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1. Embarrassing; United routs short-handed Red Bulls, 4-1

By: Dylan Butler
Big Apple Soccer
June 14, 2008

Washington, D.C. – There was still nearly 70 minutes left in the match and the deficit was just one goal. But Red Bulls coach Juan Carlos Osorio knew the game was over, long before D.C. United struck three more times in a 4-1 drubbing in front of 18,622 at RFK Stadium Saturday night.

“I think it was the first goal,” Osorio said. “Basically it was a very even game. We just decided we could go forward and there's no organization, they counterattack and in four passes they go through all our defenders and it's a goal.”

Luciano Emilio scored that goal and two others for his first career hat trick, handing the Red Bulls yet another loss at RFK Stadium.

“I don't even know if we've gotten a point here,” Jeff Parke said. “I can't remember the last time. Maybe we got one point in three, four years.”

In actuality, the Red Bulls last won here in 2005, beating D.C., 2-1. That's one win in their last 12 games in all competitions.

A win was always going to be difficult, considering the Red Bulls' past form at RFK Stadium. But the Red Bulls came to Washington, D.C. a depleted team, missing designated players Juan Pablo Angel and Claudio Reyna, both out with herniated discs in their backs.

Jozy Altidore inked a six-year deal with Villarreal this week and Chris Megaloudis, who would have likely made his MLS debut against D.C. Saturday, was with the Puerto Rican national team, scoring a goal in the 2-2 draw against Honduras.

"This is what we have," Osorio said. "I'm only concerned with the players that are here. The others, for whatever reason it is, are not here. I just think that on the night we lost against a better team."

Five minutes after Emilio scored, the Red Bulls gave up yet another set piece goal, allowing Jaime Moreno to play a ball to Clyde Simms, who blasted a shot from 22 yards out that beat Jon Conway inside the near post to double D.C.'s lead on 26 minutes.

D.C. added a third goal in first-half stoppage time when Santino Quaranta was given time and space down the left side. His shot was saved, but Emilio beat the Red Bulls defenders to the rebound and put in his second of the game.

"After it's 3-0, the game's over basically," Dave van den Bergh said. "We got a goal back and they score within (five) minutes and they were 4-1 up again. We were never really in it... Moral just took a hit there."

Moments after John Wolyniec headed the ball off the crossbar, the Red Bulls got within two when van den Bergh cut the ball back and beat former New York goalkeeper Zach Wells inside the far post from the edge of the 18-yard box on 54 minutes.

But with the Red Bulls numbers pushed recklessly up, United made it 4-1 on a counter with Emilio scoring his third of the game five minutes later.

"Every goal in my opinion is a killer," Chris Leitch said. "Especially on the road, especially against a team like this."

Osorio said he was disappointed with the defending from a Red Bulls team that gave up four or more goals in a loss for the second time in the past four games and dropped to 4-4-3 and sit just three points out of the Eastern Conference cellar.

"I think tonight they were firing on all cylinders," Kevin Goldthwaite said. "They were doing the things they needed to do to keep the ball and they kept it brilliantly. It's tough when you are defending for most of the game. That being said we still have to take care of our responsibilities in the back. As much as we didn't keep the ball, we didn't defend well enough."

The Red Bulls will travel by rail back to New Jersey Sunday. But there is no light at the end of the tunnel, not with a midweek tilt against the New England Revolution at Gillette Stadium on the horizon.

"We better bring a different mentality up there," Chris Leitch said.

It's too bad they won't be able to bring Angel and some reinforcements, too.

2. Woly's world; veteran forward all alone against D.C.

By: Dylan Butler
Big Apple Soccer
June 14, 2008

Washington, D.C. – Juan Carlos Osorio's possible options up front for tonight's Eastern Conference match against D.C. United at RFK Stadium begins and ends with John Wolyniec.

That's how thin the Red Bulls are in the striker position this weekend.

