



# NEWS RELEASE

Harrisburg City Islanders  
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## HARRISBURG WELCOMES THE CITY ISLANDERS

### Mayor Reed introduces outdoor soccer team

**Harrisburg, PA** – Harrisburg Mayor Stephen R. Reed introduced the city's newest professional sports franchise on Wednesday, welcoming the **Harrisburg City Islanders** in a press conference at his downtown offices.

The City Islanders will begin play in the Pro Soccer League (PSL) division of the United Soccer Leagues in the spring of 2004, with home games at the Skyline Sports Complex on City Island. The PSL season begins in April and lasts through August, with the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup running through September.

"We are very pleased to welcome this exciting new professional sports team to Harrisburg and City Island," said Mayor Reed. "Soccer remains the world's most popular sport, and it continues to grow both in participation as well as interest here in the U.S. We believe that professional outdoor soccer on City Island is a very good fit with the many other family-oriented activities held there, including professional minor league baseball and football, and we look forward to the City Islander's overwhelming and enduring success."

Local businessman Eric Pettis is the majority owner of the City Islanders, and will hold the title of President. Other investors include Christopher Barker (Vice President) and Chuck Fox (Secretary and Treasurer). The team's General Manager will be Joe Sierko, who most recently served as the Director of Sales and Marketing for the Harrisburg Heat of the Major Indoor Soccer League.

"We're excited and proud to make this announcement today," said Pettis. "We've worked very hard to put together a business plan that makes sense, and we thank the Mayor and the City of Harrisburg for their assistance. The City Islanders will be committed to providing high quality professional soccer, outstanding entertainment, and support for the many great youth programs in the area. In addition, we're enthusiastic about being part of the great atmosphere of downtown Harrisburg."

Pettis introduced Bill Becher, one of the most esteemed players in indoor soccer history, as the club's first head coach. The former Harrisburg Heat star, who has been heavily involved in local youth soccer for years, will lead the way in shaping the Islanders' on-field personality.

"I look forward to the opportunity to build a team that will entertain and work hard," said Becher. "I think fans will enjoy the 'City Islander' type of player: a blue-collar, two-way player who gives 110 percent on and off the field and takes the club's commitment to the community very seriously."

(more)

**(“Harrisburg Welcomes the City Islanders” continued)**

As the largest organization of soccer leagues in North America, United Soccer Leagues is dedicated to growing the sport at the grassroots level in every community across the US and Canada. USL is committed to a quality family entertainment experience that is accessible, exciting and educational. Providing the base level of professional soccer in North America, the USL Pro Soccer League is Division III soccer. The PSL provides communities with quality professional competition and affordable family entertainment. This past season, the PSL featured 13 teams across the nation, from Wilmington, NC, to San Diego. Also under the USL umbrella are the A-League, Premier Development League, W-League (women’s), and Super-Y League (youth).

“We are pleased to welcome Eric Pettis and his ownership group to the family of USL franchises,” said Dave Askinas, COO and Executive Director of the USL. “They offer business expertise, soccer knowledge and a burning commitment to make this franchise a big success story. Harrisburg promises to be an exciting new market for us and we envision City Island turning into a downtown hot spot on soccer nights during the season. We expect nothing but great things from this franchise.”

The club plans to use the coming months to start its sales drives and evaluate roster options. Ticket plans will be finalized in the near future, as will the team’s official website, [www.cityislanders.com](http://www.cityislanders.com). Beginning immediately, fans may visit [www.cityislanders.com](http://www.cityislanders.com), submit contact information, and request to be updated as developments occur.

“We plan to hit the ground running and lay the groundwork for 2004 and beyond,” said Sierko. “It’s our goal to make every game an exciting and memorable event both on and off the field. We have an excellent venue and an opportunity to build something special.”

Complete biographies on the City Islanders’ ownership and front office staff appear on the following page.

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## **Harrisburg City Islanders Ownership & Front Office Staff**

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### **Eric Pettis, President**

Eric D. Pettis is the President of Comprehensive Financial Services, Inc. (CFA) and Pennsylvania Pension Planners, Inc. (PPP), both located in Harrisburg, PA. With over twenty years experience in the financial services industry, Pettis has established CFA as one of Central Pennsylvania's leading independent financial advisory firms. Currently, CFA and PPP service over 350 corporate retirement plans throughout the Middle Atlantic States.



