti and (Lionel) Messi will be around next year,” Reyna said. “Messi will be on my team.”

23. Henry Turns the Tide on Steve Nash’s Squad

By: Joshua Robinson
New York Times Blog
June 26, 2008

It took his side going 2-0 down for Thierry Henry to click into gear. But when he did, the result was devastating.

He scored twice and provided the attacking flair for Steve Nash’s team, wearing yellow, in their 9-4 victory over Claudio Reyna’s blue-clad side in Wednesday night’s charity pickup game in Chinatown’s Roosevelt Park.

“The boys were out late last night, so you knew that was going to happen,” Reyna said.

Henry’s defending, however, was suspect. He may be one of the most polished and smoothest strikers in the world, but starting the evening at centerback, he dawdled on the ball and failed to find Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman’s runs in front of him. Henry was even caught out of position on Team Reyna’s first two goals.

Jason Kidd tore down the right-hand line and found Chelsea’s Salomon Kalou at the top of the penalty area with a clever pass, leaving Kalou the simple task of slotting home. It was Kidd’s only assist of the night, but perhaps he realized that triple-doubles are rarer in soccer. Baron Davis, the physical central defender whose strength off the ball made up for his ineptitude on it, then charged up the middle to meet a cross from the left side to tap in and make the score 2-0.

That’s when Nash’s side made a tactical change, switching to a more attacking 1-3-3 in the eight-a-side game. Henry, now in a more advanced position, combined well with McManaman, who poked in the yellow team’s first goal. Henry equalized a moment later, ghosting to the near post to flick home Nash’s cross.

By now, the momentum had swung Team Nash’s way. Henry juggled the ball in every corner of the pitch and even tried to run while he balanced it on his head. When he wasn’t showboating, he sprayed passes left and right finding his teammates free on the corners. Leandro Barbosa showed off some of the skills that Brazilians seem to be born with, while Fowler, whose playground tactics went unseen by the referee, notched the first of his three goals to make it 4-2. He may not have been in the form that saw him score the quickest hat trick in Premier League history — he had three against Arsenal in 1994 in 4 minutes and 32 seconds — but he showed he still had a nose for goal.

Playing with McManaman, the pair of native Scousers seemed like a throwback to the Liverpool team of the 1990s. Although back then, Fowler might have taken McManaman’s cross-field ball on the chest rather than stumble back into the crowd as he did Wednesday night.

“Come on, Rob,” McManaman yelled at him.

By the half, Reyna's team looked the weaker side. Jozy Altidore was largely contained while his former teammate on the New York Red Bulls Juan Pablo Angel only hobbled around for a few minutes. He came into the game carrying an injury.

Reyna closed the deficit to two goals with a penalty kick but Fowler immediately hit back with a tap-in and a penalty of his own after Davis's second handball. How Davis wasn't sent off for two intentional handballs was a mystery. He was only booked after the second one.

The referee, who apparently had officiated in Major League Soccer, only gave out one other yellow card. That went to Henry who tugged on Altidore's jersey after he took the ball off his toe. Nash closed out the game with his side's last two goals. One was a rebound from an Henry curler that was parried away and the other was a tidy volley from eight yards out.

"Steve showed that he's a good football player," Henry said. "I don't know if I could play basketball as good as Steve plays soccer."

Goals:

Team Reyna: Davis, Kalou (2), Reyna.

Team Nash: Barbosa, Fowler (3), Henry (2), McManaman, Nash (2).

Bookings: Davis, Henry.

24. Red Bulls beat Chivas Guadalajara in exhibition

ESPN Soccer.net

June 26, 2008

GLENDALE, Ariz. -- Oscar Echeverry's 12-yard shot in the 22nd minute gave the New York Red Bulls a 1-0 victory Wednesday night over Chivas of Guadalajara in an international exhibition. Echeverry's goal from the middle of the box stood as Chivas failed to get its offense in gear.

New York didn't get too many chances either but on the scoring play, Sinisa Ubiparipovic dribbled to the left of goalkeeper Luis Michel Vergara, drawing him out of position.

Ubiparipovic passed to a charging Echeverry, whose left-foot shot from near the penalty spot found the left corner of the net.

The teams played a man down for the entire second half after New York captain Seth Stammers and Chivas Edgar Solis were ejected in the 43rd minute after a hard foul sparked a near-fight.

New York controlled possession for much of the first half until after the goal, when the Mexican club stepped up its offensive attack.

