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## Ream Completes Transfer to Bolton

By JACK BELL

The day after his wedding, which was Jan. 7, Tim Ream received a phone call from [Bolton Wanderers](#) Manager Owen Coyle.

“Everything happened so fast, the wedding, everything,” Ream said in a telephone interview Wednesday from England. “They wanted us to come right away. So we had to skip the honeymoon.”

So Ream, a 24-year-old defender from St. Louis, and his nonplussed new bride, Kristen, were left holding plane tickets and reservations for Bora Bora. At least now, Ream, who played two seasons for the Red Bulls, will be able to do Bora Bora in style, whenever he and his wife have the chance — perhaps next summer.

[After winning an appeal, Ream on Monday](#) was granted a British work permit that will enable him to complete a \$2.75 million transfer to Bolton of England’s Premier League. The deal, which was delayed because Ream did not have enough appearances for the United States national team, was to become official Thursday morning, when Bolton and the Red Bulls were scheduled to make an announcement.

Ream, who was under contract with the Red Bulls for two more seasons, will sign a three-and-a-half-year contract with Bolton. He earned a little more than \$62,000 last season in M.L.S. He declined to say how much he will now be paid, but Ream did say that it was decidedly more than M.L.S. clubs are charged against their salary budgets for a designated player, about \$335,000.

In December, Ream embarked on training stints at West Bromwich Albion and then Bolton. He said that Red Bulls General Manager Erik Soler approached him on the plane home from Los Angeles last November after the club was eliminated from the playoffs about a possible loan deal with West Brom.

“After a week at West Brom, I went to Bolton and didn’t have the best first day,” Ream said. “The first-team players and coaches weren’t there. I was a little down. But the next day, Owen Coyle called me into his office, sat me down and told me that he had watched me more than 30 times on tape and live, and that I had nothing to prove. That made me feel comfortable.”

After that, he spent an [afternoon watching Bolton play Manchester United](#) at Old Trafford, which he said was his first exposure, in person, to the game at a high level.

Ream’s agent, Patrick McCabe, said that Bolton and Coyle had been tracking Ream since last summer, when Wanderers came to the United States on a brief preseason tour.

Anticipating Ream’s impending departure, the Red Bulls have signed three new defenders — Markus Holgersson from Helsingborg of Sweden, the New Jersey native Jonathan Borrajo from Hamarkameratene of Norway, and Connor Lade, one of the club’s academy players out of St. John’s University.

“After a rough year, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” Ream said. “Last year was tough, not stop-playing-and-crawl-in-a-hole-and-give-up terrible tough, but it definitely taught me a lot. The Red Bulls gave me a chance by drafting me when no one knew what I could do. I’ll always be grateful for that.”

With Bolton’s sale of defender Gary Cahill to Chelsea, Ream is likely to quickly land on the field for Wanderers, though not for Saturday’s F.A. Cup match against Swansea City. He was scheduled to return to the United States late Thursday and return to England next week.

According to M.L.S. rules, the Red Bulls will receive two-thirds of the transfer fee Bolton pays for Ream, and up to \$650,000 of it can be used for what the league calls allocation money, funds that are added on to the team’s salary budget, which was \$2.67 million in 2011.

Asked about his best of times with the Red Bulls, Ream said:

“It definitely something I always think about. You always want to better yourself as a player and make it into the top league, it’s been a dream of mine. I just didn’t know it would happen as quickly as it did. It’s been kind of whirlwind. I think, going back to highlights, first of all, being drafted. I loved my time in New York, they gave me my shot, and I’ll always be grateful for that. Without them believing in me I wouldn’t be where I am now. The biggest thing I take is the people I’ve met along the way — guys on team, the staff, friendships that will last forever. It’s too bad that I leave them behind, at same time always looking to better yourself.”

Ream was quick to admit that last season was a disappointment, both personally and for the club:

“I think it was a lot of things. I’m not one to make excuses, but it was just a poor year on a lot of fronts. People talk about a [bad fit with Rafa \[Marquez\] in the back](#), but I’ll say this, look at the first seven games, the combination was great. I think a lot of it had to do with everyone traveling as much with national team duty, me not being used to that. ... We never had same team practice together more than three days in a row. It’s hard to get chemistry back. After that when you go through a tough stretch it’s hard to get out of that slump. You learn from it. It’s never just one guy, a lot of guys struggled throughout the summer. It enveloped everyone.”

On the prospect of using time at Bolton to get back into the U.S. national team after time on the bench and out of the team:

“Circumstances played a part in it, I think he [Coach Jurgen Klinsmann] wanted to bring in guys to let them get a feel for how he runs things and how he does things in training. Bringing in guys like me, even if you don’t play you still learn. Now it’s about performing and playing week in and week out to stay on the radar. If I don’t get called up for a while so be it. I have to earn my way back. No spot is ever guaranteed, I learned that from a young age, and I’ve been lucky to show I’ve been able to play right away everywhere I’ve gone. This is a new challenge for me, and I’m ready to take it on. You always have to prove yourself to be the first-choice guy, and right now it’s not me. I’m not O.K. with that. I want

to be there and represent my country. Sometimes you have to come to the realization that you haven't performed to your best.

So far from what I've seen and done, I think the way the teams train over here is the same way Jurgen coaches and trains, so it's definitely a big positive moving over here, training day in and day out playing against some of the best in the world. It can only help."

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