

## An Interview with NY Red Bull Forward Jozy Altidore

### EA Sports Advertorial

*[New York Red Bull forward Jozy Altidore made his professional debut in MLS and scored his first professional goal during the 2006 season at the age of 16, instantly becoming a fan favorite. Now a regular in the Red Bull starting lineup and one of the rising stars in MLS and the US Youth National Teams, Altidore was chosen to the cover of FIFA Soccer 08 alongside Mexican national team goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa of Club America of the Mexican First Division and Brazilian International Ronaldinho. Altidore, now 17, is the second youngest athlete ever featured on an EA SPORTS videogame cover behind Real Salt Lake star Freddy Adu, who was 16 when he appeared on FIFA Soccer 06. This summer Altidore led the US Under-20 Men's National Team to the round of eight at the FIFA Under-20 World Cup, scoring four goals in five games.]*

1. What's it like putting on the Team USA jersey and playing for your country?

**Altidore:** It's a great feeling playing for your country. As a youth soccer player I always dreamed of being able to play for US, so to be able to do it at the FIFA Under-20 World Cup was a great feeling. It's very special to play for your country. I always wanted to play for the US after watching guys like Landon Donovan, Eddie Pope and Eric Wynalda. Those guys really inspired me and ignited a passion in me to play for my country.

2. What was it like playing in the FIFA Under-20 World Cup?

**Altidore:** It's one of the biggest stages in the world so to represent my country in this tournament was a great experience. It was a great experience to play against some of the best young players in the world. I learned a lot during this tournament and I believe it helped me to develop my game as well. It was also nice for us to show the world how good we (the US) can be.

3. What advice would you give to a young soccer player dreaming of playing for the national team?

**Altidore:** My advice to young soccer players is to keep working hard and make sure you are having fun. If you're not having fun you're not really going to develop and get better. On the pitch you have to smile as much as you can. Show that you are having fun and enjoying yourself, because when you're having fun that's when you're at your best. You don't play well if you're not enjoying yourself.

4. Was soccer always your favorite sport growing up?

**Altidore:** Growing up soccer was always my number one sport and it's the one I chose to stay with. I fell in love with the game as soon as I saw it. I just think it's a beautiful game to watch and to play. To me it's kind of an art the way the best players move around on the pitch and create scoring opportunities.

5. Were you one of those kids that always had a ball at your feet growing up?

**Altidore:** Ever since I was three years old I can always remember being out playing and practicing with a soccer ball. It's been like this for most of my life. I am very passionate about the game and I just enjoying kicking a ball around.

6. As a young player how did you develop your skills?

**Altidore:** Coaching is a big part of how you develop as a player but mostly it's all about the drive of the player and how far he or she wants to go. It's really more on the individual than anybody else. It is really up to you how good you want to be. You have to have the drive to want to improve and be as good as you can.

7. You have the reputation for being a dangerous player going forward. Is there one tip in the art of taking players on that you can give a young player?

**Altidore:** First you have to watch the great players, see what they do, and learn from them. Watch their moves, practice them and adopt them into your game. Then on the field just know what you want to do and have the confidence to try to pull them off.

8. How did you develop your ability to score goals?

**Altidore:** When I started to watch soccer I decided that I wanted to be the guy that scores the goals. Scoring is a lot of fun. It's a great feeling. I practiced very hard on my moves and my shot -- that's the only way to improve at something -- and now I've progressed and I'm doing well scoring goals.

9. What was it like when you played your first game for the New York Red Bulls?

**Altidore:** I was very excited. Part of my dream was to play professional soccer so to get my first cap for New York Red Bulls was great. But that was only part of my dream; it's not my ultimate goal. My ultimate goal obviously, like any young kid, is to go abroad so right now I'm just taking small steps to get there.

10. You are just 17 years old and you are on the cover of FIFA Soccer 08. How cool is that?

**Altidore:** It's exciting to be on the cover of my favorite videogame and I am really looking forward to finally playing as myself in FIFA Soccer 08. I can hardly wait to play with my virtual character wearing the Red Bull uniform and taking on defenders one-on-one.

11. Who were your soccer idols growing up and what did you learn from them?

**Altidore:** Thierry Henry and Ronaldo were my heroes growing up. I watched them all the time. I learned so much from watching them play. They are the best at what they do -- finishing the ball and getting past players.

12. Do you try to model your game after them?

**Altidore:** You want to play like your heroes. I watch players like Henry and Ronaldo to see how they do things, and I think of ways that I can incorporate their moves into my game.



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