

# TORMENTA FC

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# CAN YOU BELIEVE IT'S ALREADY YEAR TWO?

There have been so many steps.

We've gone from a team with no name to getting a name, a color scheme, a coach and players. From there, we celebrated first games, first goals and first wins. Now - after just one season - there are teams from all over the country and all over the world that have taken notice of what's going on in Statesboro, Georgia.

That's incredibly satisfying. It's great to think that we have these bridges that now span all over the world, but it's even better to know that all of those bridges started right here. And we did it in that classic way that Statesboro tends to do things. From the mayor's offices, to county offices, to Georgia Southern University and our community businesses, everyone banded together in their support to help lift this franchise off the ground.

And as great as the initial excitement has been for Tormenta, it would mean nothing without the fan support that was shown throughout our inaugural season. And that support has extended beyond Statesboro. We have never been shy about our intentions to be successful and strive to take on the best. With support from surrounding counties, our team is able to be talked about in the same breath as clubs in bigger cities. That's the kind of support and faith that we are grateful for and that will continue to make Tormenta a great team for our fans to enjoy while making it a desired destination for prospective players.

I'm proud to say that things are living up to our vision. Then again, having a vision is the easy part. It's easy to sell people on an idea and to be content when things are going according to plan. But what we're so proud of is the hard part. To really achieve goals, you need those boots on the ground.

It's like running a city. It's one thing to look nice in a brochure, but there is a lot of hard work that has to be done to make sure that the streets are clean, that the schools are good and that the fire and police departments are keeping everything in order and safe. That's what we achieved in our first season. From the support of our sponsors and fans, to the dedication and professionalism of our staff and players, all of those sometimes-unnoticed things were the launching point for such a successful first year.

But, as I said before, we're now in Year Two.

And as we continue to see great support and expect to field another very talented and competitive team, we continue to look forward into what can become of Tormenta FC.

As much as we want to win games and championships, we also want to send the players who will achieve those goals on to bigger things. And as a town used to rooting for college teams, I think that's a relatable building block for our fans as we continue to advance the brand of the club.

People in Statesboro may not have thought much about the Bears or Vikings before Adrian Peterson and Jerick McKinnon were playing for them. But those players' success at the next level emboldened our community's pride in the players and in that sport as they continued to have success.

That's what we aim for with Tormenta FC. We want to compete, we want to win and we want to hold a place in the great spirit that this community has shown.

So, from the players, coaches and front office of South Georgia Tormenta FC, please accept our thanks for a great first season that put our club on the national landscape. Our supporters are as great a factor in our success as any key goal or save, so join us and fully integrate yourselves into the Tormenta family as we take the next step in 2017.

Great things await.

Darin Van Tassell  
President, South Georgia Tormenta FC



DARIN VAN TASSELL  
Franchise President

# PARTNERSHIPS

As if an inaugural season filled with success and popularity wasn't enough, South Georgia Tormenta FC is now making itself an international sensation.

Near the end of 2016, Tormenta owner and team president Darin Van Tassell announced the signing of three friendship agreements. FC Academy (Monte Compatri, Italy), ASD Grottaferrata Calcio (Grottaferrata, Italy) and KF Tirana (Tirana, Albania) will all be working with Tormenta FC to collaborate through players and team administration for the mutual benefit of the clubs.

"We're really excited for this partnership," Van Tassell said. "We're wanting to grow the brand of Tormenta FC and this step into the international side of things is going to be great for everyone involved."

Partnerships with these clubs and cities could pave the way for future international players to compete for Tormenta. Front office staff members of the clubs will also be linked to the friendship agreements as an exchange of staff members will give workers valuable insight to how the different clubs and cultures operate in their day-to-day functions.

While the clubs involved in the agreements all have professional or semi-pro teams operating in their oldest division, there is also plenty of emphasis on youth soccer.

As part of the agreement with their new partners, Tormenta's U14 squad (formerly Storm Soccer Academy out of Savannah) will travel to Italy this summer. While there, the team will have a chance to play against the youth squads of some of the world's most prestigious clubs.

As 2017 rolled around, Tormenta also found a friend much closer to home.

Earlier this spring, Tormenta announced a partnership with the Charleston Battery, which plays in the USL. The sides will meet for an exhibition on May 10 in Savannah and Tormenta has already sent Nico Rittmeyer - who scored three goals last summer - to Charleston for his first professional contract.

"We're very excited for the next year of Tormenta, both on the field and with the new partnerships we're participating in," Van Tassell said. "Through building our network, we hope to continue to spread the name and recognition of our club while giving our players opportunities to reach their goals."

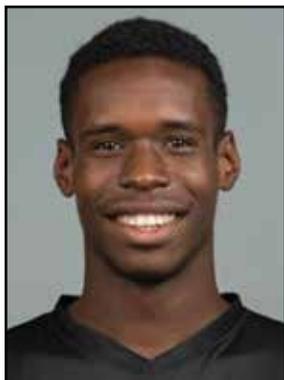


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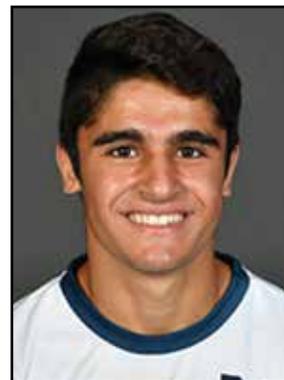
Leland Archer, # 20  
Age: 21  
Position: Center Back  
Hometown: Port-of-Spain,  
Trinidad and Tobago



**ABOUT:** Tormenta players have - to a man - all been solid players for club and collegiate teams, but Leland Archer can also boast a lofty career with a national side. The defender has played with the U17, U20 and U23 squads for Trinidad and Tobago, which he cites as his biggest accomplishment so far. Archer is currently enrolled at the College of Charleston and has scored six goals over the last two seasons. He was also one of only two Cougars to start every match in 2016.

**TOP NOTCH:** The United States hasn't reached the top of the international soccer mountain (at least not yet), but the country does have some of the best facilities available. "That's a big difference from back home," Archer said. "(In Trinidad and Tobago), some of the practices aren't always on the best fields. I don't think I've seen a bad one here."

Jad Arslan, #21  
Age: 20  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Roswell, Ga.



