

FC Edmonton sign veteran striker

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Daniel (Dizzy) Antoniuk will bring his soccer skills and eight years of professional experience to FC Edmonton.

The six-foot-three striker agreed to contract terms on Wednesday.

Since graduating from Wheaton College in Norton, Mass., in 2002, Antoniuk has suited up for outdoor action with the Portland Timbers, Montreal Impact, Atlanta Silverbacks, Carolina RailHawks FC and Charleston Battery. He has also played indoor soccer, most recently with the San Diego Shockers of the Professional Arena Soccer League.

"It's always good to get a fresh start with a new club," said Antoniuk, 30. "I'm a big strong guy who is very aggressive and I try to score goals."

With so much experience on such a young team, Antoniuk might be a player that his younger teammates look up to and that's fine with him, but he wants the team to perform well.

"I don't look at myself as being on a higher pedestal than other players, but if they want to learn from me, they certainly can. I just want to win," Antoniuk said.

After just one day of practice, head coach Harry Sinkgraven likes what he sees from the Philadelphia native.

"He's a big guy and a striker who can keep the ball away from opponents and he's got a good header, so when we have chances in the box he can head some goals," Sinkgraven said.

FC Edmonton also signed University of South Florida graduate and former United States under-20 national team member Shawn Chin and University of Saskatchewan Huskies striker Paul Craig.

Although Chin is a midfielder, Sinkgraven said he can also play on the wing, while Craig scored three goals and nine assists in 13 games with the Huskies.

FC Edmonton has compiled a 1-1-1 record so far in training camp at Casa Grande, Ariz. The team dropped its opening exhibition match 3-0 to FC Dallas, but rebounded with a 1-1 draw and 4-1 win against the University of New Mexico Lobos.

The team has two more pre-season games remaining before leaving the warm desert air for the snow and slush-covered streets of Edmonton. Sinkgraven said there are still things his team needs to work on before the North American Soccer League season begins on April 9 against the Fort Lauderdale Strikers.

"The goal of this camp is to be fit for the start of the year," Sinkgraven said. "We've done lots of good things in camp, but there are lots of things we need to improve on."

"The most important thing is playing together, getting used to each other and to know everyone's strengths."

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