

## *A Mini-Encyclopedia of Players of African Descent*

**Tewfik Abdullah** (June 23, 1896 – deceased, date unknown) was the second Egyptian to appear in the English Football League and is likely the first player of color to play in the American Soccer League. Born in Cairo, Egypt in 1896 or 1897, Abdullah began his career with the International Sporting Club of Cairo.



Abdullah moved to England to play for Derby County and was immediately recognized for not wearing shoes and for a thin frame that earned him the nickname “Toothpick.” The frigid conditions of England eventually required Abdullah to start wearing the heavy boots of the day.

Abdullah later moved from Derby County to Scotland to play for Cowdenbeath and on to Wales and Bridgend Town F.C. He later signed with England’s Hartlepool United before moving to America. In 1924, he signed with the Providence Clamdiggers and spent the next three years there. During the 1927-1927 season, Abdullah played for the dominant team of the era, the Fall River Marksmen where he scored 15 goals. He left Fall River to play for Hartford but that team folded after only 11 games. Abdullah then appeared in eight games for the New York Nations but ended up finishing the remainder of the season for Fall River. He moved to

Canada to play for Montreal Carsteel and retired shortly thereafter.

**Freddy Adu** (June 2, 1989 – ) became the youngest athlete to play in a game in American team sports when he appeared for DC United in April 2004 at age 14. Adu, born in Tema, Ghana, began playing soccer in the streets with the neighborhood's older boys. He moved to the United States at the age of eight with his mother and younger brother Fro. The Adu family settled in Potomac, Maryland, where he became a playground legend. The U.S. Olympic Development Program invited the 10-year-old Adu to play in an Under-14 tournament in Italy after seeing him play for the Potomac Cougars. Adu led his team to the tournament title, winning the MVP Award. Subsequently, Italian club Inter Milan recruited Adu for its youth program but his mother declined, feeling Freddy too young for such a move.

Coach John Ellinger, then coach of the U.S. Under-17 Team, selected Adu at age 12 to join the team's residency camp in Bradenton, Florida. After two years, training and attending school in Bradenton, Adu signed with DC United of Major League Soccer. He played in every match of the 2004 season, scoring a goal on April 17, 2004, the youngest player to score in a MLS game. In his rookie season, Adu tallied five goals and three assists. Adu's performance in the next two seasons improved gradually but did not meet the expectations of coaches and fans, resulting in DC United trading Adu to Real Salt Lake City