

Bilyeu selected by New York Red Bulls

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BALTIMORE – SIUE men's soccer standout [Justin Bilyeu](#) (St. Louis) was selected by the New York Red Bulls with the 18th overall pick in Thursday's Major League Soccer SuperDraft.

"I'm very excited," Bilyeu said. "The meeting with (New York Red Bulls) was probably the best I had at the combine."

Bilyeu becomes SIUE's second-ever first-round draft pick, following Matt Polster, who was drafted with the No. 7 overall pick last season.

"We felt like we needed some depth in the back," Red Bulls Head Coach Jesse Marsch said following Bilyeu's selection. "Justin has some flexibility to his game. He offers flexibility and is a good talent."

"I couldn't be happier for Justin," SIUE Head Coach Mario Sanchez said. "He has put in the time to develop as a player and as a person."

Bilyeu did not attend the draft, instead choosing to spend the day with his family.

"I just wanted to be with family," he said. "We were watching the live stream, so we were on a delay and then I got a text from New York congratulating me before I actually saw the pick."

More than 70 former SIUE players have gone on to play professionally following their time with the Cougars.

"It's an honor for me to keep up that tradition," Bilyeu said. "The guys before me paved the way, and I'm excited to be part of that list of players."

"This just further shows the proud tradition of SIUE producing players who go on to play at the highest level," Sanchez added. "It is a compliment to the support soccer is given by (SIUE Athletics Director) Dr. Brad Hewitt, and the University."

Bilyeu was selected as an All-West Region honorable mention choice by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) this season. He is a three-time All-Missouri Valley Conference selection. He played 59 games, making 52 starts during his career. He scored five goals and added seven assists.

Bilyeu's selection brings the number of MLS draft picks of former SIUE players to six. Christian Volesky joined Polster in being selected on the draft's first day last year. Polster remains the highest MLS pick.

Goalkeeper John Berner was selected in the second round by Colorado in 2014. Mike Banner was selected in the third round by Chicago in 2007. Mike Jones was drafted by Sporting Kansas City in the 2011 MLS Supplemental Draft.