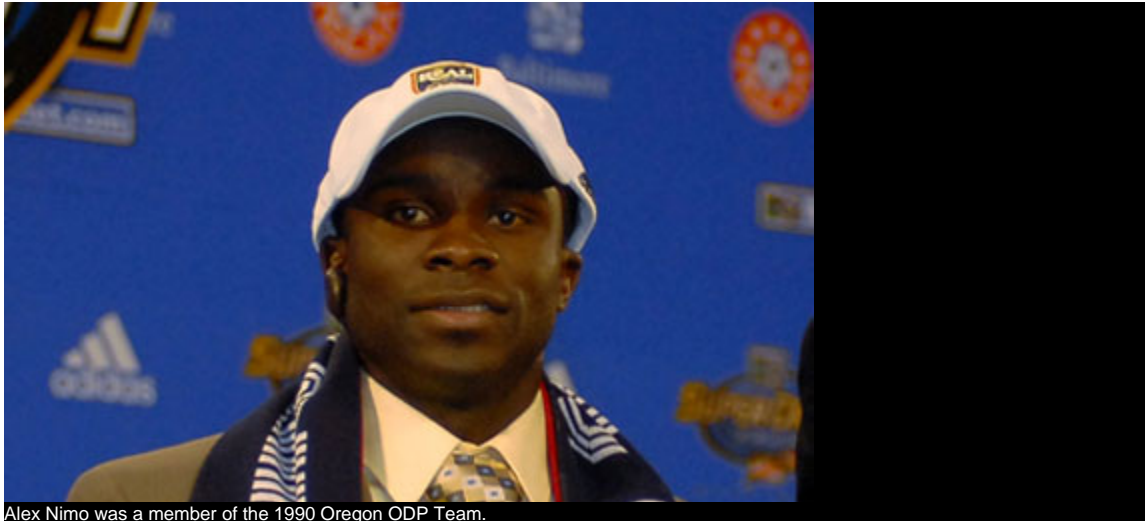


Nimo, former Oregon ODP star, drafted by Utah

Midfielder 's family escaped war-torn Liberia



Alex Nimo was a member of the 1990 Oregon ODP Team.

MLSnet.com Staff

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BALTIMORE – Alex Nimo, a U-17 National Team Member, FC Portland Club player and Oregon ODP star, realized his dreams last week when the Real Salt Lake of the MLS drafted the Portland, Oregon star at the age of 17.

Nimo, who was selected third in the second round and 17th overall, made a name for himself with a strong showing with the U-17 National Team last season.

Nimo was a superstar player for Benson High School, FC Portland and Oregon ODP. It was with the Oregon ODP 90' team he finally got his look from the National staff and didn't look back.

According to MLS.net, the journey to Utah was long and hard.

He and his family left war-torn Liberia when he was a baby to live in a refugee camp in Ghana. It was there that he started to play soccer.

"That was like my life," said Nimo, a Generation adidas selection from the United States under-17 residency program. "I used to play with friends just to have fun as a kid. When I came here I met Clive Charles and he saw I had potential and saw that I could become a pro someday."

Nimo and his family were granted political asylum and moved to Portland, Ore., where he first met Charles, playing in the FC Portland youth program. Charles, the former Portland men and women's coach and U.S. under-23 national team coach, was a big reason why Nimo realized his dream.

And while Charles, who died of prostate cancer in 2003, wasn't there in person, Nimo said he was there in spirit.

"He's not ever going to leave my heart because he's the person who really pulled me up in the U.S.," Nimo said. "He was like a father, a brother, a counselor. I'm not going to forget him."

With a large family, Nimo said he wasn't sure who called him first after he was picked.

"I got my phone on vibrate and like every five minutes it vibrates and I'm not trying to answer it," he said. "I don't know yet, probably everybody and their father calls, leaving a message."

On behalf of the Oregon ODP program, we want to congratulate Alex on his selection to Utah and we wish him the best of luck in the future.