

ONLINE

MLS has redesigned its Web site, MLSnet.com, for the 2001 season.

The new-look MLSnet.com features columns by former Dallas Burn coach David Dir, the new co-host of ESPN2's "ExtraTime," and former Providence Journal sportswriter Doug Chapman. The site has added a Spanish-language section with selected features in Spanish. MLS has also started a weekly newsletter, "90 Minutes." One of the best features of MLSnet.com is its multimedia section. The old "Theater" section features video clips of each week's top plays.



MLSnet.com

CNN's United Soccer Association's Web site at its new address, www.wusa.com.

The site, which launched in early April, includes player features, interviews and diaries. They also contribute recipes (Julie Murray's chicken broccoli), daily menus (Mercy Akide likes her food hot) and conditioning tips (Tisha Venturini likes to roller blade during the off-season).



WUSA.com

The United Soccer Leagues have once again moved their Web site.

Their new site, launched in partnership with umbro.com, is at USLsoccer.com. It was up for the start of the USL season in early April. The site has expanded news on the USL's five leagues, including the A-League. It features a bulletin board for USL fans and a poll.



then
and
now

backline

Andranik Eskandarian, one of the many New York Cosmos with World Cup experience, now follows his son's career at the University of Virginia.

Eski: 'We brought soccer to this country'

Andranik Eskandarian won two NASL titles as a steady defender with the New York Cosmos from 1979 to 1984. Born in Iran of Armenian parents, "Eski" joined the Cosmos after playing for Iran at the 1978 World Cup. The 49-year-old, who became a U.S. citizen in 1984, has settled in Bergen County, N.J., where he operates two soccer stores — Eski Sports Shop and Birkenmeier Sports Shop — with fellow Cosmos alum Hubert Birkenmeier.

SOCCER AMERICA: How did you get into the sporting goods business?

ANDRANIK ESKANDARIAN: Actually, this business, Hubert started in 1982, when we were still playing for the Cosmos. In 1985, when Cosmos was going out of business, they were selling the players to indoor teams. My contract went to San Diego, which I didn't go to because I had two kids here going to school and I didn't want to move. Hubert's contract went to Chicago, and he went because he was a single guy and it was easy to go. That's when we made a deal. Now he's back and helping me. We are great friends, we are like brothers.

SA: Do you think that with MLS establishing a foothold now, it is important for people to remember the NASL and its players?

AE: For me, it's a memory, and I'm not looking to make a name anymore — none of us are — but for the MetroStars and MLS people, we brought soccer to this country. We worked hard for the kids ... in New Jersey. I remember you could go 15 or 20 miles without finding a soccer field, and now you can't go one mile without one.

SA: Tell us about your sons.

AE: Alecko is doing excellent. He had a great year at Virginia, with the opportunity to start as a freshman. And Ari is graduating in May from Villanova. Alecko is right now in Chula Vista, training with the U-20 national team.

SA: Did you go to many of Alecko's games?

AE: Yes, it's a six- or seven-hour drive, but I went to almost every game. I coached him from when he was 6 years old in the club system, so this was kind of my retirement from coaching.

SA: Does that allow you to spend more time with your wife?

AE: To be honest, my wife, Anna, is crazy for soccer. This year we didn't have any kids in high school — she would go and watch high school soccer.

We are true soccer fans. Not only to watch our sons play, we watch everybody.

— Will Kuhns



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