Juan Pablo Angel is the No. 1 option, but he's been shut down by the Red Bulls medical department with not only an arthritic nerve-related injury in his lower back that caused him to have pain in his hamstring, but also had two herniated discs and a slight hamstring strain. He suffered that after scoring the winner against Chivas USA in the Red Bulls' last match June 5 at Giants Stadium.

Jozy Altidore, who was sold to Villarreal of Spain's La Liga, is no longer an option after coming to terms with the La Liga runners-up and being introduced to the Spanish press Wednesday.

And Chris Megaloudis, who would have likely been Osorio's first choice off the bench, is with Puerto Rico for its World Cup qualifier against Honduras. Colombian Oscar Echeverry is coming back from a knee injury suffered in training last month and has played in just two MLS matches.

That leaves Wolyniec, the veteran from Staten Island, N.Y., as the only real attacking threat for Osorio, who will likely employ a 4-5-1 formation that can easily morph into a 4-3-3 with the speed of Danleigh Borman and Dane Richards outside.

"Hopefully we will be able to provide him with better service," Osorio said of Wolyniec. "I think when Juan has done that job he has also found it very difficult to play because the service comes from the flanks, from the two midfielders that give him support...If we can feed the ball to him and he can get a hold of the ball then he will do a great job for us."

Wolyniec, who has started two games this year and has one assist, is up for the challenge.

"Usually you're going against two (defenders), they have a little bit less to worry about because they're not worried about forward coming in behind them," Wolyniec said. "It is different, a different mentality. You're holding the ball more, you're more of a target."

Wolyniec's size and saavy make him a pretty good option in terms of a lone striker and his success in that role tonight is critical if the Red Bulls are to get anything out of this match.

"He needs to give us a chance to get out of our defensive stance and hold the ball up so we can send some numbers forward and hopefully hurt them on a counterattack and hopefully keep the ball away from them a little bit," Dave van den Bergh said of Wolyniec. "He's going to be hugely important for us. He's been doing very well in practice so hopefully he can do the same for us during these games."

3. Lucky to be alive; REPORT: Ex-Bull Quaranta on drug-addiction

Big Apple Soccer

June 14, 2008

In an extensive interview with the Washington Post, former Red Bulls forward Santino Quaranta admitted that he was lucky to be alive after a self-destructive lifestyle in which he was addicted to drugs and spent approximately \$250,000 on drugs and alcohol.

"I should have been dead," the headline of the story in Saturday's Washington Post said.

"I was a one-dimensional alcoholic and addict," Quaranta told Post soccer writer Steve Goff. "When I tell you nothing else mattered in my life, I am not lying. To know there was a way out was a blessing."

Quaranta, who plays for D.C. United, used several drugs, including OxyContin and cocaine. He tested

positive for cocaine in 2006, but because he was a first-time offender, MLS did not suspend him. Quaranta went at a treatment facility in Malibu, Calif. this winter.

"The worst time was when I was healthy, because I had to go out and find more pills on my own on the street," he told the Post. "Even when the doctors gave me pills, it was just 20 or 30. I would go through those in a couple hours. I would eat 10 at a time.

"There weren't enough pills in the world for me. You could have put me in Iraq and I would have found a way to get pills. I should have been dead a long time ago."

Quaranta was a member of the Red Bulls, playing in 47 minutes over three games last season before a right toe sprain in July sidelined him for the rest of the season. He was released by the Red Bulls Jan. 3 and subsequently signed by United.

After a promising start to his career in 2001, Quaranta never reached the heights of the first half of his rookie season.

Quaranta scored five goals and an assist during a remarkable nine-game, two-month span for D.C. United and became the youngest player (16) selected for the MLS all-star game, as a commissioner's pick.

Quaranta was acquired by the Red Bulls from the Los Angeles Galaxy in exchange for a conditional fourth round pick in the 2008 MLS SuperDraft June 29.

For the entire story, go to www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/13/AR2008061303416.html.