**ABOUT:** When Tormenta took the field for the first time last season, Jad Arslan was a name that quickly became familiar to fans. In addition to playing in 13 of 14 matches, Arslan netted a goal and contributed a pair of assists. Arslan didn't need to rack up points to make his presence felt. He constantly pressured opponents with 19 shots and also provided an intimidating physical presence for Tormenta in earning four yellow cards.

**FAMILY AFFAIR:** In addition to returning to his home state from his college home in West Virginia, Arslan is excited to return to Tormenta because of the familiarity that comes along with rejoining last summer's teammates and new teammates that he has played with or against in his youth days. "It's easy to come together," Arslan said. "Especially because we all live in the same area. We get to know each other and fans get to know us. The support we have gotten makes me believe that Statesboro deserves a championship."

Sam Blackman, #15  
Age: 21  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Dartford,  
England



**ABOUT:** Blackman was affiliated with both the Millwall and Leatherneck football clubs in England before heading stateside. Blackman played for Midland University in Nebraska before transferring to Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa where he scored 10 goals and set up 11 others this past fall. Blackman suited up against Tormenta last season as a member of the Southern West Virginia King's Warriors.

**MAKING MOVES:** "After playing against Tormenta last season, it was clear that they were ahead of many PDL teams in terms of the set up," Blackman said. "I have played under (new Tormenta coach) John Miglarese before and as soon as I got the call about coming to Tormenta, it was never in doubt."

Kevin Barajas, #18  
Age: 21  
Position: Center Midfielder  
Hometown: Atlanta, Ga.



**ABOUT:** Following an accomplished high school career at Mt. Paran Christian in Marietta, Ga., Barajas has quickly established himself as a core piece for the Kentucky Wildcats. Barajas saw the field during his freshman season - where he scored his first collegiate goal - and has four goals and five assists through his first three years in Lexington.

**THE NEXT STEP:** Barajas is far from the only player or coach to cite the atmosphere around Tormenta that is unique to the PDL. Barajas said that he was immediately impressed with the professionalism of the club's front office and day-to-day operations and that this was a big factor in club choice as he strives to make a career in the sport.

Charlie Dennis, #9  
Age: 21  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Brighton,  
England



**ABOUT:** No matter where Charlie Dennis is, goals never seem to be far behind. Dennis competed in England for the Southampton Academy from U9-U16. Upon arriving at Shorter College, Dennis lit up the scoreboard, registering 16 goals and 12 assists in his two seasons with the Hawks. Fall of 2016 saw a move to Palm Beach Atlantic University, where Dennis spent his junior season leading the Sailfish with nine goals on his way to being named NSCAA All-South First Team.

**FILLING A ROLE:** As his record shows, Dennis has made an immediate impact on all of his teams. Given the short and intense nature of the PDL season, that kind of spark could be just what Tormenta is looking for. "I have (changed teams) my whole career and moved countries so it is nothing new to me," Dennis said. "I am excited to meet all my teammates and members of staff."

Carlos Gomez, #2  
Age: 23  
Position: Forward  
Hometown: Algate, Spain



**ABOUT:** Before coming stateside, Carlos Gomez made his way around numerous Spanish clubs. In his youth, Gomez played for Rayo Vallecano, CD Leganes, AD Alcorcon and UD Sanse. Following those stints, Gomez made his way to Georgia where he enrolled at Young Harris College. His first season at Young Harris was one to remember as Gomez started 16 of 18 games and tallied an impressive 13 goals and four assists. Most of his goals came at opportune moments as six of his strikes turned out to be game-winners for Young Harris.

**SETTLING IN:** Flotxxxxxx

Robert Flott, #31  
Age: 22  
Position: Goalkeeper  
Hometown: Arlington, Va.

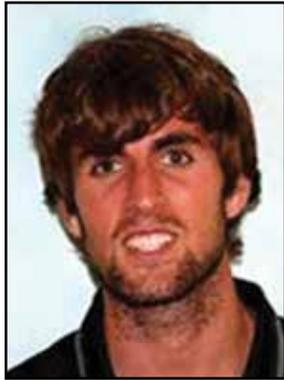


**ABOUT:** Flott made a name for himself growing up as a member of the DC United Soccer Academy. Following high school, Flott attended UNC Greensboro before transferring to Butler University in Indianapolis, where he was a member of the Bulldogs' 2016 Big East championship squad.

**CHEAT DAY:** Flott cites the top-of-the line training and facilities Tormenta offers as a big reason why he jumped at the opportunity to join the club. That training also includes team meals designed to promote health and performance. And while Flott looks forward to that, he says that his weakness is a tray from Cook-Out with a milkshake to top things off.



Pablo Gomez, #32  
 Age: 21  
 Position: Defender  
 Hometown: Molins, Spain



**ABOUT:** Of the many European-born players on the Tormenta roster, Gomez competed for several clubs in his home country of Spain before coming to the United States. In Spain, Gomez helped Mutilvera CF win a championship and win promotion into the 2B division – a feat he still considers to be one of the proudest moments of his career. Now stateside, Gomez is a member of the University of Mobile Rams. He saw action in five games last fall and will enter this season as a junior.

**POWERING UP:** During his brief time in the United States, Gomez has seen plenty of cultural differences compared to his home in Spain. His collegiate home in Mobile, Ala. is likely a contributing factor to his newfound love of southern barbecue, and he is also diving into the differences in the American game. “The work ethic and learning in the United States is very great,” Gomez said. “In Spain soccer is faster and technical, but in the United States it is very physical.”

Max Hasenstab, #4  
 Age: 24  
 Position: Forward  
 Hometown: Idstein, Germany



**ABOUT:** Tormenta FC prides itself as a launching pad for the prospective professional careers of its players. This season, it also hopes to be the home of a comeback story. Max Hasenstab had a brilliant youth career in Germany, playing in the country’s highest level (Bundesliga) for 1.FSV Mainz 05 at the U15-U19 levels. Hasenstab journeyed to America to play for Winthrop University, scoring 34 goals and 12 assists in three years, only to miss his senior season due to a knee injury.

**SECOND CHANCE:** Hasenstab has enjoyed his time in the United States, adjusting to what he says is a more physical style of play. That kind of play may have contributed to his injury, but his mind is set on the future. “My ultimate goal is to stay healthy and get ready for my last year at Winthrop University. Then, of course, help Tormenta FC as much as possible in getting to the playoffs. I want to score goals and have fun!”





