

Homeward-bound

IN THE AFTERMATH OF 2002 WORLD CUP success, it was believed MLS would be losing players to foreign teams.

Striker Brian McBride went on loan to Everton, but the traffic in World Cup veterans has mostly been in the other direction.

Negotiations dragged on for most of January as MLS worked to secure the services of World Cup veterans Joe-Max Moore and Frankie Hejduk, along with those of Earnie Stewart.

Moore, 31, left English Premier League club Everton in December after fading from Manager David Moyes' radar screen. He traveled from his offseason home in Florida to train with New England, for which he scored 37 goals in three seasons (1997 to 1999), and will join the Revs on their preseason trip to Brazil.

The Revs cleared salary-cap space by trading Alex Pineda Chacon to the Galaxy, waiving midfielder Braeden Cloutier, and declining the options on defender Carlos Llamasa and midfielder Jim Rooney.



Frankie Hejduk (right) is returning to MLS after four years in Europe.

Hejduk, 28, needed clearance from both Swiss club St. Gallen and Germany's Bayer Leverkusen, having gone on loan from the Bundesliga giant to St. Gallen since last fall. He couldn't return to the club where he began his pro career — MLS folded the Tampa Bay Mutiny last season — but the Columbus Crew offered him a spot.

"Six months ago, all the speculation was that, after the performance of our players on the world stage, we would lose them all," said MLS deputy commissioner Ivan Gazidis. "In fact the reverse is true.

"First, we re-signed Josh Wolff, Brian McBride and Landon Donovan. Then we secured the return of Earnie Stewart, Joe-Max Moore and Frankie Hejduk. That these players want to play in MLS is a powerful testament to the growing stature of the League."

— Ridge Mahoney