



TONY QUINN/SOCCERPIUXUSA

## Ray Hudson

### COACH'S CHARISMA HITS A NEW AUDIENCE

When Ray Hudson was selected as the third coach in D.C. United's history, the choice elicited gleeful responses from players and fans — even the communications department. In Hudson, United inked a proven MLS coach and a one-man marketing tool.

"I felt pretty spoiled when I used to do public relations for the Washington Capitals because Ron Wilson was such an outspoken, quotable guy, not just a stuffed shirt," said Doug Hicks, the team's senior director of communications. "But when Miami came to town last August, and I heard Ray's press conference, my mouth was open. He was talking about caged lions tearing flesh off his team's bones. I thought 'How awesome would it be to work with someone like that?'"

Hicks unleashed Hudson's effusive per-

**Washington may never be the same after new D.C. United coach Ray Hudson's effusive persona and outlandish metaphors were unleashed on the local media.**

sona and outlandish metaphors on the Washington media at a Jan. 10th event at ESPNZone restaurant. There Hudson compared United's assets to those of model Anna Nicole Smith, likened the dispersal draft to vultures picking at a carcass and vowed to bring his new team together "like a fist... that will be hitting the rest of MLS."

A floor below, *Washington Post* sports columnist Tony Kornheiser was broadcasting his nationally syndicated radio show and during a commercial break, Hicks introduced Hudson to the soccer-averse writer. The two clicked when Kornheiser mentioned that his favorite

band hailed from Hudson's hometown of Newcastle.

On the car ride back to United's Northern Virginia offices, Hicks marveled at Hudson again.

"He had been so excited and upbeat to the media, but it wasn't a thing he put on," Hicks said. "He was like that the whole way back. It's not just a schtick."

One of Hudson's first duties as coach was to be a guest on DC101 radio's popular morning program and since he was "an easy fit with the irreverent tone of the show," the modern rock station called later that day to request future appearances, Hicks said.

Soon Hudson was on to New York for the dispersal draft, where he tried to catch his breath.

"I'm still recovering from the emotional bomb of the Fusion collapsing or being folded, whatever you might call it, and I've got to come in here and make decisions about a team I was preparing to play against," Hudson said. "Me head's still spinning on me shoulders."

Once Hudson gets settled in his new town, Hicks intends to maximize his exposure.

"If you want to talk to Ray, he's going to be available," Hicks said.

—Will Kuhns