4. Red Bulls thin at striker as Megaloudis joins Puerto Rico

By: Brian Lewis
New York Post Blog
June 14, 2008

Think the Red Bull forward corps for tonight's pivotal game at D.C. was depleted before, with Juan Pablo Angel injured and Jozy Altidore transferred? Now Chris Megaloudis is out, choosing to play for Puerto Rican in its World Cup qualifier vs. Honduras.

That leaves John Wolyniec as the almost-certain starter alone in a 4-5-1, with recovering Oscar Echeverry _ who hasn't seen the field since Game 2 of the season _ as the only backup. Their strike force is thinner than Keira Knightley.

"I think he has shown enough. He has two good feet, quick, I think I am prepared to use him when the time allows for it and the time is right I think he will contribute," coach Juan Carlos Osorio had said Thursday. "We need Chris this week. Hopefully he will be available for us."

He won't be, having left at practice yesterday while the rest of the team hopped an Amtrak.

Puerto Rico lost 4-0 in the first leg of its aggregate series, meaning this second leg holds about as much suspense as the average Lifetime movie. But the reality is the Red Bulls could've faced FIFA sanctions had they not let him go; as if they don't have enough troubles with eight games in 27 days and both Designated Players Angel and Claudio Reyna out with herniated discs.

That leaves Wolyniec playing alone in a 4-5-1 formation that could at times be a 4-3-3 with Dane Richards and Danleigh Borman on the wings. But the youngsters can't leave him stranded there.

"Hopefully we will be able to provide (Wolyniec) with better service. When Juan has done that job he has also found it very difficult to play because the service comes from the flanks, from the two midfielders that give him support," Osorio said. "If we can feed the ball to him and he can get a hold of the ball then he will do a great job for us."

5. Player Ratings: Red Bulls vs. D.C. United

By: Jack Bell
New York Times Blog
June 14, 2008

The Red Bulls (4-4-3, 15 points) were at a soggy Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington Saturday night to play D.C. United (5-7-1, 16 points) after an eight-day break since their last game. Claudio Reyna and Juan Pablo Ángel, the team's two designated players, both missed the game because of injuries. (They are also expected to miss the midweek game against New England.) Jozy Altidore will soon wear the yellow uniform of Villarreal of Spain, which left Coach Juan Carlos Osorio with few options other than John Wolyniec up front in a 4-5-1 formation. Seven mostly young Americans were in the Red Bulls' uninspired and rudderless starting lineup.

The game opened a stretch of 8 games in 27 days, including 7 away from the Meadowlands, for the Red Bulls. The team has only scored 11 goals this season (allowing 12) and just three goals in four away games.

I had a choice Saturday night, a difficult one ... the game was on TV on both MSG+ and HDNet. The picture rules on HDNet, but I prefer the commentary of Steve Cangelosi and Shep Messing on the local station, even if, like me, they were not at R.F.K., but back in the studio (I'm home). But the picture truly told the story.

Final Score: D.C. United 4, Red Bulls 1

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

Red Bulls

Goalkeeper

Jon Conway

No chance on United's first goal. Left unprotected and was beaten from distance (25 yards) by Clyde Simms to the near post. Nice save on a Santino Quaranta shot, but no chance on the rebound tucked in by Luciano Emilio. Strong save on an Emilio breakaway, minutes after the Red Bulls' goal. Left defenseless by his defense. **Grade: 4**

Defenders

Kevin Goldthwaite

Terrific defending ... beaten on a through ball to Fred, but recovered to tackle away the ball in the penalty area. Shares responsibility in an overall defensive breakdown. **Grade: 3**

Jeff Parke

Did not make it hard enough for D.C. United players to play in the first 45 minutes. At the heart of a central defense shredded by United's passing. **Grade: 3**

Chris Leitch

Luciano Emilio beat him to a cross for a tap-in goal, and his giveaway in first-half injury time was fatal: a third D.C. goal. Mercifully lifted from the game in the 61st minute. **Grade: 3**

Andrew Boyens

Tried some ambitious balls out of the back, but did not always connect. See Jeff Parke above. **Grade: 3**

Carlos Mendes

Entered in 61st minute, replacing Chris Leitch. Marked his man closely, as he is supposed to do. **Grade: 5**

Hunter Freeman

Entered in 75th minute, replacing Luke Sassano. **Grade: Incomplete**

Midfielders

Seth Stammer

Seemed to be engulfed in a ball of frustration. Still struggling with a back injury that seems to limit him.

