

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Capital District Boys Premier Soccer Clubs Join Forces to Form New York Elite Alleycats FC**

*Albany, NY* – New York Elite FC and Albany Alleycats SC proudly announce the merger of their boys soccer programs effective at the end of the current season under their new name *New York Elite Alleycats FC*. This merger will join two longstanding premier boys soccer clubs in the Capital District of New York, and their extremely talented pool of players will compete at high level regional and national leagues in addition to major showcase tournaments.

Miles Joseph, the current Assistant Coach of Major League Soccer's (MLS) Portland Timbers, former MLS professional player (Metrostars, Columbus Crew, FC Dallas), former US Men's Olympic and US Men's National Team player, will stand as the Executive Director. Afrim Nezaj, also a former professional player (Pennsylvania Stoners, Rochester Flash, New York Nationals, Albany Capitals), owner of Afrim Sports and Albany Alleycats, will act as the President of Boys Soccer. With decades of combined experience, state-of-the-art facilities, and application of a professionally based coaching methodology, New York Elite Alleycats FC will provide unprecedented opportunities for future generations of youth soccer players in the Capital Region.

Led by Director of Coaching Jon Bain, New York Elite FC has grown significantly into an accomplished club with many successes in a short span of time. Bain is head coach of the nationally ranked Shenendehowa High School Boys Varsity Soccer Team and a four-time Section II Coach of the Year who took his team to NY State Championship Semi-Finals four times. He will continue his leadership role in the new organization to ensure a smooth transition.

The combined coaching staff of New York Elite Alleycats FC have developed US Men's National Team players, professional players at all levels, Major League Soccer Development Academy players and hundreds of collegiate athletes. The new club will consist of two teams at each age group from U8 through U19. Tryouts are currently planned to begin the week of June 20, 2021, with dates and locations to be announced on each club's current websites [www.nyelitefc.com](http://www.nyelitefc.com) and [www.alleycatsoccer.com](http://www.alleycatsoccer.com), with a new website to be unveiled this summer. Additional information will be released as merger activities are finalized.

Comment from Afrim Nezaj:

*"It has been my lifelong dream to promote and nurture soccer in the Capital District area. This merger between New York Elite FC and the Alleycats Soccer Club has been developing for over two years and is finally becoming a reality. Miles Joseph, Jon Bain and I are geographically setting the vision for the NEXT step.*

*Our entire staff is very excited for the future and the opportunity to continue to make New York Elite Alleycats FC a hotbed of soccer throughout the greater Northeast area."*

Comment from Miles Joseph:

*"As a youth player growing up in Clifton Park, NY, I was fortunate enough to be coached by a talented group of soccer coaches. They built a technical and tactical training foundation that was key to advancing my development as a collegiate, National, and then MLS professional player and coach. This merger will give players in the Capital District access to elite coaches, state-of-the-art facilities and be backed by professional soccer development philosophies. This is my opportunity to provide players the same foundation to grow and develop as I had."*

Comment from Jon Bain:

*"I am excited to have two of the Capital District's biggest clubs joining forces to benefit our local soccer players. Working with Afrim and the Alleycats staff is also a great opportunity for all of our coaches to enhance their craft while fostering youth soccer."*

## **About Albany Alleycats**

The Albany Alleycats was founded in 1994 by Afrim Nezaj. Born in Kosovo, Afrim came to the US at age 10 and settled in Bronx, NY. He played soccer for the University at Albany where he was an All-American and was inducted into the University of Albany Hall of Fame in 2008. After college, Afrim played professionally with the Pennsylvania Stoners, Rochester Flash, New York Nationals and Albany Capitals. He also played semi-professionally for a decade with New York Atlas and was part owner of several professional soccer teams. Afrim has been integral in the development of youth soccer in the Capital Region where he was recognized by the Capital District Youth Soccer League as a Golden Thread Award winner and a Hall of Fame inductee. Afrim now owns and operates five indoor/outdoor soccer complexes and is excited to continue his journey as the owner of the New York Shockers. The Albany Alleycats originally started as a semi-professional men's soccer team that competed in the USISL from 1995-1999. Since then, the Alleycats have grown into an elite developmental platform for youth soccer in Albany, NY.

## **About New York Elite FC**

New York Elite FC was founded in 2009 by Miles Joseph, whose vision was to give back to youth soccer community in the Capital District and resulted in starting his own club. He is a Shenendehowa High School Class of 1992 graduate and two-time All-American, contributing to three NY State titles and one National Championship title during his high school career. This was followed by four years at Division I Clemson University from 1992-1996 earning All-ACC and All-American honors. He was selected to the US Men's Olympic Team in 1996, and played professionally for the NY MetroStars, Columbus Crew, Dallas Burn and Dallas Sidekicks between 1996-2003. His coaching career started at Siena College in 2003 as an assistant and New York Elite FC was launched in 2009, just months before accepting his first MLS assistant coaching position with Real Salt Lake in 2010. He is currently assistant coach for the Portland Timbers, following stints with New York City FC and Orlando City SC. Joseph provides guidance on the MLS-centric coaching methodology adapted for youth soccer and focused on individual player development.

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