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Tanner Hummel, #16  
 Age: 20  
 Position: Defender  
 Hometown: Kennesaw, Ga.



**ABOUT:** Tanner Hummel returns to his home state for the summer after starting all 16 games for a Kentucky squad that qualified for the NCAA tournament last season. Hummel has consistently been a leader on the field as he captained his Georgia United club team before college. In his club days, Hummel's teams twice qualified for the U.S. Academy Playoffs. Hummel's individual skills have also gotten him selected to a touring team that trained at Fulham and Manchester City.

**BEING THE BEST:** "Hummel cites reports from club teammates as the reason Tormenta appeared on his radar. "I kept up with the team last year and saw the great atmosphere and facilities," Hummel said. "Tormenta seems like a place that fits me well." Hummel also spoke of Tormenta's recent partnership agreement with the Charleston Battery, stating that he's eager to play and train against the USL side.

Justin Little, #22  
 Age: 18  
 Position: Defender  
 Hometown: Warner Robins, Ga.



**ABOUT:** Tormenta proved last season that age was no factor in building a competitive team. The club featured the PDL's youngest player last summer and - in 2017 - will feature a defender with just one season of college experience. Justin Little was an All-Region player at Houston County and was immediately asked to play a starting role in his freshman season at Georgia Southern. Little started all 19 games and played every minute in 18 of those contests.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** Little had such a good time playing for the Eagles last fall that he saw no reason to leave town once school let out. "Playing at Georgia Southern and getting close to Statesboro played a big part in my decision," Little said. "Also, the quality of players that play and that have come out of Tormenta helped make the decision." Little is also endearing himself to a business that began in Statesboro, admitting that he's a regular at Zaxby's.



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**Jamie Merriam, #10**  
Age: 23  
Position: Forward  
Hometown: Gaithersburg, Md.



**ABOUT:** One of a handful of Tormenta newcomers who played elsewhere in the league last summer, Merriam brings a lethal PDL-level scoring threat to this year's roster. Merriam easily led the Baltimore Bohemians in scoring in 2016, finding the net nine times on 23 shots in 13 games. Merriam's stellar summer followed an equally impressive career at West Virginia University that saw him rack up 20 goals and 14 assists in 67 overall appearances.

**LICKING HIS CHOPS:** With his college career behind him, Merriam is now focused on grabbing the attention of professional clubs. Changing his location to the south opens up new opportunities to be seen and - depending on taste - could work out in another way. All Tormenta players were quizzed on their favorite 'off-diet' treat, with Merriam citing fried chicken as his personal kryptonite.

**Reed Norton, #19**  
Age: 23  
Position: Defender  
Hometown: Evans, Ga.



**ABOUT:** Of all Tormenta players not originally from Statesboro, Reed Norton has spent the most time in town. Norton originally came to town to begin his collegiate career at Georgia Southern before transferring to N.C. State. An accomplished college career was followed by a spot in the Seattle Sounders developments organization and a stint with the Charleston Battery of the USL. Norton made his way back to Statesboro as a member of the 2016 Tormenta squad and also served on the coaching staff for Georgia Southern's men's team last fall.

**BIG TEAM, LITTLE ME:** In his first season with Tormenta, Norton was a considerable force for the squad. He notched two goals and two assists and was one of only two players to see action in all 14 games. Presumed to be a key cog once again this season, Norton is more concerned with the bigger picture. "My goal is to win," Norton said. "If we do that, any personal goals of players should be fulfilled."

**Sam Lofts, #23**  
Age: 22  
Position: Forward  
Hometown: Swindon, England



**ABOUT:** Tormenta FC is pleased to welcome back its leading scorer from last season. Lofts found the net four times and added an assist in 815 minutes of action last summer. Lofts recently finished his junior season at Lander and has already totalled 18 goals and 10 assists. This past fall, he led Lander to a Peach Belt title and was named first team all-conference.

**BIGGER AND BETTER:** Lofts might not be the most physically imposing player in any given game, but he punches above his weight class and has the goals to match. "I want to improve my skills on the pitch and build my character off the field and develop new relationships," Lofts said. "Personally, I want to score a minimum of 10 goals over the summer."

**Keegan Meyer, #28**  
Age: 20  
Position: Goalkeeper  
Hometown: Silver Spring, Md.



**ABOUT:** Meyer was a standout at DeMatha Catholic High School, posting 26 clean sheets in 33 career starts. Those impressive stats pushed him on to High Point University where - in his redshirt freshman season this past fall - Meyer was installed as the starting keeper. Meyer helped High Point to a 10-4-4 mark in games he started, pinning five more clean sheets onto his record.

**GET IT TOGETHER:** Goalkeepers must constantly communicate in order to effectively position the defense. With so little time between Tormenta's first practice and its first game, Meyer stresses a good team atmosphere. "Getting to know everyone outside of practice will be key to creating good team chemistry."

Josh Phelps, #11  
Age: 24  
Position: Center Back  
Hometown: Sunshine Coast, Australia



**ABOUT:** Plenty of Tormenta players were born overseas, but only one comes from, literally, the other side of the globe. From the coast of Australia to Coastal Georgia, Phelps will play his home games 9,161 miles from his hometown. Phelps has plenty of playing experience stateside, competing for Thomas College and UNC Pembroke while adding some PDL experience as a member of the Southern West Virginia King's Warriors.

**EYES ON THE PRIZE:** Phelps' background showcases the global reach of the game and his outlook for the 2017 Tormenta squad maintains that global feel. "I want to get Tormenta into the finals and move towards signing a (professional) contract." Phelps said. "There is always going to be difference in practices and tactics as football is a game of opinions, but football is the biggest and greatest sport on the planet, so there also is a sense of universal language."

Adam Purvis, #30  
Age: 24  
Position: Defender  
Hometown: Statesboro, Ga.



**ABOUT:** Following a successful high school career at Statesboro High, Purvis headed toward the coast, playing for the College of Charleston from 2011-2015. Purvis steadily grew as a key wing player with his ability to maintain possession in the midfield. This will be the second PDL stint for Purvis as he competed for the Seattle Sounders' squad in 2012.

**HOME SWEET HOME:** Purvis cites one of his biggest career accomplishments as being able to start off in a small town and make it all the way to a Division I school. But while he has been away, his small town has turned into a soccer town. "Tormenta has a professional atmosphere like nowhere else," Purvis said. "And it will be great to come back home and play."

