

## Rowdies start to look forward

By NICHOLAS J.E. MURRAY  
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TAMPA - Steinbrenner Field will be the first home of the FC Tampa Bay Rowdies when they play their inaugural season in the United States Soccer Federation Second Division, with a home opener planned for early May.

Standing inside the club's new home, Rowdies owner and president Andrew Nestor said he was excited everything was starting to come together for the franchise.

"It's very exciting," Nestor said. "It's been a long year-and-a-half, restructuring, relaunching a league, building an entire organization from scratch, putting together not just an organization but a winning team that we feel will compete for a championship in our first year. To be able to announce that we're going to play in such a great venue and really start to look forward is very exciting."

The Rowdies will still try to build a soccer-specific stadium that will become their permanent home. Plans for that are still in progress, though, with Nestor not willing to say where the stadium might be built.

The Rowdies should find out the specific date of their season opener and home opener soon. The league's schedule is expected to be announced early next week with opening weekend currently scheduled for April 10. Nestor said the side will open the season on the road. When the team does host its home opener, the playing surface will be stripped across the outfield and over a portion of the infield around first base.

As well as lining up their stadium plans, the Rowdies also introduced three of the 13 players who have been signed by the team: University of Tampa All-American Pascal Milien, [Jesuit graduate Joe Donoho](#) and Yendry Diaz, a Cuban player who defected when the North American Olympic qualifying tournament was held in Tampa two years ago.

### THE TAMPA BAY SOCCER BLOG

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

#### Milien thrilled to be staying in Tampa

**TAMPA** – It's hard to wipe the smile off Pascal Milien's face at the best of times, but there was no chance of it happening as he was one of three players introduced by FC Tampa Bay Rowdies at Steinbrenner Field on Wednesday afternoon.

For the University of Tampa All-American, the opportunity to stay in Tampa to begin his professional career was one that left him overjoyed.

"I can't ask for better," Milien said. "This is a dream come true for me after all these years I've been pushing myself since high school, through college, thank God I finally have a chance to play in my hometown."

Milien was joined by [Jesuit graduate Joe Donoho](#), who had a stellar college career at Rutgers and Bradley. The Tampa native grew up a New York Yankees fan, and was looking forward to playing on the same field he had attended spring training games at growing up.

"It's awesome," **Donoho** said. "To be here to get a chance to do this, it really is a blessing."

While the Rowdies said since the beginning of their search for players that they wanted to try and sign players with ties to the Tampa Bay area, Owner and President Andrew Nestor said that the main reason why the club had targeted Milien and **Donoho** was because of their playing ability.

"You always want to have local players," Nestor said. "It helps the fan base, it helps develop future talent because

local kids have something to look up to, but at the same time they have to be quality, and I think we're pretty lucky to be in a market where you have local talent that is truly good enough to play at this level, and these two guys have shown that."

**Donoho** and the third player introduced on Wednesday, Yendry Diaz, could make a strong central defensive pairing for the team in its inaugural season. Head coach Paul Dalglish said he couldn't wait to see what his new players would be able to accomplish in the upcoming season.

"We've worked tirelessly to bring in the best players," Dalglish said. "We've had a lot of combines to try and find talent, and three of the guys you saw today have been at the top of the pile when it comes to the talent we've been looking for. As some of the names you've seen, and some of the names you'll hear about in the future are going to be very exciting names as well, and there's going to be a lot of disappointed people who wanted to play in Tampa, but that's a good thing for us because it means the standard is very high."

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