

# THE NEW JERSEY SOCCER GROUP

## Press Release



### Former WPSL Coaches Headline WPS Post-Season August 31, 2010—Millburn, NJ



While it's been almost a month since the conclusion of the 2010 season in the **Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL)**, the next level of the sport of women's soccer has been setting up their own championship race. The top four teams in **Women's Professional Soccer (WPS)** qualify for the post-season, and with only a few matches remaining, the race for the 2010 WPS Championship is turning the final corner.

The top three clubs currently in the WPS standings are led by former WPSL coaches, with Albertin Montoya and the F.C. Gold Pride (14-3-4, 46 pts) clinching the regular season championship and right to host the WPS Final on Sunday, Sept. 26th at 2:30 p.m. at Pioneer Stadium (FSN). After yesterday's 2-1 win over the Philadelphia Independence (10-8-4, 34 pts), the Boston Breakers (9-7-5, 32 pts) are now neck-in-neck with the Philly side for 2nd place and the right to host the WPS Super Semifinal on Wednesday or Thursday, Sept. 22/23.

Facing off in a tight post-season race is nothing new to the two coaches, as Boston's Tony DiCicco (2008 WPSL East Coach Of The Year) and Philadelphia's Paul Riley (two-time WPSL Coach Of The Year) were also adversaries in their WPSL days. In 2007, Riley's Long Island Fury team knocked DiCicco's SoccerPlus CT team out of the WPSL playoffs via a 3-2 victory.

But for the top side in the WPS regular season, Montoya can now put his sole focus on preparing his team for the 2010 WPS Championship match. He had plenty of prior experience with post-season preparation when he had worked alongside WPSL Commissioner Jerry Zanelli and his California Storm team, who were Pacific-North Division champions this past season and one win away from the 2010 Final Four in Dallas, TX.

Two former F.C. Gold Pride veterans - Brandi Chastain & Sissi - were key players for Zanelli's 11-1-0 Storm team this summer, while Montoya has 11 former WPSL stars on his WPS regular season championship side; including recent signee Niki Cross who helped Boston Aztec win the 2010 WPSL Championship. At the WPS Draft held earlier this year, Montoya was effusive in his praise of the league Zanelli helped form over a decade ago.

"The WPSL is an excellent environment," said Montoya. "There are so many teams for us coaches to watch these up & coming stars that for whatever reason, didn't make the league last year or even this year. Sometimes they need just a little bit more time and maturity to find their way to being truly successful. If we didn't have the WPSL around, most likely these players would stop playing the game or we would lose them to teams overseas. It's extremely important that we stay connected with the WPSL just because it's another avenue for our league to get stronger. Those players will develop under quality coaches and will go on to eventually have an impact in WPS."



For Riley, he has the dual honor of not only helping to prepare six of his former Long Island players to compete in WPS, but since he still serves as Director of Coaching for the Fury, he can also marvel at the young stars who are only one or two steps away.

"It has been amazing to see the growth of the WPSL both from a quality & quantity perspective," said Riley. "The league now boasts a lot of our [Long Island Fury] alumni in the WPS & that is credit to the league, the coaches and - of course - the players... Many of these players have been competing in the WPSL since they were [teenagers]. So, that experience has been a major influence on their careers and the improvement they have made as players."

As the commissioner of the WPSL, Zanelli has helped grow a regional league into a 50-plus team national organization. He has witnessed the exploits of these three former WPSL coaches first-hand and is proud of what they've now accomplished at the next level.

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"Seeing the success of Albertin and the F.C. Gold Pride is gratifying since we've had a long-standing relationship," said Zanelli. "But to also see what Tony & Paul have done as well this season and for all three coaches to be at the top of the WPS standings, its a strong affirmation that we're doing the right thing. The role of our league is to help both coaches & players reach that next level of competition and when they get there - excel."

The Millburn Magic is the Northern New Jersey representative of the East Conference of the [Women's Premier Soccer League](#), the highest level of women's amateur soccer in the United States and are part of the [New Jersey Soccer Group](#), a management company for a family of soccer based organizations offering a full range of soccer services in New Jersey.