Still, Chivas only got four shots off goal in the first 45 minutes while the Red Bulls started early. In the fifth minute, Echeverry got free of Vergara for a close shot that was cleared near the line by Chivas defender Antonio de los Santos.

Chivas pressured New York a bit more in the second half before a decidedly partisan Mexican crowd with many in the University of Phoenix Stadium stands in the red and white stripes of the Guadalajara squad.

25. Oscar-winning performance; Echeverry lifts Bulls over Chivas, 1-0

Big Apple Soccer

June 26, 2008

Glendale, Ariz. -- Now, if he could only do this in a game that counts.

Forward Oscar Echeverry connected for his first goal of the year in the 22nd minute to give the Red Bulls a 1-0 victory over Chivas de Guadalajara in a exhibition match Wednesday night.

Echeverry will have an opportunity to score in a match that really matters when the Red Bulls visit Chivas USA, the Mexican team's sister club, at The Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif. Saturday night.

The win kicked off a long road stretch for the Red Bulls, who must play five away games within 16 days.

"It's a good boost to the confidence of the team," Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio said.

Osorio emptied his bench at halftime and in the second half, giving as many players as much playing time as possible before a crowd of 10,154 at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

"We're very pleased with the result," Osorio said. "The guys played really well, especially in the first half. We had a plan and the plan was to start with a strong starting line and then in the second half, give a chance to everybody. Maybe the quality dropped a little bit, but we still battled and competed against them very well and limited them to very few chances."

The Red Bulls were forced to play the final 48 minutes a man down as midfielder Seth Stammers was slapped with a red card by referee Ricardo Salazar in the 42nd minute. Carlos Mendes had tackled midfielder Edgar Ivan Solis and Stammers kicked the ball into Solis' back.

A shoving match between the two teams ensued before Salazar broke it up before it really got ugly.

Since it was a friendly, Stammers won't have to sit out another match due to a one-game suspension.

Echeverry enjoyed an active first half, taking three shots at the Chivas goal and he finally found the back of the net for his first goal of the year in the 22nd minute.

Midfielder Sinisa Ubiparipovic, fresh off his finest game as a Red Bull, picked up where he left off from Saturday's 1-0 win over FC Dallas as he set up the goal. After taking a pass from defender Hunter Freeman, Ubiparipovic penetrated down the right wing into the penalty area and noticed an open Echeverry standing a step or two to the right of the penalty spot. He sent a pass to Echeverry, who had an easy time slotting past goalkeeper Luis Miguel Vergara.

"I made the run for Hunter and I saw him receive the ball," Ubiparipovic said. "I ran towards the open space and made the run, got to the ball, crossed the ball back to Oscar . . . and he finished it off well."

Said Echeverry: "It was a really pretty play by Sinisa. It was like the play was all his and all I had to do was touch it, leaving me all by myself."

Echeverry, who has been slowed by a knee injury for a good portion of the season, hasn't recorded a goal or an assist in four starts over five MLS games and 311 minutes.

"It was a very good reward for Oscar for all of his hard work, putting his injury aside and battling back into the team," Osorio said. "I'm very pleased for him."

Before and after the goal, Echeverry was the Red Bulls' most dangerous player. He had a shot cleared off the line by Chivas defender Antonio Olvera de los Santos with the game barely five minutes old. He then fired a 12-yard shot wide left of the net as he raced down the right side in the 18th minute.

And four minutes after he scored in the 22nd minute, Echeverry put the ball into the back of the net, but he was ruled to be offside.

In his first start for the Red Bulls, rookie John Gilkerson played a solid first half. In fact, he made the

defensive play of the half for New York as he raced from the his left fullback position to barely knock the ball away from forward Javier Hernandez Balcazar and out of touch in the 16th minute.

Lineups

Red Bulls

Zach Thornton, Jeff Parke, Andrew Boyens, Hunter Freeman (Chris Leitch, 45) , John Gilkerson (Ricky Schramm, 88), Carlos Mendes (Gordon Kljestan, 45), Seth Stammers, Sinisi Ubiparipovic (Mike Magee, 45), Dave van den Bergh (Luke Sassano, 45), Oscar Echeverry (John Wolyniec, 45; Chris Megaloudis, 82), Dane Richards (Danleigh Borman, 35; David Roth, 66).