Jordan Lue, #14  
Age: 21  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Tampa, Fla.



**ABOUT:** Growing up, Jordan Lue cut his teeth in Florida's elite Chargers Soccer Club. Staying in state, Lue began his collegiate career at the University of Central Florida. He redshirted in his first season in Orlando, but was on the field for the Golden Knights for a Sept. 10, 2015 win over Princeton that snapped what was the nation's longest winning streak at the time. Lue arrived in Statesboro last summer and was a key piece in Tormenta's first team, racking up 717 minutes in 12 games. He sat out last fall after transferring to Florida Gulf Coast, but is looking forward to a big summer with Tormenta and a chance to hit the field at FGCU later this year.

**A PERFECT FIT:** Venturing out of his home state in search of a club, Lue wanted to be sure that he was comfortable. A productive summer left a good impression on him and returning in 2017 was an easy call. "I was here last year, and I loved the environment Darin (Van Tassell), Netra (Van Tassell), and all the staff working within Tormenta created," Lue said. "(Former coach Ben Freakley) kept the trainings and games competitive as well so this club offered everything you'd want in a PDL team."



Kieran Roberts, #7  
Age: 23  
Position: Forward  
Hometown: Bournemouth,  
England



**ABOUT:** Roberts grew up playing for the youth sides of AFC Bournemouth, which has 118 years of history and has just recently ascended to the English Premier League. Roberts came across the pond to play for Radford University and has been a member of three consecutive regular season title winners and a pair of NCAA tournament participants. An injury sidelined Roberts in the fall of 2015, but he bounced back to assist on a pair of goals for Tormenta last summer before scoring three goals in his return to action at Radford this past fall.

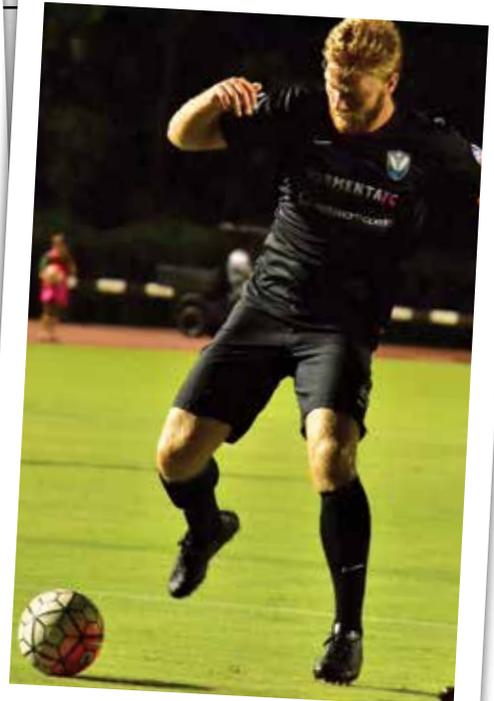
**A SOCCER TOWN:** From his stellar youth play, to his collegiate career, to his current role with Tormenta, it's clear that Roberts eats, drinks and breathes soccer. His future goals require a good fit for someone as dedicated to the sport as he is, and it appears as if Statesboro has provided that setting. "Coming from a Premier League professional environment back home, it is hard to adjust to different coaches, players, and drills when you come here. Tormenta FC is actually the closest to a professional environment I have had since I got to America."

Matt Rosenberg, #1  
Age: 18  
Position: Goalkeeper  
Hometown: Manalapan,  
N.J.



**ABOUT:** Matt Rosenberg comes to Tormenta after making an immediate impact at the University of Central Florida. As a true freshman, Rosenberg started all but one match with the Golden Knights. He notched three clean sheets, including a victory over No. 25 Connecticut. Prior to college, Rosenberg competed for the U18 New York Red Bulls Academy. At the U14 level, his Players Development Academy squad reached the national finals and was ranked second in the country. Rosenberg has also excelled in other sports, lettering in baseball and basketball in high school.

**ALL ON BOARD:** A long and successful collegiate career appears to be on the horizon for Rosenberg, but a solid freshman season hasn't led to any complacency. After meeting with former Tormenta coach Ben Freakley, Rosenberg was convinced that Statesboro would be a good place for him to work on his craft against the quality competition in the PDL. That feeling was made stronger shortly after signing on. "Everything (Freakley) told me about team owner Darin Van Tassell and about the team is true. This is a great family environment that is going to give me a chance to improve."



Mikie Rowe, #3  
Age: 20  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Wexford,  
Ireland



**ABOUT:** Ireland adds to Tormenta's vibrant worldwide mix of talent as Mikie Rowe joins the club in 2017. Rowe has been at work for a long time, playing his earliest matches for his local Campile United club before moving on to the Wexford youth teams and then transitioning into Waterford United. Since arriving in the United States, Rowe has been a force for Young Harris College, totalling 14 goals and seven assists over the past two seasons.

**IN IT TO WIN IT:** Many international players have made the observation that precision and tactics may be ahead of the curve in other parts of the map, but that the intensity and physicality of soccer in America is second to none. Rowe seems to embrace the new challenge. "Players tend to be much fitter, quicker and stronger than those I would have played against in Ireland," Rowe said. "Also, because every team works so hard despite the fact they may not be as good as their opponent, every game is competitive."

Toni Soler, #6  
Age: 25  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Valencia,  
Spain



**ABOUT:** Toni Soler grew up in the middle of one of the most dominant runs in international soccer history. Already a native of soccer-rich Spain, Soler's youth days coincided with his country's run to European championships in 2008 and 2012, with a World Cup thrown into the mix in 2010. That success must have served as a high bar for expectations for future players. Soler has continued to clear that bar, excelling with a trio of Villarreal youth squads before coming to the United States. Soler now calls Adelphi University home. In two seasons there, Soler has scored six goals while helping on eight others. He was also one of four Adelphi players to start all 22 games last season.

**FUN IN THE SUN:** Tormenta features many international players, with most originally hailing from England. As such, the summers of coastal Georgia are a bit of a meteorological shock. For Soler, this summer is a chance to get back to his sunny Spanish roots. "I come from an area with warm weather, so my first winter (at Adelphi in New York) was a shock," Soler said. "I'm in New York until May 10, so I'll have even less time to jump in. But I look forward to working hard and trying my best."