Grade: 4

Dane Richards

Showed his value as a two-way player, something demanded by the Red Bulls' defense-minded coach, Osorio. Excellent lead ball to John Wolyniec, who wasted the opportunity. Never had much of a chance to run wide with the ball. **Grade: 4**

Dave van den Bergh

In a spot he really prefers — central midfield — but perhaps too soft-spoken to take a much-needed leadership role. He eventually took control early in the second half, sending some curling left-footed balls into the area before scoring in the 54th minute. **Grade: 5**

Luke Sassano

Better composure on the ball. Yellow card for a studs-up tackle, perhaps in frustration. His rookie pedigree still showing. **Grade: 4**

Danleigh Borman

Replaced at halftime after a truly lackluster first half. **Grade: 3**

Forwards

John Wolyniec

A stop-gap starter, he showed why when he waited and waited and waited to shoot off a lead pass from Dane Richards late in the first half. Smacked a header off the crossbar but was pretty unthreatening in general. **Grade: 4**

Oscar Echeverry

Entered in the second half. Rarely had a whiff of the ball. Ran aimlessly on a team that lacks continuity back to front. **Grade: 4**

Coach

Juan Carlos Osorio

Put together a patchwork lineup while waiting for reinforcements from Mexico, Venezuela and points south when the M.L.S. transfer period begins on July 15. Few options right now. Can a coach in M.L.S. be bold enough or cynical enough to play for one point on the road from the start of the game? D.C. United's two goals in the first 30 minutes answered that question. Behind by 3-0 after the first half ... do you make three changes? No, only one.

It would be easy to ridicule and criticize a coach, known for his defensive schemes, for bad defense. But right now Osorio has dwindling options. (But certainly Mike Magee should have been one of the three substitutes used, especially when Osorio brought on a defender, Hunter Freeman.) The coach can only hope his players do their jobs well. **Grade: 4**

Substitutes/Did Not Play

Caleb Patterson-Sewell (GK), Sinisa Ubiparipovic, Mike Magee, Kevin Mesa.

6. A Mega goal; Megloudis scores for Puerto Rico in WCQ

Big Apple Soccer
June 15, 2008

Forward Chris Megaloudis hasn't scored a goal or played a minute for the Red Bulls this season, but he has a World Cup qualifying goal under his belt.

The Queens, N.Y. native connected for Puerto Rico's first goal in its 2-2 tie with Honduras in the CONCACAF second-round qualifier in San Juan Saturday night.

Despite the encouraging and impressive result for the Puerto Ricans, they were eliminated in the total-goals series, 6-2. Honduras won the first encounter at home earlier this month, 4-0.

David Suazo, who plays for Inter Milan (Italy), struck for the Hondurans in the 23rd minute, but Megaloudis equalized in the 32nd minute.

Former MetroStars midfielder Petter Villegas gave the hosts a surprising 2-1 advantage in the 41st minute, but Wilson Palacios leveled it for Honduras in the 52nd minute.

"This is a great result for us," Honduras coach Reinaldo Rueda told FIFA.com. "Puerto Rico have shown much improvement of late and we are just happy to be moving on."

7. Luciano Emilio Nets a Hat Trick in 4-1 DCU Rout of New York

By: Abram Fox
DC Sports Box
June 15, 2008

Washington, DC--Though Saturday was Flag Day, there was no rocket's red glare and no bombs bursting in air in a rain-soaked RFK Stadium.

No worries, for Luciano Emilio provided plenty of fireworks.

Emilio scored a hat trick, his first multi-goal game this season and first career hat trick, as D.C. United (5-7-1, 16 pts.) rolled over Red Bull New York 4-1.