Chivas de Guadalajara

Luis Michel Vergara (Serio Rodriguez, 79), Javier Ledexma (Xavier Baez, 53), Hector Reynoso Lopez, Serio Avila (Marco Fabian de la Mora, 45; Julio Cesar Nava, 72), Antonio de los Santos, Omar Esparza, Ramon Morales (Jorge Adrian Cardenas, 78), Edgar Solis, Edgar Mejia Viruete, Javier Hernandez (Omar Arellano Riveron, 45), Antonio Salazar (Jesus Andrews Padilla, 53).

26. For starters; Gilkerson makes 1st team debut for Bulls

Big Apple Soccer

June 26, 2008

Phoenix, Ariz. -- He has been patient, going to training every day and playing in reserve games.

The payoff for rookie defender John Gilkerson came Wednesday night, when he started the Red Bulls' 1-0 win over Chivas de Guadalajara in a friendly.

Gilkerson, 23, acquitted himself well and at times stood out. He made the defensive play of the half for the Red Bulls as he raced across the field from the his left fullback position to barely knock the ball away from forward Javier Hernandez Balcazar and out of touch in the 16th minute.

"It's big," Gilkerson said of playing. "I've been waiting for this for a long time. I didn't think it would come this soon but I thank coach for letting me have the opportunity to let me in there and it was great to get a game under my belt."

The 6-foot, 175-lb. Gilkerson, who was drafted by the Red Bulls in the third round of this year's MLS supplemental draft, still hasn't playing in an official league game.

"Even though it wasn't an MLS game, it was still my first professional game," he said. "It was good to be out there, good atmosphere, good fans."

It certainly was a physical game. Gilkerson and a Chivas player knocked heads once and another one threw him to the ground.

"I knew that they would come out and be physical," Gilkerson said. "No matter the circumstances, a game is a game but it did get a little bit out of hand a little bit, but that's what happens when you're in the heat of the battle."

Gilkerson left the game for rookie Ricky Schramm in the 88th minute.

The Red Bulls' latest signing, midfielder Gordon Kljestan, who agreed to a developmental contract Wednesday, also made his first team debut. Kljestan replaced defensive midfielder Carlos Mendes at halftime.

Kljestan, a former Seton Hall player who grew up in Huntington Beach, Calif., was just happy to be a Red Bull.

"I was thrilled once I found out they were offering me a contract," he said. "It was a dream come true because I played at Seton Hall and I always followed the Red Bulls. As a kid, the Galaxy was my team and then slowly, the Red Bulls became my team so I was happy [when I signed]."

27. No great expectations

Big Apple Soccer
June 26, 2008

Glendale, Ariz. -- It doesn't come as a big surprise. Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio said that he doesn't expect the injured Juan Pablo Angel and Claudio Reyna to play at Chivas USA Saturday.

"Both are improving," he said after the Red Bulls defeated Chivas de Guadalajara in a friendly Wednesday night.

Angel is battling a hamstring injury while Reyna has a herniated disc.

The Red Bulls and Chivas play at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif.

Reyna played the entire 60 minutes at a charity game for his foundation in Manhattan Wednesday. Angel attended the function, but did not play.

28. New York shows its love for Henry

By: Stephan Bondy
Herald News
June 26, 2008

Could Frenchman end up playing for Red Bulls one day?

NEW YORK -- They pounced on Thierry Henry with autograph requests and words of undying adulation.

When Henry's name was finally announced, the sardine-packed crowd bestowed its loudest ovation of the night -- overwhelmingly louder than the cheers for NBA stars Jason Kidd, Baron Davis and Steve Nash.

If there was any question whether the French soccer star has appeal in New York, Wednesday's charity soccer game in Chinatown provided the emphatic answer. His various jerseys were scattered around Sara Roosevelt Park -- from the third row of standing bodies behind the fence to the treetops where the younger crowd climbed to get a better view.

They chanted his name during downtime, then "oohed and aahed" when the ball was at his feet. Henry's reception was a sight to behold, more than he expected. The striker didn't disappoint on the field, either, teaming up with Nash to defeat a team that featured Davis, Kidd, Claudio Reyna and Jozy Altidore.

"Not really, I didn't think it would be like this to be honest," said Henry in a brief moment between posing for photos. "But it's great. New York is New York. It's a great place."

The hope for the Red Bulls and their fans is that Henry's words are more than fleeting compliments. Rumors of a possible transfer to MLS surfaced in 2006, picking up last year when Henry told the New York Times, "I always say that one day I can play over there. I would love to."

At 30 years old and still in top form, Henry would be the perfect blend of skill and marketability to open Red Bull Park in Harrison in 2009. He is a World Cup hero who played in two finals and is a perennial

contender for FIFA's World Player of the Year Award -- finishing runner-up in 2003 and 2004 and fourth in 2005 and 2006.

