



# ***MLS NEWS RELEASE***

420 Fifth Ave. 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY, 10018 – (212) 450-1200

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Will Kuhns, Major League Soccer, 212-450-1206, [will.kuhns@mlsnet.com](mailto:will.kuhns@mlsnet.com)

Nathan Vanstone, Vancouver Whitecaps, (604) 629-2251, [nvanstone@whitecapsfc.com](mailto:nvanstone@whitecapsfc.com)

## ***MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER AWARDS VANCOUVER EXPANSION TEAM FOR 2011***

***League's 17th Team to Play in Newly-Renovated BC Place***

**NEW YORK** (Wednesday, March 18, 2009) – Vancouver, British Columbia, will be the home of Major League Soccer's 17th team, MLS Commissioner Don Garber announced today. The Vancouver MLS team will begin play in 2011 at the newly-renovated BC Place Stadium in the city's downtown entertainment district. The venue will undergo approximately \$365 million CDN in improvements before the new MLS team takes to the field, and will have a seamless 20,000-seat soccer-specific configuration.

The Vancouver ownership group consists of Greg Kerfoot, Steve Luczo, Jeff Mallett, and Steve Nash. Kerfoot is the owner of Vancouver Whitecaps FC and former CEO of Crystal Decisions Software. Luczo is president, CEO, and chairman of the board for Seagate Technology and part owner of the National Basketball Association's Boston Celtics. Mallett is part owner of Major League Baseball's San Francisco Giants and is the former president and COO of Yahoo! Nash – a guard for the NBA's Phoenix Suns – is a two-time NBA MVP, and along with Mallett, is an investor in Women's Professional Soccer.

"We are thrilled to welcome Vancouver into Major League Soccer for the 2011 season," Garber said. "The ownership team of Greg Kerfoot, Steve Luczo, Jeff Mallett, and Steve Nash love the game and represent a new breed of ownership group. Our new Vancouver team also provides an attractive stadium plan and a market with a rich soccer tradition."

Tomorrow marks the start of the 2009 MLS season and the long-awaited inaugural game for Seattle Sounders FC, who are a geographic rival for Vancouver. More than 32,000 fans will witness the historic match against the New York Red Bulls at 9 p.m. EDT on ESPN2.

Vancouver will have the second MLS team in Canada following the successful launch of Toronto FC in 2007. Toronto FC has sold out every home game, capped season tickets at 16,000, and has a season-ticket waiting list of over 14,000. Vancouver also has a proven track record of supporting soccer. In November 2007, the Whitecaps United Soccer Leagues First Division team played in front of over 48,000 fans at BC Place when they hosted the Los Angeles Galaxy.

"British Columbians are excited about hosting a Major League Soccer team in a newly-renovated BC Place Stadium beginning in 2011," said Premier Gordon Campbell. "The Vancouver Whitecaps have been a part of our province's history for more than three decades. As an MLS team, the Whitecaps organization will carry on that incredible tradition, as well as generate economic benefits of up to \$25 million each season."

The renovations to BC Place include new seating, concessions, washrooms, hospitality areas, field surface, improved access for persons with disabilities, the redevelopment of all common spaces, and a significant reduction in the building's energy consumption. The defining features will include the first centrally-hung electronic scoreboard and retractable roof in MLS - an engineering marvel that uses the same technology found at Commerzbank Arena in Frankfurt, Germany, which is the home of Eintracht Frankfurt of the German Bundesliga.

"This is a great win for the province of British Columbia and the city of Vancouver," said Mallett. "Major League Soccer is North America's premier soccer league and offers exceptional skill and entertainment. We have a world-class stadium that will be packed with cheering, singing, and chanting Vancouver supporters."

Vancouver Whitecaps FC will continue to field a USL-1 team during the 2009 and 2010 seasons. MLS plans to announce another expansion team, its 18th, in the near future.

“The city of Vancouver and the Whitecaps have a rich and storied soccer history, which includes long-standing rivalries with Toronto and Seattle,” said Vancouver Whitecaps FC president Bob Lenarduzzi. “The successful bid for a Major League Soccer franchise offers a whole new level of opportunity for our organization, and by extension, for our city and our province.”

Five thousand \$50 deposits for Vancouver Major League Soccer 2011 season tickets go on sale this Saturday, March 21, at 10 a.m. Current Whitecaps ticket holders receive priority purchase rights for 2011 season tickets. For more information on securing a season ticket for 2011, visit [www.vancouvermls2011.com](http://www.vancouvermls2011.com).

#### **ABOUT MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER**

Headquartered in New York City, Major League Soccer is the top-flight professional soccer league in the United States and Canada. MLS features many stars from the U.S., Canada, and around the world. MLS kicks off its 14th season on March 19, with 15 teams each playing 30 regular season matches. They include Chicago Fire, Colorado Rapids, Chivas USA, Columbus Crew, D.C. United, FC Dallas, Houston Dynamo, Kansas City Wizards, Los Angeles Galaxy, New York Red Bulls, New England Revolution, Real Salt Lake, San Jose Earthquakes, Toronto FC and, in its inaugural season, Seattle Sounders FC. A Philadelphia expansion team will debut in 2010, while a Vancouver expansion team will debut in 2011. For more information about MLS, log on to the League’s official website at [www.MLSnet.com](http://www.MLSnet.com).

[www.MLSnet.com](http://www.MLSnet.com)