Pettis is a 1983 graduate of Bloomsburg University, where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. He is also a Registered Investment Principal and an Office of Supervisory Jurisdiction (OSJ) for Locust Street Securities, and supervises twenty Registered Representatives.

Pettis played goalkeeper for Bloomsburg's Men's Soccer Team (1980-83) and was Head Varsity Boys Coach at Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg from 1985-95. In addition, he has actively coached at the Youth Premier Level with LDC United for the past five years. Pettis resides in West Hanover Township with wife Patrice and daughters Eric and Taylor and sons Garret and Isaiah.

### **Christopher Barker, Vice President**

Chris Barker has lived and worked in Harrisburg since graduating from Penn State University in 1984 with a Bachelor's Degree in Quantitative Business Analysis. Currently a Consultant with Pennsylvania Pension Planners, Inc. (PPP) He has been involved in the Retirement Plan industry since 1984, starting as a Pension Plan Administrator. In addition, as part owner and manager of PPP, he is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the firm.

### **Chuck Fox, Secretary & Treasurer**

Chuck Fox graduated from Penn State University in 1985 with a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics. Currently an administrator with Pennsylvania Pension Planners, Inc. (PPP), Fox is active on the local youth soccer scene as a coach for his son's teams in the Rheems Athletic Association. Fox relocated from the Philadelphia area in 1994 and resides in Elizabethtown with wife Deb, son Luke, and daughter Grace.

### **Joe Sierko, General Manager**

Joe Sierko most recently served as Director of Sales and Marketing for the Harrisburg Heat of the Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL). In that role, Sierko was known for combining progressive, innovative thinking with a down-to-earth personality to generate considerable revenue for the franchise. In addition to forging working relationships with local and national marketing partners, Sierko directed the development of successful programs like "Reading for a Goal" and "Big Buddy Night" while also serving as the team's accountant.

In his new role, the Philadelphia native will oversee the day-to-day management of the City Islanders, serve as the club's primary corporate salesperson and be directly involved in all aspects of marketing, advertising, venue administration, public relations, and ticket sales. Sierko lives in Camp Hill with his wife Laurie.

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## **Bill Becher, Head Coach**

One of the Harrisburg's most recognizable soccer personalities, Bill Becher brings decades of experience to his role as Head Coach. After winning a national title with Sagamon State University in 1986, the St. Louis native enjoyed an acclaimed and lengthy professional career in the MISL (formerly the AISA and NPSL), scoring 280 goals and assisting on 254 others in 458 games.

Becher spent the bulk of his indoor years with the Harrisburg Heat, with whom he notched 227 goals and 209 assists in 315 games from 1991-99 and served as the team's captain from 1997-99. Becher also played indoors with the Hershey Impact, Ft. Wayne Flames, New York Kick, and St. Louis Ambush of the MISL and Arizona Sandsharks of the CISL, and outdoors with the Colorado Foxes of the APSL. Since 1996, Becher has served as Coaching Director for the Lower Dauphin Soccer Association. He and wife Dawn reside in Lower Paxton Township with sons Jackson (4) and Ryan (2).

## **The Alvis Group, Inc. – Official Communications Firm of the City Islanders**

The City Islanders have named **The Alvis Group, Inc.**, as the club's official communications firm. Located on Jonestown Road in Harrisburg, **The Alvis Group** utilizes a distinctive mix of experience and abilities to produce exceptional work for a wide range of clients. **Alvis** designed the Islanders' logo and consulted on the team's introductory press conference, in addition to producing collateral material.

Phil Yerger, Communications Director for **The Alvis Group**, serves as the Islanders' media contact. He may be reached at the office (717-635-2188) or via e-mail ([phil@alvisgroup.com](mailto:phil@alvisgroup.com)). General Manager Joe Sierko may also be reached via cell phone (717-497-3673) or e-mail ([joe@cityislanders.com](mailto:joe@cityislanders.com)).

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