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- 2020 -



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Confirman que Cuba no participará en la Serie del Caribe que se celebrará en Puerto Rico

La Confederación de Béisbol Profesional del Caribe (CBPC) confirmó este domingo que Cuba no participará de la Serie del Caribe 2020 debido a que está "imposibilitado de hacerlo por condiciones fuera de su control".

Asimismo, informó que Colombia figurará como país invitado en el torneo que se celebrará del 1 al 7 de febrero en el estadio Hiram Bithorn, en San Juan.

El equipo Campeón del torneo 2019-2020 de la Liga Profesional de Béisbol Colombiano será el responsable de representar a su país en los juegos.

Este medio reportó ayer que las autoridades cubanas acusaron directamente al comisionado del béisbol caribeño, el dominicano José Francisco Puello, de ceder a las presiones de Estados Unidos para que la isla no participe en el evento.

La novena cubana no podrá llegar a suelo boricua debido a que, supuestamente, los visados de sus jugadores no podrán ser tramitados a tiempo por Estados Unidos, país que mantiene una enconada disputa política con el gobierno de la isla.

"Aún cuando las autoridades migratorias del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos, a través del Consulado General en República Dominicana, brindaron todas las facilidades para permitir el trámite de visa para la delegación cubana que asistiría a San Juan, haciendo los trámites en Santo Domingo, la obtención de visas para la delegación cubana se dificultó, dado que los tiempos en que termina su torneo y logística de traslados, hacían improbable asegurar el visado completo antes de iniciar el evento en Puerto Rico", estableció la (CBPC) en un comunicado de prensa divulgado hoy.

Por su parte, Puello Herrera indicó que espera que Cuba figure como invitado en la Serie del Caribe de 2021 que se celebrará en Mazatlán, México

"Quedamos muy agradecidos con todo el esfuerzo hecho por Consulado General de Estados Unidos en la República Dominicana, para ofrecer las mejores condiciones para alcanzar el visado de la delegación cubana", indicó.

Honrarán boletos comprados

Mientras, Anaymir Muñoz, de la compañía productora MB Sports, celebró la llegada de Colombia al evento.

"Aunque lamentamos en gran manera que la delegación cubana no pueda participar de la Serie del Caribe 2020, nos llena de alegría y satisfacción que Colombia se una al evento. Sabemos que el evento será uno de calidad y competitividad y que todos los equipos darán el máximo para conseguir el título de ganador", dijo.

Informó que los clientes que tenían los boletos para los partidos de Cuba, éstos serán honrados para la fecha y hora del juego donde ahora participará el equipo de Colombia.

Las personas que no deseen asistir al juego, tendrán hasta las 5:00 p.m. del lunes, 20 de enero para reclamar su reembolso o cambio para otro juego.

"Luego de esta fecha no se aceptarán reclamaciones de reembolso ni cambios", reza el comunicado de prensa.



MLS Players of the Decade: a team-by-team guide

Major League Soccer clubs hand out their own team accolades at the end of each year, but with the decade soon to pass, we've decided to give them a little help in the honors department.

Some picks were much easier than others, but we've managed to come up with our own player of the 2010s award for each MLS team. Without further adieu, here are the choices.

Atlanta United: Josef Martinez

For a club only three years old, 88 goals in 100 competitive matches, a regular season/MLS Cup MVP double and three Best XI nods is more than enough to earn this title. In addition to being more than anyone expected on the field, Martinez is also the emotional center of Atlanta United.

Chicago Fire FC: Sean Johnson

This was among the toughest calls. Not only did the Fire manage just two playoff berths during the decade, but many of their top performers over the last 10 seasons didn't stick around for long. As such, we'll go with Johnson, who averaged over three saves per game while racking up 36 clean sheets behind an often-suspect back line.

Colorado Rapids: Drew Moor

It was nearly as difficult to tab the Rapids man of the decade for the same reasons — heck, 2010 championship hero Conor Casey got serious consideration despite working only 63 games in burgundy during the teens. In the end, another key man from Colorado's MLS Cup-winning side got the salute. Moor organized the defense for 50 shutouts in his 186 games across all competitions.

Columbus Crew SC: Federico Higuain

In about seven seasons' worth of games, the playmaker logged 59 goals and 69 helpers across all competitions to lead the Crew in both categories over the decade. Higuain also led them to the 2015 MLS Cup, and did it all in style.