Clyde Simms also added a goal for D.C., his first of the season, as United extended its season-high unbeaten streak to four games.

After a wretched 2-7-0 start that saw United in the MLS cellar, coach Tom Soehn's squad has strung together several strong results against quality opponents to climb out of that cellar, with Saturday's win vaulting them past New York into fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

Don't tell that to Soehn, though. "We didn't manage the game that well" in the second half, Soehn said. "I came in [to the locker room at the half] disappointed that we didn't play better."

From the beginning of the game New York (4-4-3, 15 pts.) came out with a decidedly defensive mindset. The Red Bulls were missing their two leading scorers, Jozy Altidore (transfer) and Juan Pablo Angel (hamstring), as well as designated player Claudio Reyna (hamstring).

United was also missing two key cogs, defender Bryan Namoff and midfielder-cum-quarterback Marcelo Gallardo, both to red cards in D.C.'s June 7th match against the Chicago Fire.

Nonetheless, D.C. found success in a strong transition game, capitalizing on fast breaks after New York's few offensive pushes.

Emilio's first goal was the result of strong team passing moving the ball up the field. Santino Quaranta, filling Gallardo's role, pushed the ball up through the center circle before sailing a pass to Fred along the right flank. Never breaking stride, Fred dished a strong pass across the six-yard box which Emilio one-timed past Red Bull goaltender Jon Conway.

The marker extended Emilio's goal-scoring streak to four games, after the striker only netted one in United's previous eight games. The Brazilian striker was not yet done for the evening, but before he would get another chance one of his less-heralded teammates would make some waves.

In the 26th minute, just three minutes after Emilio's goal, United earned a free kick from just outside and left of New York's penalty area. Jaime Moreno faked a volley to the net before tapping the ball to Simms, stationed at the top of the box.

Simms drilled the ball toward the lower left corner and Conway, who was screened by 6'3" center back Gonzalo Peralta, could not stretch in time to turn away the shot. The goal was Simms' first of the season.

At the end of the first half, with New York hoping to stop the bleeding, Quaranta again pushed the ball down the field, this time on the left wing. The Baltimore native chose to take his own shot this time, and Conway dove to deflect Quaranta's low blast.

Unfortunately for Conway, the rebound rolled directly to Emilio, who slotted the ball into an open net a minute into stoppage time. As the rest of the team celebrated, Quaranta dropped to his knees and lifted his hands through the driving rain.

Quaranta, who just a few days ago revealed for the first time his previously-unknown battle with alcohol and drug addiction, had the distinct expression of a man from whose shoulders all the weight of the world had been lifted.

Just as Quaranta credited the support staff at D.C. United for helping through his harsh times, Emilio credited his team as the catalyst for the striker's superb individual day.

"It was a collective effort," said Emilio, through an interpreter, of his goals. "Game by game we're working together to get to that level where we were last year."

Both teams made intention-changing substitutions to start the second half. Soehn replaced Quaranta with Maryland grad Domenic Mediate, a more defensive-minded midfielder, while New York coach Juan Pablo Osorio swapped Oscar Echeverry in for Danleigh Borman to help jump start the Red Bull offense.

Ten minutes into the second half, it appeared the tide was turning in New York's favor. After John Wolyniec hit the crossbar on a point-blank shot, midfielder Dave van den Bergh collected the rebound just outside the penalty area. Van den Bergh deftly dribbled around three D.C. defenders and blasted a shot to the opposite corner out of Wells' reach.

The van den Bergh goal continued another, more ignominious, streak for D.C. Neither Wells nor backup keeper Jose Carvallo have pitched a shutout this season, making United the only MLS squad without a clean slate in 2008.

“I was disappointed we gave up a goal,” allowed Soehn. “We’re working hard to get a clean sheet, we don’t have a clean sheet yet.” The coach, who is more than willing to call out underperforming players, instead offered praise to his goaltender, noting, “he’s manning the box a little bit more, he’s more decisive.”

