

Peruvian Stalwart

by Jay Mwamba



April 24, 2014 - Sitting atop the Metro Div. One log with a playoff berth already sewn up, Sporting Astoria appear good bets for promotion to the Second Division. Should that come to pass, boss Ed Romero will have a lot to thank for his Peruvian skipper Jorge Monsalve who has promised to lead the side to its first championship since 2005-2006.

Now in his 11th season with Astoria, the midfield stalwart has with each campaign become an increasingly influential figure at the club. Both on the field -- where he has two goals and seven assists in this current promotion bid -- and off it in terms of helping the perennial contenders rebuild.

“[He’s] a hard worker that is willing to do whatever in order to help the team. He has always been about Sporting,” said Romero. “

Monsalve was 19 and straight out of his native Peru when he was signed by Astoria in 2003.

“Patricio [Acosta] saw him play and brought him for a tryout. The rest is history. He hasn’t left since,” said Romero. “Sebastian Acosta was our first prolific scorer. Patricio Acosta was the clutch time playmaker with legendary performances. Jorge Monsalve is the player behind the scenes who made it possible for those two to shine.”

Then a defensive midfielder playing behind the creative and prolific Patricio, Monsalve was part of the Astoria team that won the 2005-2006 Metro Div. II title and promotion.

“With Jorge on the team we nearly got a second championship and promotion. We fell six points short. That was the 2006-2007 season,” recalled Romero. “We then had a second chance in 2009-2010 but this time we fell three points short. Ever since then we have been rebuilding and Jorge continues to be here.”

Monsalve’s contribution to this effort has included recruiting players from his North Bergen, New Jersey, neighborhood, notably current Astoria hitman Terroll Ishmael.

“And yes, he has been [commuting] to New York City from New Jersey since 2003,” Romero emphasized. “He loves to play with Sporting. It is his passion. When he came to the U.S. at 19, we greeted him with open arms. He always remembers that. To him Sporting is more than just a club, it is family.”

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