Henry is also one of the few recognizable soccer faces in America, partially due to his participation in a Gillette commercial with Tiger Woods and Roger Federer.

When asked Wednesday whether he'll play in New York, Henry was invitingly vague. "We'll see about that," he said.

Henry is under contract with Barcelona of La Liga until 2011 and a transfer will likely cost MLS eight figures, a fee that was unnecessary for David Beckham because he was a free agent. It would be a large commitment for the league, which acts as a single-entity that shares revenues and negotiates all contracts.

One of the charity game spectators, MLS Commissioner Don Garber, could be the deciding factor. Though Garber couldn't comment on the potential transfer of a player under contract, the native New Yorker was certainly impressed with what he witnessed -- a love fest for a Frenchman who captivated Chinatown.

"What a fantastic player, great guy and someone that's a true superstar," Garber said. "It shows how international New York City is and what passion and understanding we have for the game here that Thierry got the biggest cheers."

"It's a huge crowd. I'm shocked by the number of people here."

Perhaps it is a scene destined for Red Bull Park.

29. Nash/Reyna charity game: A look back

By: Ives Galarcep
Soccer by Ives Blog
June 26, 2008

Standing in the middle of an energized crowd, Jozy Altidore rattled off autographs and posed for picture after picture. Even after most of the other stars who played in the Steve Nash/Claudio Reyna charity match in Manhattan's Chinatown, Altidore stood on the turf at Nike Field and signed and posed for fans eager to meet American soccer's most exciting young star.

I stood just a few feet away from Altidore, watching the display when three young kids (somewhere between nine and 12) ran up to the group. One kid says, "I think he's a player. Is that Solomon Kalou?" I leaned over to the boys and said, "That's not Kalou, that's Jozy Altidore." One of the boys followed with, "Is he a player?"

After eventually giving the youngsters a quick rundown on who Altidore was, they ran off to get his autograph. I turned to ESPN colleague Doug McIntyre, who could barely contain his grin. Yes folks, this is soccer in America.

Yes, there were hundreds, probably a few thousand, of fans lining the fences at the charity game in Chinatown on Wednesday, but they weren't all soccer fans. Most fell into three groups: soccer fans hoping to see some good action and catch a glimpse of a soccer star, basketball fans hoping to see an NBA player and curious New Yorkers hoping to see something, anything entertaining and possibly see a celebrity or two.

What all those fans got was a funny, sometimes skillful and entertaining show that was a credit to the sport. Here's a look back at some of the more memorable moments:

Thierry Henry was the star of the show. He did ball tricks, scored goals and showed the charisma that has made him such an international star. I have already gone on record a few times saying that I see him joining the Red Bulls eventually and I'm sticking to it. Summer of 2009. Book it.

Baron Davis gets the award for most entertaining player. He clearly hasn't played much soccer in his life but he's funny as can be and was still athletic enough to score a goal and strip Henry clean in a one-on-one situation. His Reverse Hand of God play (Davis punched away a goal-bound chip shot from Henry) was one of the funnier moments of the day, as was the scene of Davis shoving Robbie Fowler to the ground and laying on him for the pin.

Steve Nash can play. He hit some great shots, including the game-ending volley goal off a long-range pass, and while I'm not ready to say he could play in MLS, I do think he could have been pushing Dwayne DeRosario and Julian DeGuzman for national team time with Canada had he stuck with soccer.

Robbie Fowler showed off some of his trademark finishing and I have to say he wouldn't be a bad pick-up for the Red Bulls. He absolutely blistered some shots and his finish off a Steve McNamara pass had to bring a smile to the faces of many a Liverpool fan in attendance. It was still a bit sad to see the autograph seekers who horde the field after basically ignore him.

Leandro Barbosa is a beast and you can tell he knows the game (I know, he's Brazilian, they all know the game right?). With his size and speed, if he had stuck to soccer I think he'd probably be a \$50 million center back and definitely an upgrade on the national team from Juan.

Salomon Kalou showed off some nice speed and ball control, but as is the case with Chelsea, his finishing leaves a bit to be desired.

Jozy Altidore played but didn't get too involved after the first 20 minutes. He had a nice assist on Baron Davis' goal and he and Claudio Reyna tried to combine on several occasions. Watching him sign autographs long after most other players had left was impressive. He is in Jersey getting some rest before going to Spain next month. I asked him about playing in the Olympics and he said there would be a meeting to discuss it next week, but that he didn't think there would be a problem. He definitely wants to play, which tells me he will.

