

## Julius James, one for the future?

Contributed by Warrior Nation Media  
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With our defense from the World Cup 2006 squad depleted due to retirement, blacklists, age etc., T&T football fans are understandably asking the question "Where are our defenders?". One player who is hoping to fill this void, is former U-17 member, Julius James. Julius has been a revelation at the University of Connecticut, where he is completing his final year of studies. In recognition of his ability, he was invited to the 2008 MLS Combine where he would get a chance to display his skills to MLS coaches and various scouts, with the hope of landing a professional contract. To get a little insight into Julius, Warrior Nation Media correspondent Collin "Mr Mc" McFarlane made his way to Lockhart Stadium, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on Saturday, January 12th to chat with him.

WN: Despite realizing many accomplishments and winning numerous awards during your college career, you have yet to earn a senior cap for the national team. Why is that?

JJ: I guess I just wasn't good enough&hellip;that's basically it. If a guy hasn't played with the national team, he just hasn't impressed the coach as yet.

WN: Do you think you have done enough to earn a call up to the senior squad thus far?

JJ: I've worked really hard over the years. I've always worked hard, but at the end of the day it just boils down to what the technical staff wants. I've played in college, and you are not always as respected when you play in college until you become a professional. Until you show yourself on the professional level, then you can have some credentials as they say.

WN: You are listed as being 6' tall, and there has been talk about your height being a hindrance to your effectiveness as a defender, especially when it comes to winning balls in the air. How do you respond to those comments?

JJ: You recall who the golden ball winner for the last World Cup was? It was Fabio Cannavaro. He is a center back and he is definitely not as tall as I am. There is another defender, Puyol, who plays for Barcelona, and there is Córdoba from Colombia. There are many good defenders who are not tall, that play center back. The height is not the issue, it is how high the guy can jump and how big he plays as a player. You don't want a guy that's 5 feet playing in the back there, I'm average height but I play above my height. Maybe those people who make those comments have not seen me play at all. If they came to see me play, they would see me jumping over 6' 5" guys, so that is not an issue for me, it doesn't worry me at all, it's people who have not seen me play who make those comments.

WN: You were called to a camp in South Carolina over the Thanksgiving holidays in 2006. Why were you unavailable?

JJ: I had other serious obligations at the time. But, being called for the National Team is a really big honor and I will always make myself available every single time. Let me also say this, I am a college student, I live on my own and I don't make money, so I had no money to take a taxi or the train. There was no one up on my side to make that drive with me and no means of transportation was provided for me.

WN: We are just about to embark on our World Cup 2010 campaign. Will we see you battling for a spot on the roster?

JJ: Of course, of course! I have to prove myself first. My main focus is playing in the MLS or whichever team selects me. Playing a lot, getting as much experience as I could on a professional level, gaining the respect, and catching the eye of the technical staff. But the main thing is playing first as a professional.

WN: T&T football has endured a lot of turmoil since the World Cup in Germany. Has this dampened your desire to represent the national team?

JJ: Until I could actually make the national team, my main concern is playing and gaining experience for when my time is right.

WN: You have had a lot of exposure in the media over the last couple of years. How do you cope with the expectations brought about by all the press? Is it a burden for you to carry?

JJ: I was just talking to a guy from the media and what I told him was I don't pay much attention to the media. I don't go online, I don't read much stuff in the papers. I just focus on playing hard and being disciplined.

WN: Former national player, Brent Rahim, was a standout player at UCONN, but was unable to have a stable career as a football player. Some people feel that he should have gone straight to pro ball instead of college. As a current Huskie, do you think you are at a disadvantage, when comparing yourself footballing-wise to your peers?

JJ: What I have to say to that is different strokes for different folks. I needed to develop more. Those other guys went straight on and they played. I think its really important that I went to college, and I went to a really good institution like UCONN, it's a really good institution and I fit in there well.

WN: There is currently a squad in training for a friendly against Guadeloupe on Ash Wednesday. Did you receive an invitation?

JJ: No.

WN: Apart from possibly your parents, is Kenrick Burke aka morvantman your biggest fan?

JJ: [laughing] yes yes, he is.

Since this interview took place, we have received information from an inside source who said that Julius has been waiting patiently for Colin to fulfill a promise to take him to Joy's Roti Shop.