D.C. United: Bill Hamid

The netminder played at least a part in all 10 D.C. United seasons during the decade, racking up 68 shutouts and a cumulative goals against-expected goals against (GA-xGA) that bested all other goalkeepers by a mile. Hamid also starred in the 2013 U.S. Open Cup final, notching six saves to swipe the club's lone trophy of the decade.

FC Cincinnati: Allan Cruz

With but one season of MLS action under their belts, this pick is basically a 2019 MVP citation. We gave Cruz a narrow nod over Emmanuel Ledesma for his consistent play, despite so often being used out of position. The Costa Rica international easily led the team with seven run-of-play goals and also paced the side in tackles.

FC Dallas: Matt Hedges

Ever since joining as the 11th overall pick in the 2012 SuperDraft, Hedges has been a rock at the back for the Frisco bunch. He holds the team record with 278 total appearances, and has a Defender of the Year award and consecutive Best XI accolades to his credit. The center back has even come up with some big goals, including important strikes in the semifinal and final during FC Dallas' run to the 2016 Open Cup title.

Houston Dynamo: Brad Davis

With all due respect to Alberth Elis and Mauro Manotas, this honorary sash has to go to Davis. In addition to piling up 30 goals and 76 helpers across his six seasons in Houston during the decade, Davis also finished second in the 2011 MVP voting and helped the teams reach back-to-back MLS Cups. It's quite fair for Dynamo fans to still be wondering how the 2011 title match might have turned out differently had Davis not been injured in the Eastern Conference final.

LAFC: Carlos Vela

It's only been two years, but the Mexico dazzler is the undisputed face of LAFC. Thanks to a bawdy 1.35 goals + assists per 90 minutes (G+A/90) in league action, Vela has already bagged two Best XI nods, an MVP trophy and his record-setting Golden Boot haul of 34 goals from the club's 2019 Supporters Shield season (and that was with him missing three games!).

LA Galaxy: Robbie Keane

Sorting through the Galaxy's stars of the decade for a pick of the bunch was no automatic feat, but in the end it had to be the Ireland legend. Keane's arrival crystallized the club's Beckham era into a dynasty, and not just because of his impressive 1.02 G+A/90 output. The veteran was a spark plug, on and off the field, for a team that hogged three MLS Cup titles and two Supporters' Shields in a four-year span.

Montreal Impact: Ignacio Piatti

One of the most prolific wingers to ever grace MLS, the Nacho man has notched 79 goals and 43 helpers in 163 total contests for the Impact. Piatti was named Montreal's team MVP four straight seasons from 2015-18, and then led the club to their first Canadian Championship in five years during an injury-shortened 2019 campaign.



Minnesota United: Darwin Quintero

Though he's no slam-dunk choice, there's no escaping the fact that the veteran playmaker made the Loons exciting before they were good. Quintero put up 21 goals and as many assists in two league seasons for Minnesota, quite often in scintillating fashion, and was the U.S. Open Cup Player of the Tournament to spark the team's 2019 runners-up finish.

New England Revolution: Lee Nguyen

The Revs call was nearly a toss-up, but we gave Nguyen the edge over Diego Fagundez by virtue of his monster 2014 campaign. That year, the midfielder scored 18 times to finish third in the MVP voting, then starred in their postseason run to MLS Cup. In all, Nguyen chalked up 51 goals and 53 assists in 199 league outings for New England.

New York City FC: David Villa

Signed before the club even started play, El Guaje proved to be a fitting first NYCFC superstar. In addition to averaging 20 goals and 6.5 helpers per season in the Bronx, Villa was a very visible club ambassador in the community. He took home the 2016 MVP award, and then finished as runner-up the following year.

New York Red Bulls: Bradley Wright-Phillips

Like their Big Apple rivals, a prolific striker ruled their decade. Wright-Phillips was second among all MLS players during the '10s in goals (117) and winners (33), and tied for first in playoff strikes (nine). The Red Bulls star also netted a pair of Golden Boot/Best XI doubles, and helped the Red Bulls score three Supporters' Shields.

Orlando City SC: Cyle Larin

Although his exit was rather unceremonious, there can be no denying the Canada striker's impact while he was in a Purple Lions shirt. Larin found the net 44 times in 89 Orlando City appearances, winning the 2015 Rookie of the Year award in the process.