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**Members of the Tormenta FC front office** pose with the American ambassador to Albania Donald Lu (front, center) and members of KF Tirana following the signing of a friendship agreement between Tormenta and the Albanian club. Tormenta made the trip as part of a European tour that saw the club sign partnerships with three organizations.

**Ayao Sossou, #44**  
**Age: 26**  
**Position: Left Back**  
**Hometown: Frederick, Md.**



**ABOUT:** One of Tormenta's returning players from its inaugural squad is also the team's most experienced veteran. Born in Togo, Sossou made his way to the United States for a collegiate career at the Virginia Military Institute spanning 2008-2010. From there, he travelled back across the Atlantic Ocean, playing professionally for Finnish sides I-Kissat and TPV before returning to the United States to join the Rochester Rhinos of the USL in 2014. Sossou appeared in 11 games for Tormenta last season, logging the sixth-most minutes of playing time.

**PART OF THE FAMILY:** Not only is Sossou back in Tormenta's lineup for the 2017 season, he never left after last summer. Sossou signed on as a part of the club's coaching staff in the youth levels of the organization and is as instructional to others on the practice field as he is entertaining when suiting up for Tormenta. "I'm excited for the new season," Sossou said. "My goal for this season is to win a championship because I believe Darin and Netra and everyone at Tormenta deserves it for all the hard work they have put in the past two years."

**Evan Szklennik, #5**  
**Age: 20**  
**Position: Forward**  
**Hometown: Warrenton, Va.**



**ABOUT:** During high school year, played for Loudoun Soccer Club out of Northern Virginia. Szklennik moved on to Radford University where he has been a mainstay in the starting lineup over his first three seasons. Szklennik has been a driving force in the Highlanders' offense, netting seven goals and assisting on 15 more during his collegiate career.

**EASY CHOICE:** In deciding where to play in the PDL, Szklennik credits Radford — and now Tormenta — teammate Kieran Roberts. With Roberts already on the squad, Szklennik's coach at Radford suggested that he follow. "From that point, Tormenta was an easy decision, just based on what I had heard and saw."

Trenton Whitely, #13  
 Age: 21  
 Position: Right Back  
 Hometown: Lawrenceville, Ga.



**ABOUT:** One of Tormenta's returning players from 2016, Whitely kicked off his youth career playing for club teams SMYSA and NASA. Whitely's final two years of high school were spent competing for Georgia United DA, paving the way for a spot on the Mercer University roster. Whitely battled his way into the Bears' starting lineup during his freshman year and has become an anchor on the back line. During his junior season last fall, Whitely was named to the All-Southern Conference Tournament team as the Bears clinched the title and a spot in the NCAA tournament.

**BACK IN TOWN:** Whitely played nearly 1,000 minutes for Tormenta last season, helping the club notch a plus-9 goal differential over the last 10 games of the season. Whitely credits the excitement and support of the large home crowds as a determining factor in his return this summer and he'd also like to give back more. "I'd like to play every minute this season while continuing to grow personally," Whitely said. "But I also want to help bring the city of Statesboro an Eastern Conference championship."

Nick Wells, #24  
 Age: 20  
 Position: Midfielder  
 Hometown: Atlanta, Ga.



**ABOUT:** Nick Wells is another Georgia Southern Eagle who sees no reason to leave Statesboro over the summer. Any Eagle fans attending Tormenta games should recognize Wells' face as he has been a mainstay in the Georgia Southern lineup, appearing in 50 games over his first three seasons. Wells has scored six goals and seven assists in that span, and the work he puts in aside from putting goals on the board has earned him All-Sun Belt recognition in both 2015 and 2016.

**FUN AND FESTIVE:** As Statesboro got its first look at Tormenta last summer, Wells was among those who immediately took a liking to the team. "Being in Statesboro during the summer last year and seeing the support the team got from the community made me want to play here and help this team achieve its goals," Wells said. "Going to one game last year you could tell that the support for this team is immense, and it makes you want to play well to make the fans proud."



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- Sugar Magnolia Bakery
- The Boiling Shrimp
- Wing Maxx
- Your Pie



Nil Vinyals, #8  
Age: 20  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Barcelona,  
Spain

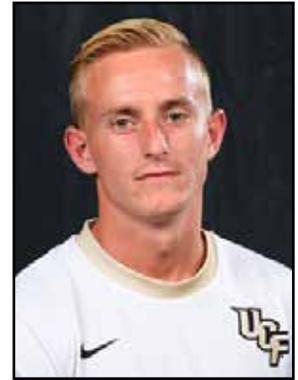


**ABOUT:** Winthrop University has fielded some very competitive

teams in recent years and Tormenta is proud to welcome Nil Vinyals as one of two Eagles on this summer's squad. Vinyals spent his youth playing in Spain and kicked off his playing career in the United States with a 2014 season at Union University (Tenn.) that saw him named to the Gulf South Conference first team, as well as earning a spot on the league's honor roll. Winthrop was the next stop and Vinyals has continued to excel, seeing time in 34 matches while scoring a goal and racking up eight assists over the last two years.

**GROWTH AND CHALLENGES:** With three solid seasons under his belt since coming to America, Vinyals is confident he can handle anything that comes his way. He hopes that attitude can help lead to a solid season for Tormenta. "I want to grow as a player in a highly competitive league while also getting the experience of playing with guys from different backgrounds," Vinyals said. "There's a lot of change and adapting when a new team comes together. The important thing is to work together and help each other."

Walker Dawkins, #17  
Age: 21  
Position: Midfielder  
Hometown: Royal Palm  
Beach, Fla.



**ABOUT:** Tormenta has looked to one of the nation's premier athletic conferences to solidify its midfield for the 2017 season. In three seasons with the University of Central Florida, Walker Dawkins has patrolled the middle of the field and has scored a pair of goals and notched four assists while seeing action in 50 games. Prior to his stint in the collegiate game, Dawkins was a member of the U.S. National Team pool in 2010 and 2011 and cites getting to play against teams from Borussia Dortmund and Ajax as career highlights.

**GO WITH THE FLOW:** As a midfielder, Dawkins is subject to being asked to fulfill a wide variety of roles depending on any given team's talent and philosophy. Coming to a new team with a slew of new teammates is just another challenge to overcome. "Soccer is a game where things are constantly happening or changing and you have to deal with them," Dawkins said. "Just like any other game, I am going to deal with adversity and give it my all."