Claudio Reyna delivered some of his trademark sharp passes and had a handful of shots in the first half. Seeing him connect with former U.S. national team and high school teammate Gregg Berhalter was memorable. I know some Red Bulls fans will call me crazy but if he can get past his current injury I still think he can help the team. That's a big if though and at this point I wouldn't be at all shocked if he retired very soon.

I had a chance to catch up with **Gregg Berhalter** after the game. It sounds like he will consider a move to MLS for 2009 depending on how things go with 1860 Munich next season. he's 1860s captain and is eager to help the team gain promotion, but after talking to him about a potential return to the USA for the past six years he sounds more open to the idea than ever before.

Kudos to the goalkeepers for taking so much abuse. Red Bulls' employee (and occasional reserve team player) **Mike Quarino** made some great saves and has already been called by D.C. United for a tryout (Okay, I made that last part up.)

For those of you wondering where I was, I sat behind the south goal (literally behind it). It was a great view to watch the game and I only wish I had my laptop with me to provide a more thorough live commentary (yes, my laptop is still on the DL, but my Glyde phone did okay in its place). I sat a few feet from NBA all-star Caron Butler, who was relatively anonymous to the people in attendance because he wasn't wearing any elaborate jewelry and spent most of his time shooting video and taking pictures (probably to blackmail Baron Davis with). Robbie Fowler and Salomon Kalou both almost caught me in the head with shots but my cat-like quickness prevailed.

Overall it was a good event for a good cause and it's the type of event there needs to be more of to help soccer connect with the community. Can somebody get Ronaldinho and Lionel Messi on the phone?

Were you at the event? If so, feel free to share your favorite moments from the Steve Nash/Claudio Reyna charity soccer game.

30. On MLS in Phoenix and the Red Bulls-Chivas friendly

By: Ives Galarcep
Soccer by Ives Blog
June 26, 2008

When USA and Mexico squared off in a friendly at University of Phoenix Stadium about 16 months ago, the crowd was great and packed the place in a memorable display of soccer passion. When the New York Red Bulls and Chivas de Guadalajara met last night, the scene was slightly less memorable.

Okay, a lot less memorable.

The paltry crowd was treated to a forgettable game, though the Red Bulls gave their fans plenty to feel good about. Despite being short-handed, the Red Bulls thoroughly outplayed a top Mexican club (which to be fair, was also not in season and missing several key players). No matter. The Red Bulls can feel proud about their performance.

SBI West Coast correspondent Odeen Domingo was in the house on Wednesday night and gave us his take on the exhibition and the Red Bulls' performance:

Major League Soccer in Phoenix .

That's like heaven in hell.

It must only be the work of the devil, when the clouds are black and the sun is setting and it's still over 105 degrees. But a reprieve -- the MLS is in Phoenix. If just for one, glorious night.

The heat is as unbearable as Max Bretos. But on this night, Phoenicians can take solace in watching professional soccer live -- the New York Red Bulls vs. Chivas de Guadalajara at the big bedpan, er, University of Phoenix Stadium .

Doing so while drinking beer. We just didn't know how much. For two buddies and I were about to join -- for the first time -- others who share our preference of seeing an MLS team in the Valley. We bought tickets to enjoy the match with the resident MLS in Phoenix supporter's group, MLS Phoenix Rising.

Finally, to be a part of what makes soccer great. Fanatic fandom. To wave the flag of a team that doesn't exist. To buy pints of beer with the lone objective is to spill them. To chant and sing and for 90 hell-raising minutes.

Our only problem was how to raise hell when hell is already waiting for you outside?

It need not matter. Everything will be better once we begin singing songs stolen from South America , the ones we don't know the words to.

But then, we walked inside the monstrous stadium and reality hit.

The lower bowl wasn't even half full. Much of the 15,000 or so in attendance were Chivas fans, which was predictable. What also should have been predictable was the size of the local MLS in Phoenix support group.

Sons of Ben it was not.

“Small” would be an overstatement. “Minute” would be a slap in the face.

The group couldn't even fill three rows in the section it saved for the match.

There were no flags to wave. No pints to shower in. No chanting. No singing.

No big grins.