Philadelphia Union: Alejandro Bedoya

This was a tricky one. Go with the attacker who had a lot less help and carried the club early in its history (Sebastien Le Toux), or do we go with the under-heralded midfield bull who played fewer seasons, but helped teach the Union how to rise up in the MLS world? With a nudge from area product Bobby Warshaw, we picked Bedoya.

Portland Timbers: Diego Valeri

Could there be any doubt? The Rose City's favorite adopted son accounted for 87 goals and a league-best 89 assists across all competitions. On top of leading the Timbers to the 2015 MLS Cup crown, Valeri also grabbed an MVP award and three Best XI citations for himself.

Real Salt Lake: Nick Rimando

Aside from a hat trick of Save of the Year nods, Rimando somehow managed to leave the decade without individual accolades. Never mind that, as he remained a consistently foreboding presence in the RSL net. The Rio Tinto legend topped all netminders with 99 shutouts and 17 penalty stops during the decade.

San Jose Earthquakes: Chris Wondolowski

The Earthquakes star averaged more than 15 tallies per season during this past decade, hitting double figures each year. That rampage left Wondo with a runaway best 153 goals since 2010 and the league's all-time scoring crown. I'd imagine both player and club regularly thank the stars he didn't jet off to Europe early in the decade.

Seattle Sounders FC: Nicolas Lodeiro

Welcome to arguably the hardest call to make of all. Even with a handful of Sounders aces with a fair case to be made, most observers would likely default straight to Ozzie Alonso. And I wouldn't badger anyone who did; he's entirely worthy. However, I just can't deny Lodeiro, the busy-bee midfield engine who led the team to their two MLS Cup titles, bringing Seattle to a whole new level of excellence.

Sporting Kansas City: Matt Besler

For yet another club with a handful of solid choices, the veteran center back is our pick. Besler led all MLS defenders by contributing to 92 shutouts during the decade, which also saw him shine in four winning finals (2013 MLS Cup, plus three Open Cups). For good measure, he also earned a Defender of the Year prize and two Best XI mentions.

Toronto FC: Sebastian Giovinco

Though he only spent four seasons in MLS, no player hoarded more individual and team honors during the decade than the Atomic Ant. Giovinco brought countless thrills to the Big Smoke along with the 1.1 G+A/go of league play he produced. He won the 2015 MVP award by becoming the first player to top both the goal and assists charts in the same season.

Vancouver Whitecaps FC: Kendall Waston

The Costa Rica star was the sturdy backbone of the Whitecaps back line for four-and-a-half seasons, averaging 6.8 clearances and 2.8 pass interceptions per game. Waston was named to the Best XI twice, including after a 2015 season that saw him marshal the joint-stingiest defense in MLS.

US-Iran rising tensions in Middle East lead USMNT to scratch Qatar camp

The U.S. men's national team will not be heading to Qatar for January camp as originally planned, announcing the squad will train at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla. instead.

In a statement issued by the U.S. Soccer Federation on Friday, the U.S. national team scratched the Qatar trip due to the "developing situation in the region." The USMNT was scheduled to depart for a three-week camp in Qatar on Saturday.

The developing situation involves rising tensions between the USA and Iran following the U.S. airstrike that killed Iranian commander Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani in Iraq. In the aftermath, the Iranian ambassador to the U.N. stated that Iran would be seeking "revenge, harsh revenge," and the United States is deploying more troops to the Middle East.

Below is the full statement from the U.S. Soccer Federation:

Due to the developing situation in the region, U.S. Soccer has decided to postpone traveling to Qatar for the Men's National Team's scheduled January training camp. In the meantime, we are working on alternative arrangements in preparation for the match against Costa Rica on February 1 at Dignity Health Sports Park in Carson, Calif. We are working with the Qatar Football Association to find an opportunity in the near future for our team to experience Qatar's world-class facilities and hospitality.



US national team head coach Gregg Berhalter called up 25 players, including 22 from MLS, for the January camp that was due to take place at the Aspire Academy in Doha, Qatar from January 5-25. The players will now commence training in Bradenton on January 6 ahead of the February 1 friendly against Costa Rica to be played at Dignity Health Sports Park in Los Angeles.

U.S. Soccer MNT

@USMNT

UPDATE: The #USMNT will now open its annual January Camp on Jan. 6 at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla.

