



U14 Colorado Rush Nike and U15

National team player Victor Rolph recently had the chance to interview current Colorado Rapid and reigning MLS Cup MVP Conor Casey about his time playing with the Rush. Vic is following in many of Conor's footsteps (Rush, Youth National teams, dreams of playing in Europe, etc.) and the two met up at the Colorado Rush Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony of Conor's former teammate Todd Dunivant.

VR: What does it mean to you to be here tonight (teammate Todd Dunivant's election into the Colorado Rush Hall of Fame)?

CC: It's awesome. A few years ago I was inducted into the Rush Hall of fame and it was a great event. Tonight is bigger than a few years ago and its great to see somebody like Todd up there being recognized and just seeing the number of people who have come out to this event.

What was your best memory of playing for the Rush?

When I was U15, we won 5-0 in the regional championship. That was really the only thing I had ever wanted on a youth level. So that was a pretty amazing moment for us and to be able to win a trophy with all of your buddies it was pretty cool.

Who was your favorite coach at Rush?

Wow that's a tough one. Really there were two. Denger (Dave Dengerink who is now Director of Academy at Texas Rush) was my coach for 3 years and before that Tim Schulz, I used to sneak away from school during the day to go train with Tim. He would set up a little field and we'd train. They both had just a huge impact on me.

Do you still talk with your Rush teammates?

Yeah I do. You know I see Todd throughout the year, and the other guys I will run into here and there. I'm still fairly close with five or six of them, which is quite a lot considering all the years that have passed.

What is it like playing against Todd in the MLS?

It's cool. It's really just enjoyable. Its fun when you know someone when your younger and now we are playing in front of big crowds and I think for both of us it is just a special feeling to compete against each other.

What was the most memorable goal you've ever scored?

I'd have to say last year in the MLS Cup. It was memorable in the fashion that it was done but also in that it was in a winner and it was the first time I'd ever won anything in my life. So for those reasons I think of it was my most important goal.

What was it like winning the MLS Cup? What was going through your mind?

It was just pure joy and a little bit of relief. I've played for 10 years and never won and after awhile you get that little bit of doubt in your head of 'Will I even win anything?' So to have that monkey off of my back and a lot of the guys on the team, playing with guys in the club. Really all those things made it special.

You played in Germany prior to the MLS. Tell me a bit about that experience.

It was a great experience. I went there when I was 19. To some extent, I grew up there. I lived there by myself. It was grueling it was hard, both the soccer and the lifestyle. I improved a lot. When I came back it was really just excitement to live in the United States again.

When did you feel becoming a pro was a possibility?

I think going into college, I had it in my mind that that's what I wanted to do. You never really know if you'll make it or not but I think late high school years I started to think of it as a possibility.

How did the college experience fit in with going pro?

Really more than anything college is why I'm here, Clive Charles who's since past, was the coach there. He recruited me and turned me into a pro because I wasn't when I went there, just in terms of off the field stuff more than on the field. Just how to act like a professional, how to present yourself. He was really tantamount to where I am in my career.

When was the first time you were called into the national team and what was that like?

Well I played in the youth ranks since about 16-17 and the first call in to the Men's team at about 19. There are always nerves, a lot of nerves. You always want to impress. Impress the coaches and impress your teammates so they know what to expect.

You scored some big goals for the US during World Cup Qualifying. How did it feel to score

for your country?

It was amazing. We played a game in Honduras to qualify for the World Cup. And it was my first goals ever for the National team and kind of a coming out game for me. It was a really cool feeling to celebrate qualifying for a World Cup with all those guys who had worked so hard to get there. It was awesome!

([Click here](#) to see highlights of the game)

What is it like for you preparing for games?

You know I don't really sweat it. I sleep. I sleep all day long. There's a couple butterfly's for big games but after enough of them you just kind of get in a routine of being rested and going out and having fun and try to enjoy it. You want to go out and do well but in the end it is just a game and you need to enjoy it along the way. You've just got to go in to each game with confidence. Know that you are always going to make mistakes, always. So there's no point in sweating it. You can evaluate yourself after words but have fun.

What piece of advice would you give to a young player with dreams of playing professionally?

It's tough to give one piece of advice. You see a lot of different players that have come down different paths. But one thing that I've seen from a lot of players that I've played with is the passion to want to improve and enjoy the process of improving.