



## MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER PLAYERS UNION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Washington, D.C., April 17, 2003:** The Major League Soccer Players Union was certified today as the exclusive collective bargaining representative for all Major League Soccer players. The MLSPU is a labor organization formed and organized by MLS players to represent them in their dealings with MLS.

The MLSPU originally requested recognition from MLS on Friday, April 11, 2003, after receiving authorization cards from a vast majority of players. Upon Arbitrator Andrew Strongin's certification today that the MLSPU had obtained cards significantly in excess of a majority, the union was certified as the exclusive collective bargaining representative for the players.

"Professional athletes in every major league sport have union representation. We formed this union so that we will have a unified voice that will raise players' concerns with the league, engage in collective bargaining, and ultimately improve our terms of employment," said Ben Olsen of D.C. United, one of members of the MLSPU's Executive Board. Chris Klein of the Kansas City Wizards, another member of the Executive Board, added that, "the players have worked hard, and will continue to work hard to make MLS a success. Our objective is to receive our fair share now and to make sure that the players share in the future growth of the league."

The MLSPU is a union run and governed by the players. One player on each of the ten teams serves as a player representative, and there is a five-player Executive Board. In addition to Klein and Olsen, the members of the Executive Board are Landon Donovan of the San Jose Earthquakes, Tim Howard of the Metrostars and Alexi Lalas of the Los Angeles Galaxy.

"There are many issues that need to be addressed with MLS. For example, the minimum salary has not increased since the inception of the league. The players also want to make sure that we have a unified and independent voice through which to work with the league to continue to expand the growth of soccer in the United States," said Lalas.

The MLSPU is an independent union and was not involved in the lengthy antitrust litigation that has overshadowed labor relations in the league for the past six years. "The past is behind us. We want to look forward to the growth of professional soccer in the United States, and to better terms and conditions of employment for the players who make that growth possible," noted Howard. "The players are unified, we are organized, and we now have a union that will represent us at the bargaining table," added Donovan.

To assist them in their efforts, the MLSPU has retained Jon Newman as its General Counsel. Mr. Newman is a partner in the law firm of Sherman, Dunn, Cohen, Leifer & Yellig, P.C., a Washington D.C. based union-side firm that has represented a variety of labor unions since 1947. The MLSPU has also retained Bob Foose, a Bethesda, Maryland based attorney with ties to the soccer industry, as its Associate General Counsel/Administrator.

Contacts: Jon Newman (202) 785-9300 [newman@shermaddunn.com](mailto:newman@shermaddunn.com); Bob Foose (301) 718-7273 [bobfoose@aol.com](mailto:bobfoose@aol.com).