# 2017 SEASON AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR



**20**  
**LELAND ARCHER**  
21  
Center Back  
Port-of-Spain



**21**  
**JAD ARSLAN**  
20  
Midfielder  
Roswell, Ga.



**18**  
**KEVIN BARAJAS**  
21  
Center Midfielder  
Atlanta, Ga.



**15**  
**SAM BLACKMAN**  
21  
Midfielder  
Dartford, England



**17**  
**WALKER DAWKINS**  
21  
Midfielder  
Royal Palm Beach, Fla.



**9**  
**CHARLIE DENNIS**  
21  
Midfielder  
Brighton, England



**31**  
**ROBERT FLOTT**  
22  
Goalkeeper  
Arlington, Va.



**2**  
**CARLOS GOMEZ**  
23  
Forward  
Algate, Spain



**32**  
**PABLO GOMEZ**  
21  
Defender  
Molins, Spain



**4**  
**MAX HASENSTAB**  
24  
Forward  
Idstein, Germany



**16**  
**TANNER HUMMEL**  
20  
Defender  
Kennesaw, Ga.



**22**  
**JUSTIN LITTLE**  
18  
Defender  
Warner Robins, Ga.



**23**  
**SAM LOFTS**  
22  
Forward  
Swindon, England



**14**  
**JORDAN LUE**  
21  
Midfielder  
Tampa, Fla.



**28**  
**KEEGAN MEYER**  
20  
Goalkeeper  
Silver Spring, Md.



**10**  
**JAMIE MERRIAM**  
23  
Forward  
Gaithersburg, Md.



**19**  
**REED NORTON**  
23  
Defender  
Evans, Ga.



**11**  
**JOSH PHELPS**  
24  
Center Back  
Sunshine Coast, Australia



**30**  
**ADAM PURVIS**  
24  
Defender  
Statesboro, Ga.



**7**  
**KIERAN ROBERTS**  
23  
Forward  
Bournemouth, England



**1**  
**MATT ROSENBERG**  
18  
Goalkeeper  
Manalapan, N.J.



**3**  
**MIKIE ROWE**  
20  
Midfielder  
Wexford, Ireland



**6**  
**TONI SOLER**  
25  
Midfielder  
Valencia, Spain



**44**  
**AYAO SOSSOU**  
26  
Left Back  
Frederick, Md.



**5**  
**EVAN SZKLENNIK**  
20  
Forward  
Warrenton, Va.



**8**  
**NIL VINYALS**  
20  
Midfielder  
Barcelona, Spain



**24**  
**NICK WELLS**  
20  
Midfielder  
Atlanta, Ga.



**13**  
**TRENTON WHITELY**  
21  
Right Back  
Lawrenceville, Ga.

# A WINNING TEAM

Building a winning team in any level and in any sport is quite the challenge. And doing so in the Premier Development League might be one of the biggest challenges of all.

Aiming for a championship in a 72-team league is ambitious in its own right and only becomes more challenging when considering how PDL rosters are built. With the vast majority of PDL players currently enrolled in college, there are no contracts or payments that can be used to draw in top talent. Similarly, PDL veterans returning for another summer of competition have no obligation to rejoin teams that they competed for the previous year.

And so, while identifying the best players remains crucial for clubs, there is the added matter of selling players on the idea of joining a team.

"We're bringing back seven players from last year and it does my heart good to know that 26 of them wanted to come back," Tormenta President Darin Van Tassell said. "There are always decisions that have to be made, keeping in mind what will ultimately be best for our team. We're fortunate enough with our efforts to build our roster that we were receiving 10-15 requests from around the world each day from players who wanted us to take them on."

Following an inaugural season that nearly resulted in a trip to the playoffs, Tormenta is only hitting the gas harder heading into 2017. With the Eastern Conference semifinals and finals slated to be played in Statesboro near the end of July, Tormenta wants to take the next step and play a postseason game on its home turf.

Accomplishing that will first require working through a division that has been shaken up. Peachtree City, Tri-Cities and SC United will be familiar rivals for Tormenta to deal with, but new faces like Myrtle Beach and Nashville also dot the schedule.

Tormenta expects a tough test, but also expects to prevail.

"We intend to compete. We made that very clear with the guys we brought in," Van Tassell said. "We're going to be big and fast, and we want everyone on the field contributing to offense and defense. Ideally, we want our biggest battles and toughest competition to be on the practice field to see who suits up for each game."

Van Tassell has assumed the role of general manager and has overseen the hiring of new Tormenta head coach John Miglarese.

Migliarese is familiar with Statesboro, having served as goalkeeper for Georgia Southern while in college. He also got a first-hand look at the competitiveness and attitude of Tormenta last season as coach of the Southern West Virginia King's Warriors.

"I remember our game in Statesboro well," Miglarese said. "As a visiting team, it struck us from the moment we got off the bus how serious this club takes things. That translated to the field with loud fans and a team that took it to us for the full 90 minutes.

"We lost that game - and it still stings as a coach - but as coach with Tormenta now, I'm excited to know what kind of players and environment we have."

In the wide-open field of team building and player recruiting, Tormenta seems to have a bit of an edge this season, thanks in large part to the attention and goodwill it garnered in its impressive first run through the Premier Development League.

In 2016, the club had to sell itself as an unknown entity. This time around, Tormenta was able to promote its solid inaugural season and has capitalized on word-of-mouth about its amenities and top-notch training.

"Last year, we were stocked with guys who really had a passion for the game, and that fueled us," Van Tassell said. "Over the last year, our staff and our coaches have continued to grow relationships with players from all over. That has increased awareness of our club and is giving us great opportunities to bring in great talent."

In the end, the front office has the immediate job of fielding a competitive team each season, but is also always working towards the bigger picture.

"Tormenta is our team, but it's also our style," Van Tassell said. "When we talk about Tormenta, it's not just about the games. Tormenta is a brand. It's how our guys are going to play, but it's also how they'll be housed, how they'll be trained, and how they'll be a part of this community."



## IBIS FOUNDATION

When South Georgia Tormenta FC officially opened for business in the late summer of 2015, the club wasn't shy about announcing its intentions.