No offense to the eight people who were wearing yellow Phoenix Rising shirts or the other 10 who were there to round out the supporter's group (and the two of whom who are reading this right now), but it falls much short of what is needed to convince the MLS that Phoenix deserves a team. Which is why this city will never receive one. Well, not in the next decade, at least. It's laughable to think the MLS was even considering a meeting with a potential Phoenix ownership group. (FYI, the meeting was canceled and has yet to be rescheduled.)

Heck, even the Chivas fans were lame. They tried starting a wave, which failed, and the lone chant heard that night was “Chivas!” clap-clap-clap-clap-clap “Chivas!”

It's the Americanization of Chivas fans.

To be fair, this game wasn't marketed the way it should have been, giving the public just a three-week notice instead of the needed three months.

But still, if you really want to follow the footsteps of the Sons of Ben, there should be nothing in the way to stop you.

The best moment and the longest time I actually stood was when the game was over, when I was the lone soul in the stands to recognize American soccer star, Reading F.C. goalkeeper and soul patch-extraordinaire Marcus Hahnemann.

I asked him if he could take a picture with me. He obliged. And then gave me the scoop.

Me: “What's up Marcus? So when are you going to play for Seattle ?”

MH: “I have one more season at Reading then I'll announce I agreed to a three-year contract with the Sounders. But don't tell anyone.”

OK. I'm lying.

Hahnemann really said: “Maybe. Maybe. We'll see. I have one more season at Reading .”

Phoenix Rising will also need more seasoning to become a factor in American soccer. To their credit, they tried. And if you live in the Valley, you should help them create something special. Check them out at: www.mlsphoenixrising.com.

It has to begin somewhere. To being creating flags. Chants. And those famous grins.

A few notes on the game:

- Both teams were short-handed. And it showed. Both teams seemed uninterested in a disturbing amount of stretches.
- Sinisa Ubiparipovic is no joke. His run into the box and jock-dropping move on a Chivas defender before the assist on the match's lone goal was impressive. As was his play for much of the night.
- But I also like to stress the pass before the pass. Stammler's pass to find Ubiparipovic was money.
- Oscar Echverry's goal wasn't even his highlight of the night. His footwork when on the ball was fun to watch.

-- The Red Bulls had a hard time playing through the midfield in the second half and asked their fullbacks to boom the ball down the touchline to streaking forwards, a strategy that found some success.
-- Not sure why Juan Carlos Osorio seems to put a lot of faith in Mike Magee. He didn't do much besides sail balls into the stands.

31. Reyna displays a slight to Red Bulls fans

By: Ives Galarcep
Soccer by Ives Blog
June 26, 2008

Claudio Reyna calmly placed the ball on the artificial turf where the penalty spot was and readied himself for a chance to score a goal. After a brief interruption from an opponent, Reyna confidently strided up to the ball and blasted it past the goalkeeper, drawing applause from the New York fans who ringed the venue.

No, this didn't take place at Giants Stadium. This took place at Nike Field in Chinatown at a charity game. The opponent who interrupted Reyna's kick was a joking Thierry Henry, who drew a yellow card that made many of the fans in attendance laugh.

Red Bulls fans weren't laughing at all. Not at the news that Reyna, the same player who has played in just six of the team's 13 matches this year, was able to play in a soccer game despite being too injured to join his team on its current West Coast swing, or play in any of the team's past five matches.

For many Red Bulls fans, it was the ultimate insult and the last straw.

That Reyna played in the event, which was played to help raise funds for Reyna's and NBA star Steve Nash's charitable foundations, wasn't that big an offense. Playing in that half-speed match can't compare in any way with the physical demands of playing in an MLS match. The problem was the symbolism of his participation, and the perception that he cared more about playing in a celebrity pick-up game than being with the team that actually pays him is what turned it into a crime in the eyes of Red Bulls fans. The fact that injured Red Bulls forward Juan Pablo Angel attended but didn't play in the match only made Reyna's participation look that much worse.

Do I think it was a crime? Playing in the game itself wasn't that bad. Where Reyna failed miserably is in communicating with the public about the charity event beforehand. Instead of failing to talk about the possibility of playing (he decline interview requests last week), Reyna should have been out front talking about the charity event and about his potential participation in the match. It would have given Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio a chance to state whether or not he thought Reyna playing in the match was risky or even acceptable. The news might have been met with snickers and objections, but not nearly the reaction elicited when Red Bulls fans had to find out after the fact that Reyna played the entire charity game.

That isn't what happened though. Not only did Reyna not spread the word beforehand about his potential participation in the match, the Red Bulls had hardly any involvement in the charity event and sources tell me that the club scrambled to get involved in some capacity the day before the match.

