

THE NEW JERSEY SOCCER GROUP

Press Release



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WPSL Players Dominate 2009 WPS draft

The "circle of life" of women's professional soccer has finally turned back around to the sport's favor as the opening game of the inaugural Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) season is a little over two months away. After the dissolution of the Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA) in 2003, aspiring professionals, internationals & veterans alike had to ply their trade in the amateur ranks, which includes one of the top leagues in the world - the Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL). After the WPS Draft, held in St. Louis, MO, many WPSL players can pursue that professional dream once again, as 29 former & current standouts were selected by the seven WPS teams in a 10-round format. On top of that fact, nine of the first 11 picks in the 2009 WPS Draft have ties with the WPSL.

"It is a great day for the WPSL but more so for the sport of women's soccer," said League Commissioner Jerry Zanelli. To have 9 of the first 11 picks in today's WPS Draft connected to our league is truly gratifying, but as a whole, no where close to the satisfaction when it comes to the players themselves. This is what our league is truly about - developing players for the next level." West Coast F.C.'s Amy Rodriguez, who signed with the team prior to the 2008 season but was called up to the gold-medal winning U.S. Women's National Team for the Olympic Games this past summer after an injury to star forward Abby Wambach, was selected 1st overall by the Boston Breakers. After that, former Elk Grove Pride star & All-WPSL selection Megan Rapinoe (Univ. of Portland) went to the Chicago Red Stars with the second overall selection. The Long Island Fury of the East Conference were honored with two selections in the First Round, as U-23 USWNT star & UCLA's Hermann Trophy Finalist Christina DiMartino (3rd overall, F.C. Gold Pride) and Allie Long (7th overall, Washington) of the 2008 College Cup Champion Univ. of North Carolina Tarheels will now take on the pro ranks. Alex Singer (Univ. of Virginia) - a starter on Long Island's 2006 WPSL National Championship team - was selected with the first pick (8th overall) of the 2nd Round. "Obviously, it's a great opportunity for the ladies to take the next step in their careers, but it's truly amazing for the league," said Fury Head Coach Paul Riley. "The other WPSL teams can use this as inspiration; opportunities are out there for you to excel and have a chance to compete in the top echelon of the game. It's a credit to [Christina & Allie] as they've been working hard for this opportunity, even training in the past few weeks with us. "I'm ecstatic for Alex [Singer] because she hasn't been one of the bigger names mentioned through this process. All this is really gratifying for those players and us as an organization... all of them played together with us for the Albertson Soccer Club." Both DiMartino and her new coach - Albertin Montoya, who was on the California Storm coaching staff - were excited about their WPS possibilities. "Christina is the best attacking midfielder in the country by far," said Montoya. "She can create, she can finish and she possesses skills you just can't teach. Her vision of the game is impeccable. We wish her the best in camp with the National Team and look forward to her arrival in the Bay Area." "I'm excited to head to the Bay Area I heard it's great. I met Albertin at the combine he seemed like a great guy and an awesome coach. I'm excited to be a part of the Bay Area team." said DiMartino. Also, rounding out the first two rounds were WPSL standouts Kia McNeill (9th overall to St. Louis, All-WPSL selection with Bay State Select) and five-time All-WPSL selection & UConn's First Team NSCAA All-American Meghan Schnur (11th overall to Sky Blue F.C.). Notre Dame's Brittany Bock (5th overall to Los Angeles) played for the 2005 WPSL & U.S. Open Cup Champion F.C. Indiana squad and was named to the All-Final Four Team for her efforts.

The mission of Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) is to be the premier women's soccer league in the world. Play kicks off in the spring of 2009, with WPS teams based in the Bay Area, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Jersey/New York, St. Louis and Washington, D.C. The WPSL is a 51-team national women's soccer league with five conferences and is considered one of the top women's soccer leagues in the world. The Millburn Magic is the Northern NJ member of the WPSL, an independent national league representing the highest level of women's soccer in the United States. The Magic are part of The New Jersey Soccer Group, a management company representing a family of soccer based organizations offering a full range of soccer services in northern New Jersey.

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The New Jersey Soccer Group
P.O. Box 3
Long Valley, NJ
07853

www.njsoccergroup.com
info@njsoccergroup.com
Phone: 973-315-3098
Fax: 973-315-3104