Before the team had any players or coaches or uniforms — or even the name South Georgia Tormenta FC, for that matter — club officials spoke openly about their wishes to have a winning team that receives plenty of support from the community. Tormenta made good on its promises in its first season, nearly making the Eastern Conference playoffs while putting up attendance numbers that even well-established Premier Development League squads struggle to draw.

And while those achievements only serve to set the bar that much higher for Tormenta in 2017, the club is looking beyond the effect it has in the league standings or on its own bottom line.

During the offseason, Tormenta announced the creation of the Ibis Foundation. The organization, which takes its name from the fearless bird featured on Tormenta's crest, seeks to promote the benefits of a soccer lifestyle throughout the area.

"It's something that we feel will be beneficial for all sides involved," foundation president David Ball Sr. said. "Funds raised will — in part — go towards doing things to grow and help Tormenta. In turn, those benefits to the team will



be used to offer opportunities to the community to participate in things like clinics and get a chance to interact with players."

Ball cited examples of fund usage as helping to bring players and coaches over from Europe in conjunction with Tormenta's newly-signed partnership agreements with international clubs. Funds can help with travel and housing, while the integration of foreign players and coaches and their ideas help our club to grow from our PDL team, all the way through the youth levels.

But one of the biggest impacts that the Ibis Foundation aims for is to grow the game and culture outside of what already exists under the Tormenta umbrella. A Statesboro-to-Savannah sphere of influence is already going strong as the Tormenta FC Youth Academy provides opportunities to train with and learn from the elite coaches and players on the PDL squad. But with the support of the Ibis Foundation, those training sessions and clinics are starting to branch outward.

Surrounding counties and cities are now being brought into the fold, with support and awareness for Tormenta being welcomed by the club in exchange for opportunities that are new to many towns.

"This is a different landscape than just a few years ago," Ball said of the area's thoughts about soccer. "It's the most popular game in the world and one of the fastest growing sports in America. Our goal is to take that popularity and pair it with financial support to make sure that anyone interested has the opportunity to learn and participate."

# BEST NEW FRANCHISE

South Georgia Tormenta FC burst onto the stage in the summer of 2016 as Statesboro's first minor league franchise. Tormenta nearly made the national playoffs in the Premier Development League and quickly became a star in the normally sparse summertime sports landscape of Statesboro.

The games were over by the end of July, but the organization hit a high point in December as Tormenta FC was recognized as the best new franchise in the league at the PDL's annual meetings in Tampa, Fla.

"I hoped our colleagues would feel as strongly about our accomplishments as we do," Tormenta owner and president Darin Van Tassell. "There were clubs from Calgary and Oregon and San Diego recognizing what we've done. That's pretty awesome to think about."

On the field, Tormenta was extremely successful in its inaugural season. Playing in a division that featured two teams that often made the PDL's national top-10 rankings, Tormenta finished with a 6-5-3 record and was in the running for a postseason berth until the final weekend of the season.

But the real credentials for the club's award can trace their roots back to the summer of 2015.

From the moment it was announced that minor league soccer would be coming to Statesboro - and well before any team name or players and coaches had been announced - Tormenta's front office was hard at work building its brand within the community.

Vice President of Franchise Development Heidi Jeffers and Director of Franchise Development David Ball have been instrumental in building the team's brand. Because of cooperation between Tormenta's front office staff and local businesses, the franchise was able to provide a top-notch atmosphere for its players.

Instead of living with host families, Tormenta players were accommodated in apartments where they could live and socialize as a team. Practices and workouts were offered in higher frequency than many competing PDL squads and meals were planned and provided throughout the summer instead of each player being left on their own.

Numerous social events within the community also made players available to the public and that outreach seemed to go both ways as Tormenta topped the 2,000 mark in attendance for all seven of its home games.

"This award comes in large part due to the efforts of Heidi and David," Van Tassell said. "They're working hard every day to build this brand. From live streaming, to coaches shows, to all of our other events, they've really made us a professional team with a professional environment in a short time."

"This award also belongs to Statesboro," former coach and general manager Ben Freakley said. "It belongs to every fan that supported us from day one. It's for every mom and dad and grandparent that brought their kids to the games to introduce them to our team."

The award and fast rise of Tormenta is especially inspiring to Freakley. A former player at Georgia Southern University, Freakley has also served as a coach to many local players as they have worked their way through the youth and high school ranks.

"Fifteen years ago, I wouldn't have thought Statesboro could be the home of a soccer team with Tormenta's success and following," Freakley said. "But I didn't know Darin 15 years ago. He's done so much to make this a possibility and now we're looking forward to continuing to build up this franchise."

Freakley has since moved on, but he hand-picked Tormenta's new coach. John



Migliarese is cut from the same cloth as he is also a former Georgia Southern player. Migliarese saw firsthand - from the opposing bench as coach of the South West Virginia King's Warriors last season - what Tormenta is building and is ready to do his part to keep the train rolling.

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## **JOHN MIGLARESE**

### **HEAD COACH**

South Georgia Tormenta FC has made it clear since its inception that its end goal in any season will be to win. Whether it's a regular season game, a division race or the entire Premier Development League, Tormenta wants to be on top.

So it's only fitting that Tormenta has looked to a member of one of Statesboro's most successful soccer teams on record to head the charge.

John Miglarese stood in the woodwork for Georgia Southern from 1996-99, including the 1997 season that saw the Eagles post a 14-4-2 record. His playing career was followed by what is now 17 years worth of coaching, with his latest resume notch coming as head coach for Tormenta.

"It's an exciting opportunity and an honor to come to Tormenta," Miglarese said. "This is an organization that is committed to winning and to doing things in a very professional manner. That's easy to get behind."

Miglarese has the unique position of heading up Tormenta after first getting a chance to see what it is like to compete against the club. For the last two seasons, Miglarese was the head coach for the Southern West Virginia King's Warriors, which were matched in Tormenta's division.

"From our accommodations, to the field conditions, to the game day atmosphere, it was far and away our best experience," Miglarese. "That's the kind of standard that Tormenta sets and that I want to contribute to this organization."

In addition to his PDL resume, Miglarese served as head coach of UNC Pembroke in the fall of 2016. Before that, Miglarese spent three years heading up the team at King University (Tenn.). He has also held head coaching spots at Covenant and John Brown University.



## **JORGE GONZALEZ**

### **ASSISTANT COACH**

This year's Tormenta coaching staff has changed over from last season, but there is still some good continuity within the ranks of the new staff.