As the Red Bulls pushed on offense the game took on a furious pace, with New York maintaining long offensive possessions only to have D.C. stretch the field on the counterattack. Emilio and Fred each had long runs foiled by Conway or Red Bulls backs.

Emilio again found the back of the net in the 59th minute, though it seemed forever removed from the van den Bergh goal considering the flurry of interim activity.

Jaime Moreno set up the play, with a long clearing pass to Devon McTavish on the left flank that caught the New York defense off guard. McTavish dashed toward the penalty area with Emilio to his right and Red Bulls defender Andrew Boyen between the two.

When Boyen committed to McTavish, the D.C. defender tapped the ball Emilio, who took a step before blasting the ball across Conway’s body into the corner of the net.

Last night’s game had the potential to end before it began, as heavy rainfall and thunderstorms were forecast for the entire D.C. metropolitan region in the evening. Rain did appear minutes before the start of the game and continued into the second half, but the field remained playable.

Each of D.C.’s previous two games were affected by weather, a home date against Houston called early due to rain making RFK’s field unplayable and last week’s game against Chicago was nearly postponed due to a tornado warning.

McTavish was unconcerned with the sudden change in field conditions, noting “you just kind of have to adapt to it...there were a couple boot changes right before we stepped onto the field” but no real change in strategy.

No one can blame D.C., 3-0-1 in their past four, for not wanting to change any of the things that have gone right the past few weeks.

United continues its extended homestand with two afternoon games, on June 22nd at 3 pm against the San Jose Earthquakes and then a nationally-televised game on June 29th at noon against the Los Angeles Galaxy.

8. Emilio’s trifecta drops Red Bulls

Associated Press/New York Post

June 15, 2008

June 15, 2008 -- WASHINGTON - Luciano Emilio had his first three-goal game, leading D.C. United to a 4-1 victory over the Red Bulls last night.

Emilio, last year's league MVP, has scored in each of the last four games, notching six goals of his seven goals in that span.

Clyde Simms picked up his first goal of the season in the 26th minute for D.C. United (5-7-1).

9. Life is good for van den Bergh

By: Stefan Bondy

Herald News

June 14, 2008

Dave van den Bergh sat in his New Jersey home, surrounded by family, witnessing Dutch greatness on American TV.

It was an ideal situation for the Red Bulls midfielder. His parents flew in from Holland to see his new baby. His oldest son, Ryan, cheered in a Dutch jersey. His wife, Alexie, was healthy, having given birth just six days prior.

They all saw the Oranje at its best in a 3-0 victory over Italy on Monday, a top performance of Euro 2008 (essentially repeated in Friday's 4-1 win over France).

"I couldn't have missed that," said van den Bergh, demonstrating his flawless English despite living in America just three years. "It was nice -- a bunch of Dutch people in my house going crazy for three goals."

That is van den Bergh off the field -- family man, locker room jokester, Oranje fan fluent in four languages.

On the field, where the 32-year-old is making a case for team MVP and will start tonight against D.C. United (4-7-1), life is just as rewarding. The Red Bulls are 4-1-3 with van den Bergh commanding the left flank, aided by his game-winning goal in the season opener and a game-tying goal to continue a five-game unbeaten streak. They lost both games without him in the lineup -- one because of a red card suspension, the other because his wife was giving birth -- and were outscored 6-1.

He is the prototypical player for Juan Carlos Osorio's plan of full-team attack, a strong defender with the ability and mindset to push forward. And with injuries stacking up and holes at every position, van den Bergh's flexibility is an indispensable quality.

Last month, he went from scoring on a free kick in one game to shadowing David Beckham in the next.

"The first thing that comes to mind is versatility," Osorio said. "He can do almost anything for us, and he is as an intelligent a player as we have."

Van den Bergh is the only Red Bull to grow up in Europe, to learn the game in a youth system considered the best in the world.

Without school teams in Holland, aspiring soccer players are recruited into club youth programs. Van den Bergh developed with AFC Ajax, a feeder system for the top team in the Dutch League. He made his professional debut at 18, eventually earning two caps with the national team under Marco van Basten.

