

# CHARACTER, NOT EXPERIENCE, LED DELTAS TO HIRE MARC DOS SANTOS AS COACH

Deltas CEO Brian Helmick believes the coach embodies the spirit of San Francisco

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*Photo credit: Steve Kingsman/Freestyle Photography*

Marc Dos Santos may have been born in Montreal and influenced by his Portuguese roots, but his spirit is of someone from San Francisco, where he will coach the Deltas in 2017.

"I know you were born in Montreal, but your mentality is in San Francisco," Deltas CEO Brian Helmick recalled telling the club's first coach in an interview with NASL.com.

It was that mentality that attracted Helmick and the Deltas to Dos Santos, who recently led Swope Park Rangers to the USL title game.

"Why we chose him had to do with the traits he had and for me what was really impactful compared to the other coaches was they spent time talking about their accomplishments, but Marc talked about his struggles and hurdles and challenges and disappointments," Helmick said. "That's the type of character and scrappiness I value."

Dos Santos has gone through the process of building a roster for an inaugural campaign several times in his young coaching career. He did it with Swope Park in 2016 as well as with Ottawa for the 2014 NASL season. He was named NASL Coach of the Year in 2015, guiding Fury FC to The Championship Final. That experience also dates to 2007 with Trois-Rivières Attak, the Montreal Impact's former reserve side.

Helmick's decision to hire Dos Santos, 39, didn't hinge on those past experiences instead focusing on important characteristics that the Montreal native brings to the table.

"Don't get me wrong, the fact that he's done it before is a plus, but that's not the reason why we brought him in," Helmick said. "We wanted somebody who was a leader, somebody who was humble, somebody who was open-minded, so we looked for someone with the character not the experience."

The Deltas fielded résumés from candidates with experience all over the world, including a former head coach of the Colombian men's national team. But after several FaceTime calls, including while Helmick was on his honeymoon, Dos Santos was seen as the right man to lead San Francisco in its first NASL season.

Now, Dos Santos is hard at work putting together the roster, with announcements expected in December.

"We didn't want to announce them once we signed them," Helmick said. "Our DNA is about humility. Part of one of the things in May when we were putting together our philosophy is that the club is the star. Instead of announcing player by player, let's do it in batches."

The club recently held an open tryout, which was open to any club team in the area – professional or amateur – to watch and try to sign players. The Deltas will invite four players to training camp in January.

And player decisions will be left to Dos Santos with Helmick taking a hands-off approach in that aspect of the club.

"I'm a huge believer that many times ownership groups in professional sports get too involved in the aspect of players," Helmick said. "I told Marc that I'm here to support you and to find ways for you to be really, really successful, but I trust you and believe you should be making those decisions."

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