Reyna discussed his participation after the match and pointed out that he was close to coming back to action with the Red Bulls, and that his participation in Wednesday's match could only help his progress, but that explanation rang hollow coming after the event rather than before it.

What happens next? It is safe to say that if Reyna doesn't play for the Red Bulls very soon there will be even more questions raised about him playing in Wednesday's charity game and even more venom from Red Bulls fans who will have every right to feel slighted.

32. Red Bulls beat the real Chivas 1-0

By: Brian Lewis

New York Post Blog
June 26, 2008

The reserve-laden Red Bulls beat Chivas de Guadalajara _ the real Chivas _ 1-0 in a friendly that wasn't very friendly at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale. Oscar Echeverry scored his first goal since joining the club, side-footing the ball into an open goal after a great pass from Sinisa Ubiparipovic.

"First of all, we're very pleased with the result. The guys played really well, especially in the first half," said coach Juan Carlos Osorio. "The plan was to start with a strong starting line and then in the second half, give a chance to everybody. Maybe the quality dropped a little bit, but we still battled and competed.

"I think in the end, great individual performances, great commitment, great effort from the guys playing against a top opponent. So, I'm very pleased with the result and the performance."

With five road games in 16 days, they fielded a young lineup with stars Claudio Reyna and Juan Pablo Angel back in New York healing _ and playing in Steve Nash's charity game, but let's not go there. They've got a backlog of fixtures with Chivas USA coming up Saturday, but they played well against the original Mexican version.

Echeverry was arguably Red Bull's best player and could've had three goals, with one called back offside and another cleared off the line. But in the 22nd minute, Ubiparipovic _ coming off his best MLS game in the 1-0 win over Dallas _ dribbled through the penalty area, danced around ne defender and laid the ball to Echeverry.

"I made the run for Hunter (Freeman) and I saw him receive the ball. I ran towards the open space and made the run, got to the ball, crossed the ball back to Oscar...and he finished it off well," Ubiparipovic said of Echeverry, who doesn't have a goal or assist in five league games _ 311 minutes _ but looked sharp.

"Sinisa is very capable of seeing a pass and executing it and Oscar just put it away," Osorio said. "In general, I think that it was a very good reward for Oscar for all of his hard work, putting his injury aside and battling back into the team. I'm very pleased for him."
The game got chippy with Seth Stammers and a Chivas player both getting red cards.

Centerback Jeff Parke wore the captain's armband and had the defensive play of the night, racing 20 yards from off the screen to strip a Chivas attacker who had a breakaway.

Rookie left back John Gilkerson looked great in his first start, sprinting to tackle the ball away from striker Javier Hernandez Balcazar in the first half.

"It's big," Gilkerson said. "I've been waiting for this for a long time. I didn't think it would come this soon but I thank coach for letting me have the opportunity to let me in there and it was great to get a game under my belt."

33. Red Bulls sign Gordon Kljestan

By: Brian Lewis
New York Post Blog
June 26, 2008

The Red Bulls signed former Seton Hall midfielder Gordon Kljestan to a developmental contract today, waiving Queens product Kevin Mesa to make room.

"I was thrilled once I found out they were offering me a contract. It was a dream come true because I played at Seton Hall and I always followed the Red Bulls," Kljestan said. "As a kid, the Galaxy was my team and then slowly, the Red Bulls became my team so I was happy (when I signed)."

Kljestan was a first-round supplemental pick by the Galaxy last year, starting six games for their reserves and logging 513 minutes. The 24-year-old had been on trial with the Red Bulls and started two reserve games before eventually being inked to a deal. He's the brother of Chivas USA star and US National Team standout Sacha Kljestan.

"Gordon has impressed us since joining our team on trial a few weeks ago. We think that he can make a contribution to our squad and we're excited to have him on board," said Sporting Director Jeff Agoos.

Mesa had inked with the Red Bulls in March after practicing with them in the preseason. He played in four reserve games, but hadn't made an appearance with the big club despite a host of injuries in the midfield, while developmental players Danleigh Borman, Luke Sassano and Chris Megaloudis all appeared.

34. This week in MLS: First time not a charm

By: Frank Giase
Star-Ledger
June 26, 2008

FC Dallas coach Schellas Hyndman, the 60th head/interim coach in Major League Soccer history, lost his debut Saturday night, 1-0, to the Red Bulls at Giants Stadium. The result left the league record for coaching debuts at 27-22-11.

