



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **FINALLY, FIRE PICKS ITS GUY (THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE)**

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Fire fans have been waiting a month for the team to hire a new head coach, and it turns out he's an old hand. Longtime Fire assistant Denis Hamlett has been named the team's head coach, according to sources. Hamlett, 39, has been an assistant since the team's first season in 1998. And the team he will be coaching will sport a new look, as the Tribune also has learned Best Buy will be the team's jersey sponsor.

The coaching news should come as a relief to Fire players and fans who have been on a roller coaster over the last year with the addition of Mexican star Cuauhtemoc Blanco, the coaching changes and new ownership. After Juan Carlos Osorio's departure for the New York Red Bulls last month, Fire President John Guppy was forced to find a new coach just five months after hiring Osorio to replace the fired Dave Sarachan. It appeared he had found his man when he offered Houston Dynamo assistant John Spencer the position Tuesday.

Spencer initially accepted the job but then declined because he thought the Fire's offer was too low. "We couldn't come to terms," Spencer told the Houston Chronicle. "It wasn't much more money than I [was making]. To move my family to another state and all the upheaval and such, I just didn't think it was worth it, so I turned it down. I value myself a lot more than what they offered." With Spencer out of the running, the Fire turned to Hamlett, who had been considered one of the leading candidates ever since Osorio left.

The former Colorado Rapids player joined the Fire in 1998 as an assistant under Bob Bradley, now head coach of the U.S. national team. He remained on the Fire coaching staff when Sarachan was hired in 2002 and stayed on when he was passed over for Osorio in July. The recently retired Chris Armas, who assisted with the coaching search, was believed to be one of Hamlett's biggest supporters.

Guppy could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, another source has told the Tribune the Fire has reached a deal with Best Buy to wear the company's logo on jersey fronts this season. The Fire becomes the eighth team in MLS to secure a jersey sponsor along with Real Salt Lake (XanGo), the Los Angeles Galaxy (Herbalife), the New York Red Bulls (Red Bull), Toronto FC (BMO Financial Group), Chivas USA (Comex), the Houston Dynamo (Amigo Energy) and the Columbus Crew (ICI Paints).

Last season was the first in which corporate names were allowed on the front of MLS jerseys. Best Buy also sponsors NASCAR driver Jeremy Mayfield. What likely motivated Best Buy's partnership with the Fire was its plans to open stores in Mexico this year. With Mexico's most popular soccer star playing for the Fire, Best Buy can expect his fans back home to take notice of his jersey logo.

#### **About Andell Holdings**

Andell Holdings ([www.andellinc.com](http://www.andellinc.com)) is a Los Angeles-based private investment firm and family office with global business and investment interests. Founded in 1998, Andell's current activities are divided between investments in private companies, core holdings in publicly traded companies, and partnerships with best-in-class investment managers. The firm acquires and builds ownership stakes in established, well-managed, profitable businesses with solid market positions and strong growth potential. Andell focuses its direct investments in the



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**About Major League Soccer**

Headquartered in New York City, Major League Soccer is the top-flight professional soccer league in the United States and features many stars from the United States and around the world. The League's 12th championship game, MLS Cup 2007, takes place Nov. 18 in Washington, D.C. The 13 teams in MLS are: the Chicago Fire, Colorado Rapids, Chivas USA, Columbus Crew, D.C. United, FC Dallas, Houston Dynamo, Kansas City Wizards, Los Angeles Galaxy, Red Bull New York, New England Revolution, Real Salt Lake and Toronto FC. San Jose will begin play as the 14th team in 2008. For more information about MLS, log on to the League's official web site at [www.MLSnet.com](http://www.MLSnet.com).

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