Other club teams scheduled to train in the warmer weather of Doha, Qatar are at present moving forward with their plans. German giants FC Bayern Munich are set to begin a two-week training camp in Doha during the Bundesliga's winter break. Austrian side FC Red Bull Salzburg, coached by American Jesse Marsch, were due to be scrimmage opponents of the USMNT in Doha.

Qatar is set to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the camp would have given Berhalter's USMNT an opportunity to begin to familiarize itself with the country, the climate and the facilities in the hope of qualifying for the tournament after missing out on the last edition in 2018.

CREDIT: Simon Borg Editor-in-Chief

NYCFC hire Ronny Deila as new head coach

The final coaching vacancy in MLS heading into the 2020 season has been filled, with New York City FC officially appointing Valerenga manager Ronny Deila as head coach on a three-year contract.

Deila, a defender during his playing days, has been with Valerenga in Norway's top flight since 2017, and previously also managed Stromsgodset in his home country from 2008-2014, leading the club to its first league title in 43 years in 2013. He then moved to Scotland in charge of powerhouse Celtic from 2014-16, where he won a pair of back-to-back Scottish Premiership titles.

"When the opportunity came up to join New York City FC as their new head coach, it was a dream come true for me to manage an amazing club in a great city," said Deila in a club release. "When I come in, it's important to continue to build on what's already proven to be a strong foundation and to get some of my ideas across. The way I want to play and the way NYCFC has played is very similar. I'm a very attacking coach. We want to have the ball as much as possible, but also try to be direct when you have those opportunities.

"I'm really looking forward to getting going and getting to know the players in preseason and begin my time at NYCFC. I'm ready to see our supporters and hopefully we'll have a wonderful relationship. I'm going to do everything I can to play good football the City way and I'll give everything from myself to the club and I'm sure we're going to achieve fantastic things in the future."

New York City FC

@NYCFC

Go and check the stats... #NYCFC

8:14 AM - Jan 6, 2020

Deila takes over a formidable squad that earned the East's No. 1 seed in the 2019 Audi MLS Cup Playoffs, though were bounced in the conference semifinals by eventual finalists Toronto FC. NYCFC registered a club-record 64 points, and now await their Concacaf Champions League debut Feb. 20 at Costa Rican side AD San Carlos. Meanwhile, NYCFC open their MLS slate March 1 at Columbus Crew SC.

The move continues a busy offseason for NYCFC, at least from a front-office perspective, as Claudio Reyna left to become the sporting director of 2021 expansion side Austin FC. As a result, David Lee was promoted from technical director to sporting director.

"With the benefit of time in the offseason, we wanted to make sure we found the right person to lead our club and we're really delighted that Ronny has agreed to become the new head coach of New York City FC," said Lee.

"Knowing we had a very strong group of players returning in 2020, we wanted to recruit an experienced manager who played in a similar style as we have done in the past few years, with a proven ability to win league titles and develop players. Ronny meets that criteria, managing over 400 games, winning three leagues titles and two domestic cup competitions, along with many players who have been identified and developed by Ronny that have gone on to have careers at the highest levels of football."

CREDIT: MLS Staff



 An infographic profile of Ronny Deila. It includes his name, a Norwegian flag, his place of birth (Porsgrunn, Norway), and his birthday (September 21, 1975). It lists his playing and coaching career from 1992 to 2019, and his honors, including the 2013 Kniksen Award - Coach of the Year and five league/cup titles.

RONNY DEILA	
Place of Birth: Porsgrunn, Norway	
Birthday: September 21, 1975	
PLAYER	COACH
1992-1993 IF Urædd	2008-2014 Strømsgodset Toppfotball
1993-2004 Odds BK	2014-2016 Celtic FC
2004-2005 Viking FK	2017-2019 Vålerenga Fotball
2006-2008 Strømsgodset Toppfotball	
HONORS	
2013 Kniksen Award - Coach of the Year	
2010 NORWEGIAN FOOTBALL CUP WINNER	2013 NORWEGIAN CHAMPION
2014-15 SCOTTISH CHAMPION	2014-15 SCOTTISH LEAGUE CUP CHAMPION
	2015-16 SCOTTISH CHAMPION

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Zlatan Ibrahimovic says he feels a lot more alive thanks to time in MLS as he begins Milan challenge

Zlatan Ibrahimovic may have left Los Angeles but he hasn't forgotten the time he spent with the Galaxy in MLS.