Jorge Gonzalez follows head coach John Miglarese to Statesboro after coaching under him in the Premier Development League last summer as both were with the Southern West Virginia King's Warriors. Gonzalez helped coach the team to a fourth place finish — two points ahead of Tormenta FC.

Gonzalez has served as an assistant coach at Reinhardt University since 2014. In that span, the Eagles have posted a record of 35-16-3. On the club side of things, Gonzalez has also coached for the Cherokee Impact out of Canton, Ga.

Now in Statesboro, Gonzalez aims to continue that same line of success.

"Coaching alongside Coach Miglarese has given me the opportunity to see that the game is a tool that can be used to develop the character of young adults," Gonzalez said. "We are all competitors, and winning every game and trophy is pivotal, yet coach Miglarese teaches that it's more than a trophy at the end your career — it's your interaction with those you cross."



## **JOHN KOT**

### **ASSISTANT COACH**

In order to complete this year's coaching staff, Tormenta looked within. John Kot will move up to the PDL club after serving as a youth coach for Tormenta last year. Prior to joining with Tormenta, Kot served as a head coach for a youth team in the Southern Alliance Futbol club that plays out of Macon.

Kot may be making his first coaching appearance at the PDL level, but — as is the trend for most who associate with the team — it hasn't taken long for him to get a clear picture of what to strive for.

"The motto is 'Pros Start Here,'" Kot said. "I'm new to the PDL landscape and didn't do much in terms of recruiting, but having spoken to John (Miglarese) and Darin (Van Tassell) the goal is to get into the playoffs and then take each game as it comes."

"I would say our first and primary goal is to help guys reach the next level in their playing career."

As a player, Kot built quite an impressive resume. Kot played for UFC Lightning and was named to their U18 USSF Academy squad. At the high school level, Kot was a member of three state championship teams at Mount de Sales Academy before joining the team at Virginia Tech.



## **ANDREA BORSA**

### **ASSISTANT COACH**

Tormenta's coaching staff picks up an international component this season as Andrea Borsa comes to Statesboro from Rome.

Borsa ascended to Serie A — the highest division of Italian soccer — during his playing career and has now transitioned into coaching. Borsa currently trains ASD Furlani Grottaferrata. He also serves as head of the Youth Technical Sector, which oversees children from ages 5-20.

A friendship agreement struck between Tormenta and Grottaferrata includes a stint that will see Borsa travel stateside to bring his knowledge to Tormenta throughout the month of June.

In a return of services — and keeping with the spirit of providing a new environment for coaches — Tormenta FC's David Ball II, Director of Franchise Development, will travel to Italy later this year on his own mission to soak up the soccer culture of a different nation while imparting his own knowledge on the Grottaferrata organization.

# POSTSEASON ACTION COMING TO TOWN

It took all of one season for the rest of the Premier Development League to take note of the storm that is brewing with Tormenta FC in Statesboro.

In its inaugural season last summer, Tormenta routinely saw its home crowds spill out well beyond the permanent seating at their home field and many opposing players and coaches likened the atmosphere to a high-stakes tournament game.

**“The Statesboro community backs the team in so many ways. It’s amazing. We always want to play hard for our fans.”**

**- Jordan Lue, midfielder**

That comparison will become a reality in 2017 as the PDL announced plans for Statesboro to host the Eastern Conference semifinals and finals July 22-23. Over that weekend, the champions from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic divisions will descend on Statesboro. The South Atlantic division - where Tormenta FC resides - will send its top two finishers, getting the extra playoff bid because of its size. The South Atlantic carries 11 teams while the other two Eastern Conference divisions have seven teams each.

**“The people of Statesboro are the best part. The support they show is unreal. I can’t wait to see the people again this summer.”**

**- Ayao Sossou, defender**

The decision to award the three-game championship weekend to Tormenta and Statesboro wasn’t rushed into. Plenty of factors went into the league’s process, but there will be few arguments over the final call of taking the postseason to a place that was recognized nationally as the league’s best new franchise in 2016.

“We led the entire Eastern Conference in attendance last season,” Tormenta President Darin Van Tassell said. “That definitely had something to do with the decision. But I think that another reason that the playoffs are coming here is the overall atmosphere that we have created. Our game day staff does a great job of putting on our games and making everything a great experience for the community.”

**“Knowing every single game that you would be playing in front of 1,500 or more fans just gave me extra motivation to go out there and make the city proud.”**

**- Trenton Whitely, defender**

The Statesboro community has responded to the entertaining and high-quality soccer that

Tormenta brings to the field by helping to sustain the professional environment the club strives to exude everywhere from the field, to workouts, to front office activities.

Among Tormenta’s corporate sponsors are many locally owned businesses that have gotten behind the dream of bringing minor league soccer - and hopefully championships - to town. Some of those businesses are able to help Tormenta and its opponents by providing meals and lodging. The support of others is seen in the constantly-packed stands and in the large and

wide-spanning activities that the club is able to take part in thanks to a strong support base.

A foundation to a franchise that is already that solid less than a year into the process was enough for the Eastern Conference to make up its mind.

The playoffs are coming to Statesboro this summer and - to hear it from Tormenta players beginning their second season with the club - they want to make sure that the fans at the postseason games have a hometown team to cheer on.

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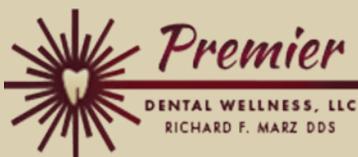


# TORMENTA FC

## 2017 Schedule

DATE	TEAM/LOCATION	TIME
5/13	vs. Myrtle Beach	8 p.m.
5/18	vs. Peachtree City	8 p.m.
5/20	at Nashville	8 p.m.
5/31	vs. SC United	8 p.m.
6/8	vs. Nashville	8 p.m.
6/10	vs. Nashville	8 p.m.
6/15	at Myrtle Beach	7 p.m.
6/17	at SC United	7 p.m.
6/24	vs. Tri Cities	8 p.m.
6/27	at SC United	7 p.m.
6/30	at Tri Cities	7 p.m.
7/3	at Peachtree City	7:30 p.m.
7/8	at Peachtree City	7:30 p.m.
7/15	vs. Tri Cities	8 p.m.
7/22-23	Eastern Conference Semifinals/Championship	

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