A Word From... is part of a series of monthly articles from Alaska Rush Soccer Club's Techinical Director and Directors of Coaching. Each week, a different Director will submit an article pertaining to Alaska Rush, Rush Soccer or even world football in general. It's an opportunity for our readership to gain more insight on the sport and understand further what Alaska Rush Soccer Club is about and what Rush Soccer offers it's Members.

A Word From... Director of Elite Programs

On the night of October 13, 2012 four players from the Cuba National Team faced one of the hardest decision of their lives. They decided to defect before the game against Canada in the World Cup Qualifier. This is one of many decisions these players would need to make to begin their journey of reaching their goals and dreams. They have made the first and possibly hardest step to creating a new life here in the United States.

Reading about these four players brought back so many emotions for me personally since I have been in their shoes. I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was March 11, 2008 when I had to make the biggest decision of my life. Was I to leave and begin a bright future in the USA, giving up all I had ever know including my family? Or do I go back to a country that is so controlled by the government that I would never have a future. Although I knew no one and I only had $60 in my pocket, I had decided and knew I had to do this, not only for me, but also for my family as well. I figured I could at least help them from America. After I had made my decision and knew that I was not going to turn back, I spoke with a friend of mine on the team and he knew there were some other players planning on defecting as well. We linked up to do this together. We had no plans, but we knew if an opportunity arose we would have to take advantage of it. After the game against the United States, we went back to the hotel to have dinner. It was late and we were all so tired. After dinner they told the players to go through the back halls of the hotel because there were many Cuban fans in the lobby. As the players got up from the tables the teams headed out the doors to the lobby while my friend and I headed down the back halls. As we approached the elevators, we looked back and noticed that no one was behind us, so we knew right then that this was our opportunity. There were a set of doors leading outside and before I knew what was going on, we were all running out the doors and through the parking lot. As we were running through the parking lot, we heard someone yelling for us. We looked back and as our hearts were pounding, we noticed it was a player’s grandfather who arrived to help us. We ran over to his car and piled in. We were free! This was the beginning of my new life in the United States. I was so excited to see what I could do with my life.

Talking with one of my friends who had made contact with these four players, say that the players are really excited and also ready for the up coming challenges. They have the same hopes and dreams I had of being singed to play professionally. Knowing everything they are going through and the challenges still ahead, I hope nothing but the best for them and I hope they can make their dreams come true like I feel I have.

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