Incredibly, of the 60 coaches, 11 have been with the MetroStars/Red Bulls. That's 18.5 percent. And you can guess which team has dragged the winning percentage down.

The record for the franchise's coaching debuts is 2-6-3, with the only victory in regulation play coming this year, when Juan Carlos Osorio beat the Crew, 2-0. Actually, the past four coaches have done well, going 1-0-3.

Before Osorio, Mo Johnston tied the Fire, 2-2, on Oct. 5, 2005; Richie Williams tied the Crew, 0-0, on June 28, 2006; and Bruce Arena tied D.C. United, 0-0, on Aug. 16, 2006.

Before that? Disaster. Eddie Firmani got it started, losing the first game in franchise history, 2-1, to the Galaxy, before 69,255 at the Rose Bowl on April 13, 1996. Then it was Carlos Queiroz losing at D.C. United, 2-1, on May 30, 1996, followed by Carlos Alberto Parreira, who lost at San Jose, 1-0, on March 22, 1997.

Alfonso kept the streak going, losing at the Galaxy, 3-2, on March 28, 1998, before Bora Milutinovic replaced him for the last game of the season. Bora won, 1-0, at the Revolution on Sept. 26, 1998, but that game was won in a shootout that followed a scoreless tie.

Even Octavio Zambrano and Bob Bradley, the two winningest coaches in franchise history, couldn't do it. Zambrano lost, 3-1, at the Miami Fusion on March 26, 2000, and Bradley lost, 1-0, at the Crew on April 12, 2003.

MARATHON

Five straight hours of soccer on network television on a Sunday afternoon? What's this world coming to?

Well, believe it. Executives at ABC were hoping to showcase England and David Beckham at the European Championship finals on Sunday, but because England didn't qualify, they came up with a new plan.

They decided to put together a doubleheader with an MLS game and, to no one's surprise, it will include Beckham. So on Sunday, it will be Beckham and the Galaxy at D.C. United at noon, followed by the Euro final at 2:30. I'd love to see Mike and the Mad Dog do the ratings on those games Monday afternoon.

DEADLINE

Online voting (mlsnet.com) for the All-Star Game ends Wednesday. After five weeks, Beckham leads the pack with 4.89 percent of the total vote. He's followed by Landon Donovan, Cuauhtemoc Blanco, Amado Guevara, Dwayne De Rosario, Greg Sutton, Frankie Hejduk, Maurice Edu, Guillermo Barros Schelotto and Marvell Wynne. Guevara, Sutton, Edu and Wynne all play for Toronto FC, which, by no fan-voting coincidence, will host the July 24 game.

As far as who will coach the MLS team against English club West Ham, the outcome will be decided after this weekend's games. If the Revolution beats Toronto FC Saturday night in Foxborough, Mass., the Revs' Steve Nicol is the coach. If not, other factors come into play.

TONIGHT

FC DALLAS AT DYNAMO

9 p.m., ESPN2

FC Dallas, sixth in the Western Conference, is struggling at 4-6-4, while the third-place Dynamo (4-4-6) are coming on and are just three points behind the first-place Galaxy.

THE RANKINGS

1. Revolution: Loss to RSL ended 5-0-2 unbeaten streak, the longest in the league this season.
2. Galaxy: Have scored seven more goals than any other team (31), but have given up the second most (24).
3. Dynamo: Play intrastate rival FC Dallas for third and final time. First two games ended in ties.
4. Toronto FC: Is now unbeaten in its last 10 home games (6-0-4) dating to last season.
5. Crew: The only team in the league that hasn't allowed a goal in the first 15 minutes of the second half.
6. Fire: Have lost three games in a row, but goalie Jon Busch's goals against average is still best in the league (0.92).
7. Real Salt Lake: Set a club record by holding opponents scoreless for 283 minutes.
8. D.C. United: Unbeaten in last five games (4-0-1) with 14 goals for and seven against.
9. Red Bulls: Team's depth will be stretched during stretch of eight games in 27 days.
10. FC Dallas: Forward Kenny Cooper has scored three of his seven goals against Houston.
11. Rapids: Play at Crew Saturday night. Have not won there since June 26, 2004.
12. Chivas USA: Midfielder Sacha Kljestan has five goals in 12 games after scoring four in 25 games last season.
13. Wizards: Became just the third team to earn a point in Toronto this year with Saturday's scoreless tie.
14. Earthquakes: Worst record in the league at 3-7-2, but are 3-1 when they score the first goal.