The 38-year-old, who left the LA Galaxy at the end of the 2019 season, was unveiled as an AC Milan player for the second time on Friday. And he explained how his time in the U.S. had left him feeling ready to take on the challenge of Serie A following a serious knee injury suffered during his time at Manchester United in 2017 that at the time appeared to threaten his career.

"I went to America because I wanted to feel alive, I wanted to experience new things," Ibrahimovic said at his press conference. "And after two seasons I feel a lot more alive, that's why I've decided it's time to come back to Italy and help Milan. Coming here and signing for Milan shows I have something left to give. If the club didn't believe in me they wouldn't have made this deal. I'm not just a mascot to stand next to the other mascot and dance around."

Ibrahimovic certainly showed he was still alive during his two years in MLS. The Swedish great, who won the Serie A title during his first spell in Milan a decade ago, scored 53 goals in 58 appearances (54 starts), while adding 17 assists.

His impact on the league was immediate. On his debut against LAFC in El Trafico in March 2018, Ibrahimovic scored twice, including a stunning strike from fully 40 yards out.

As Ibrahimovic suggested on Friday, it is goals like that which show how he has continued to thrive deep into his 30s. "I won't play as I played 10 years ago, that is not impossible," he said. "But an intelligent player knows how to adapt. Instead of running the whole way, you can fire from far out."



CREDIT: MLSsoccer staff

FC Dallas academy alum Chris Richards in FC Bayern Munich senior camp

With Bundesliga sides returning to work after the holiday season, Bayern Munich has announced its winter camp roster that includes former FC Dallas academy alum Chris Richards.

Now age 19, the 6-foot-2 defender signed a Homegrown Player contract with Dallas in April of 2018, moved to Bayern Munich on loan that summer and completed a permanent transfer in January of 2019.

He has been a regular for Bayern's reserves since the permanent transfer, making 15 3. Liga appearances — all starts — and scoring once. He also played in six matches of last year's UEFA Youth League for Bayern's U-19 side, and has also been a regular contributor for the US U-20 youth national team.

At the winter camp, Richards will join former Vancouver Whitecaps winger Alphonso Davies, who has evolved into a starting left back role for the senior team.

Richards isn't the first FCD alum to climb the Bundesliga ranks; US national team regular Weston McKennie was part of the team's academy before opting to sign with Schalke 04.

1	Neuer	19	Davies
26	Ulreich	21	Hernández
36	Früchtli	22	Gnabry
39	Hoffmann	24	Tolisso
5	Pavard	25	Müller
6	Thiago	27	Alaba
10	Coutinho	28	Singh
11	Cuisance	32	Kimmich
14	Perišić	33	Mai
15	Arp	34	Batista-Meier
16	Dajaku	35	Zirkzee
17	Boateng	37	Arrey Mbi
18	Goretzka	38	Richards

CREDIT: MLSsoccer staff

2020 MLS SuperDraft: The top 10 prospects available

While the MLS SuperDraft may not be as critical as it has been in the league's earlier days, this year's crop of talent coming through isn't too far off what has been coming from the college ranks of late: a decent amount of high-end talent, and a few players here and there that could stick and thrive given the right opportunity.

Below is a look at the top 10 players eligible to be picked in this year's SuperDraft, which will start with the first two rounds via conference call and web streaming on Jan. 9 and wrap up with the third and fourth rounds on Jan. 13.

10. CM/RB Alistair Johnston, Wake Forest

College Years: The Ontario, Canada, native swapped St. John's for Wake Forest after his sophomore season. Slotting in as a reserve during his junior season, Johnston stepped up in a big way, manning the right back spot as a senior at Wake Forest this past fall.

Scouting Report: Having spent portions of his collegiate career as a box-to-box midfielder, Johnston slotted into a right back role for the 2019 campaign. Although not a freak athlete, he's shown the ability to read the game well, while his passing and crossing can create chances for his team going forward.

MLS Doppelganger: While he's not the set-piece merchant that Graham Zusi has been at Sporting Kansas City, Johnston's reminiscent of the U.S. national team player. His quality stems less from his physical traits than his ability to serve a good ball, combine in the attack and make quick decisions in terms of getting forward versus hanging back.