After bouncing around the Dutch League and the Spanish League for 11 years, van den Bergh said he wanted something more than what was offered in Holland. The U.S. became the logical place to finish his career, the birthplace of his wife and a desirable place to raise a family.

Van den Bergh joined the Kansas City Wizards in 2006 and was traded to the Red Bulls last year for a third-round supplemental draft pick.

"I was talking to my wife about what I want to do after I'm done playing," he said. "We wanted to come here regardless, and I saw an interesting league (MLS), a league on the rise, a league making huge strides that will only get better."

Although van den Burgh has faith in MLS, he doesn't think America provides a proper youth system to harness its soccer talent.

With the sport picking up popularity in the past decade, many of the kids are first-generation players.

Their coaches are often their parents, well-meaning volunteers with no experience on the field who know little about the sport.

"That's something that's lacking here. The youngest kids from bottom-up need to be developed a little better," van den Bergh said. "There's plenty of talent, but I think there's too many 'good ol' dads' that try to coach their sons' teams.

"If you can get former players in, I think this country has tremendous talent."

Van den Bergh's boys -- Ryan and infant Max -- will get that advantage. They also had inspiration this week from a top-notch Dutch performance.

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10. Depleted Red Bulls overwhelmed by United

By: Stefan Bondy

Herald News

June 15, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- John Wolyniec patrolled the front by himself, a gray-haired reserve in a hopeless battle against three surrounding defenders.

With injuries and a transfer decimating the attack, Wolyniec was the Red Bulls' lone striker in the decisive first half Saturday night -- four years past his prime and still scoreless this season after a 4-1 loss to D.C. United. He chased down long balls, played monkey-in-the-middle with the defense and was the frontline of an offense that didn't produce a shot on goal until the 54th minute.

A glaring mismatch in level of strikers manifested itself in the 23rd minute, when D.C. United forward Luciano Emilio ran onto a low cross by Fred Cordeiro and deposited it into an open goal. The reigning league MVP finished with a hat trick, giving him seven goals this season -- more than the entire Red Bull lineup combined -- and six in the last four games.

"(Emilio) is good in and around the box, especially when we allow wide open shots," said a down-trodden coach Juan Carlos Osorio.

United took a three-goal lead into the break after Emilio's second goal in the 45th minute, sealing three points and a leap over the Red Bulls for fourth place in the Eastern Conference. The loss was reminiscent of last month's 5-1 defeat against the Chicago Fire, another defensive meltdown that featured 90 minutes of Red Bull ineptitude.

"I am very disappointed in our defense," Osorio said. "Everyone involved."

The Red Bull striker connection of Jozy Altidore and Juan Pablo Angel, projected as one of the best in the league, reached its disappointing conclusion last week when Altidore signed a six-year deal with Villarreal of Spain's La Liga. Altidore and Angel started together in just four games this season and combined for five goals.

Angel was absent Saturday because of a nagging back injury, one that already sidelined him four games and will likely keep him inactive Wednesday against New England.

That left Wolyniec and Oscar Echeverry as the only active strikers, a sharp contrast to United's tandem of Emilio and Jaime Moreno, the league's all-time leading scorer.

Unsurprisingly, United out-shot the Red Bulls on goal, 8-1. Emilio took four shots on goal.

"This is what we have and I only concentrate on the players that are here," Osorio said. "The others, for whatever reason it is, they are not here."

Echeverry came in the second half and the Red Bulls got a goal from Dave van den Bergh in the 54th minute. But Emilio responded with his third goal five minutes later to take a 4-1 lead.

Wolyniec had his best opportunity in the 39th minute but waited too long to shoot off a cross inside the box. The ball was poked away by United defender Gonzalo Martinez and the chance rolled out of bounds, symbolic of a game-long struggle.

11. Emilio's hat trick is a treat for United in win over N.Y.

By: Steven Goff
Washington Post
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Not so long ago, Luciano Emilio could not score and D.C. United could not win.