9. LB Tanner Beason, Stanford (Senior signee)

College Years: After redshirting his first season at Stanford, Beason slotted into the starting lineup as a left back, helping the Cardinal win the national titles in 2016 and 2017. Since then, he moved into a center back role the past two seasons. He missed a chunk of 2019 after breaking his collarbone but returned to help Stanford return to the College Cup, where they lost to eventual champions Georgetown.

Scouting Report: More of a defense-first outside back, Beason's a capable defender at the college level and a gritty, determined leader. He's not going to set the world alight going forward, and could end up playing centrally in MLS. If he can make that jump to the pro level while also combining well with teammates, he could end up as a defense-first left back.

MLS Doppelganger: While he's not as polished on the ball as Matt Besler, he's a good comp for Beason – not a hulking presence but a quality defender with good intangibles.

8. W Ryan Raposo, Syracuse (Generation Adidas)

College Years: Two seasons at Syracuse was all Raposo needed to cement himself as an elite college attacker. Named to the All-Freshman ACC team in 2018 after scoring four goals and tallying seven assists, 2019 represented a massive step forward for the Ontario native. He amassed 15 goals and seven assists as a sophomore, including a two-goal, one-assist performance in the NCAA tournament against Rhode Island.

Scouting Report: A twitchy, attack-minded winger that could also play in the No. 10 role, Raposo is extremely dangerous in one-on-one situations with the ball. The question for him to answer is if he's quick and dynamic enough to make the same kind of impact against MLS defenders. If he can't, he's still good enough with his passing and goal-scoring to thrive in a different role. He'll also need to raise his defensive work rate, particularly if he's shunted out as a winger.

MLS Doppelganger: There's something about Raposo when he's in space on the ball that's similar to Montreal's Ignacio Piatti. Especially when he's closer to goal, Raposo showed last year that he can be lethal with his finishing, along with showing good passing instincts.

7. CB Henry Kessler, Virginia (Generation Adidas)

College Years: After playing primarily from the bench as a freshman in 2017, Kessler took a small step forward as a starter in his second season. But it was the fall of 2019 where he stood tallest, making 24 starts while anchoring one of college soccer's best defenses at Virginia.

Scouting Report: Listed a six-feet-four-inches tall, Kessler plays big and moves well at the back. He partnered with Andreas Ueland, another six-feet-four-inches defender, along the Virginia backline during the 2019 season. Kessler will be faced with the same questions that present themselves to big college center backs: how he can handle defending on the turn and will he be able to defend higher quality attackers in isolation.

MLS Doppelganger: A tall, American center back that moves well? FC Dallas defender Matt Hedges comes to mind when looking at a current MLS comp for Kessler.

6. CM Aaron Molloy, Penn State

College Years: The Dublin native came to the United States to play NAIA soccer for Keiser University in Florida. After a standout freshman season, he transferred to Penn State ahead of the 2017 campaign. Since then, he's been one of the Big Ten's best, bossing the midfield and leading the Nittany Lions back to the NCAA tournament in 2019. Normally a deep-lying defensive midfielder, he added goals and assists to his game this past season, scoring nine and chipping in six assists.

Scouting Report: Strong, tough and composed in central midfield, Molloy's status as an international is the one hang-up when looking at his MLS potential. While the goals this season were a nice bonus, he's more suited to a deeper role, especially with another center midfielder next to him. Capable of winning the ball and starting the attack with a quick, well-hit pass, Molloy has plenty to offer, provided he shows the engine and adjusts to the speed at the next level.

MLS Doppelganger: There's a lot of Dax McCarty in Molloy's game, and it's not just about the hair color. The Irishman may even have a touch more physicality than the new Nashville SC signing as well.

5. F Garrett McLaughlin, Southern Methodist

College Years: It's been an interesting four-year stretch for McLaughlin, who was part of a renaissance at SMU. The American Athletic Conference Rookie of the Year during his first season in college, he had a breakout season as a sophomore, scoring 14 goals and chipping in three assists. Battling injuries as a junior, his productivity was limited but he assuaged any fears of that with another stellar campaign in his final season of eligibility, scoring 15 times and adding five helpers.