These days, no one in MLS seems to be able to stop either of them.

The Brazilian striker continued his torrid resurgence with his first MLS hat trick and United extended its unbeaten streak to four last night with a 4-1 victory over the New York Red Bulls before 18,622 at murky RFK Stadium.

Despite the absence of playmaker Marcelo Gallardo and top defender Bryan Namoff because of red card suspensions, United (5-7-1) offered another comprehensive attacking performance and overtook New York (4-4-3) for fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

"I've been playing the same all along. The difference is that we are creating more chances as a group, and I've had more opportunities," Emilio said through an interpreter. "Now I have got to keep working hard and focus, and next time maybe I will score four."

Last year's scoring champion and MVP scored for the fourth consecutive match since a seven-game drought and increased his season total to seven. The beneficiary of sharp ball movement and constant threats, Emilio struck in the 23rd minute, in first-half added time and in the 59th as United scored four goals for the third time this season.

Defensive midfielder Clyde Simms added a rare goal for United and Dave van den Bergh contributed for the Red Bulls, who were without injured forward Juan Pablo Ángel and midfielder Claudio Reyna. Despite 12 corner kicks and some first-half opportunities, New York failed to win in Washington for the seventh straight time (0-5-2).

The degree of difficulty on Emilio's strikes was not particularly high -- all were within 12 yards and two came in the clear -- but United is not looking for artistry from him. Just goals.

"I said this before, when he does get one, it is going to come in bunches, and it is starting to come in bunches," United Coach Tom Soehn said.

With Gallardo out, United needed about 10 minutes to find a rhythm and begin linking passes. Pressure on the New York backline mounted as United attacked with confidence and flair, a characteristic that resurfaced May 29 at New England. Midway through the half, Emilio finished an exquisite sequence.

Santino Quaranta initiated it with an assertive central run, then delivered a diagonal ball into Fred's path on the right side of the box. Fred stung a one-touch cross for Emilio, who got behind Chris Leitch and thumped a four-yarder into the left corner.

Three minutes later, it was Simms's turn. With Jaime Moreno standing over a free kick in a dangerous position on the left side, the Red Bulls anticipated the ball being driven into the penalty area. Instead, Moreno touched it back to the unmarked Simms, who had ample time to line up his shot and drill a 25-yarder just inside the left post for just his second goal in 88 regular season appearances.

The Red Bulls stirred late in the half, but fast-closing defender Gonzalo Martínez spoiled John Wolyniec's free run into the box and United survived five corner kicks in rapid succession.

Then, on the final charge of the half, Moreno sprayed the ball wide to Quaranta, whose angled bid toward the far corner was slapped away by goalkeeper Jon Conway. Emilio controlled the rebound and banged a nine-yard shot into the right side.

Nine minutes into the second half, after Wolyniec's half volley hit the crossbar, van den Bergh tagged a low shot from just outside the area into the far corner. But with the Red Bulls committing extra players forward, United seized on its counterattacking opportunities. Five minutes after van den Bergh's goal, Emilio worked a two-on-one with defender Devon McTavish and completed the hat trick with a rising drive from 12 yards.

"We are working hard to get there," Emilio said, comparing this year's uprising to last season's MLS-best record. "I don't think we are there yet, but game by game, we are working together to get to that level where we were."

Besides Emilio, United received stylish performances from Fred, who played in central midfield in the second half and, at one point, kept the ball aloft with a series of touches off his hip; from Moreno (two assists); and from Quaranta, who departed at halftime with a mild hamstring injury.

"Once they get flying, it's tough to stop them," McTavish said. "I love watching them. I remember a couple times just catching myself laughing at Fred. He was on fire, and so was the rest of the frontline and midfield."

United Notes: Quaranta received a yellow card in the 28th minute, his fifth of the season, putting him over the league limit and forcing him to sit out next Sunday's match against San Jose. . . . Because of the suspensions to Gallardo and Namoff, Dane Murphy, a rookie midfielder-defender from the University of Virginia, made his first appearance on the game-day roster.