Scouting Report: A direct attacker, McLaughlin is a goal-dangerous forward that is more likely to feature out wide in a front three or a three-player band in a 4-2-3-1 than up front as a lone striker. Quick enough to offer a threat out wide in MLS, the Oklahoma native should be a Top 10 pick. While he can certainly make an impact offensively, his adjustment to the pro game could come down to his defensive prowess if he's in a system that demands a two-way player.

MLS Doppelganger: While not possessing the same kind of pace as Jordan Morris, McLaughlin offers a similar threat to the Seattle Sounders man: a goal-scoring winger that can serve in dangerous crosses and score when in dangerous spots.

4. RB Dylan Nealis, Georgetown (Senior Signee)

College Years: The youngest of four soccer-playing brothers, Nealis finished his college career at the summit, winning the 2019 national championship with Georgetown. In his decorated four-year stint on the Hilltop, he made 78 starts, scoring seven goals and adding 14 assists. The back-to-back Big East Defensive Player of the Year, Nealis was far and away one of the best outside backs in college soccer.

Scouting Report: A modern fullback who's just as comfortable going forward as he is defending, Nealis didn't have to do much of the latter during Georgetown's 2019 season. A reliable and capable operator in combination with teammates and able to provide dangerous service, the questions he'll face when making the jump to MLS will start with his defending. Whether it's in isolation or defending as a unit, if he's able to adjust to the bigger, stronger and more talented players in MLS, he could be a hit right away as a rookie.

MLS Doppelganger: Perhaps it's a lazy comparison since they both played at Georgetown, but Nealis is akin to fellow Hoya alum Keegan Rosenberry, who gets up the flank for the Colorado Rapids these days.

3. CF Cal Jennings, Central Florida

College Years: During his first two seasons at UCF, Jennings grabbed a total of 14 goals in 29 games. Then something clicked ahead of his junior year, and he matched that total with 14 tallies from just 15 games. In his final season in the NCAA, Jennings took his tally to 18 goals from 20 matches at the American Athletic Conference program.

Scouting Report: There's obviously no guarantee that scoring goals in college soccer translates to MLS. But Jennings' growth over the past two seasons was predicated a great deal on his instincts in the penalty area and getting to the right places, making the right run, at the right times. He can connect play well enough, but he's more of the kind of forward that thrives when his teammates get him the ball in the box, and he can do the rest.

MLS Doppelganger: There are striking similarities between Jennings and the 2019 MLS Rookie of the Year Andre Shin-yashiki. Both are capable in the buildup but their success is more about making the smart, dangerous runs and providing a lethal touch in front of goal.

2. CB Jack Maher, Indiana (Generation Adidas)

College Years: A starter from his first day on campus in Bloomington, the St. Louis native quickly emerged as a premier center back in the college game. His two seasons at the Big Ten program saw him earn Freshman of the Year honors in 2018, helping IU to the nation's best defense in his first season at the program. As a sophomore, Maher anchored the Hoosiers once again, making 22 starts and earning the conference's Defender of the Year honor as IU won both the regular season and conference tournament titles.

Scouting Report: A tall center back who moves well, Maher's listed at six feet three inches tall and has the build to hold up against the biggest strikers in MLS. His passing and ability with the ball is sharp at most times, although it is notable the Indiana product tends to defend deep, which keeps the game in front of him. There's a lot to work with here regardless, and the St. Louis native arguably has a higher floor than our No. 1 selection below and could be the safer pick.

MLS Doppelganger: The center back is reminiscent of D.C. United's Steve Birnbaum, when looking at his comfort with the ball and defending ability.

1. F Robbie Robinson, Clemson (Generation adidas)

College Years: After a strong freshman campaign in 2017, injuries limited Robinson's time on the field in the fall of 2018. He rebounded last year with a Hermann Trophy-winning season for a Clemson's attack that was best in the nation. His 18 goals were tied for first in Division I soccer, and he chipped in nine assists for a Clemson team that averaged more than three goals per game.

Scouting Report: Standing at six feet two inches tall, Robinson has the frame to get the better of defenders at the pro level. His quickness in the final third should carry over into making him an impact player in the league if he stays healthy. Robinson is more than just a poacher, as he's been able to create his own shot, not to mention showing the ability to pop up in dangerous spots in front of goal.

MLS Doppelganger: While he has a bigger frame than Raul Ruidiaz, the 21-year-old shows similar tenaciousness and work-rate to the Peruvian.



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