



[Luis Morales](#) is the First Team Administrator at New York City Football Club (NYCFC). Before joining NYCFC, he spent over a decade with the St. Louis Cardinals, rising to Director of International Operations. Born and raised in Venezuela, Luis's journey into sports started in Venezuela's Winter Baseball League, led him to a master's program in Miami, and later took him to the U.S. Soccer Federation, where he managed international and domestic training camps for the U-20 men's national team. His career reflects the power of persistence, people, and pride.

### **A Kid from Venezuela, Dreaming Bigger Than the Map**

Luis didn't grow up with a clear path into sports. In Venezuela, professional opportunities in the industry were rare. He studied accounting in college but knew early on something felt off. "I was always the guy who knew every player, every stat, in every sport," he says. "But back home, if you liked sports, the only real path was journalism."

That changed the day he saw former Real Madrid legend Emilio Butragueño on TV talking about studying sport management at UCLA. "That moment flipped a switch for me," Luis says. "I didn't even know you could study something like that. I went straight to the internet." From that day forward, he started searching for a way in.

### **Building with Baseball – and Betting on Himself**

Luis got his first break through a family connection; an accounting seasonal position with Leones del Caracas. The following season, thanks to a mentor who believed in him, he transitioned into baseball operations. "I did not have all the answers, but I asked questions, stayed curious, and got involved in

everything. That's how I learned and grew. " he says. "And I started to really understand how scouting and academies worked in Latin America."

He cold-emailed people across MLB and one of those notes landed with the Cleveland Guardians. They hired him as an administrator in Venezuela, and he spent four years learning the system from the inside. Still, he knew he had to bet on himself again. "I realized that my value to the team was always going to be tied to Venezuela. I wanted more." That led to Miami. A master's in sport administration at St. Thomas University. An internship with the Cardinals. And, eventually, a full-time role that would last 13 years.



### **From Intern to Director**

Luis worked his way up in St. Louis, from assistant to Director of International Operations by 2017. He oversaw everything from international scouting to academy management in the Dominican Republic. He handled budgets, visas, contracts, you name it. "I never played baseball professionally, never scouted. But they gave me a shot and helped me grow," he says.

He's proud of that culture of development. "In the Cardinals organization, so many people worked their way up from entry-level to major league roles. They believed in promoting from within. And I was one of those stories."

### **A Shift to Soccer—and a Return to Passion**

After 17 years in baseball, Luis made a move, joining the U.S. Soccer Federation as a Youth National Team Administrator . "Soccer was always a passion," he says. "And I felt like if I was ever going to make a change, this was the time."

He helped plan and organize training camps and tournaments across Morocco, Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Spain; an experience that tested both his logistics chops and his cultural fluency. "I didn't realize how valuable it was to speak Spanish and understand the culture, in this particular position, until I started working exclusively with the U20 MNT.," he says.

Now at NYCFC, Luis leads travel logistics, scheduling, and operations for the club's first team. "Everything that affects the players when we're on the road, I am involved in it," he says.

### **Leadership with Compassion and the Value of Belief**

Luis credits his growth to leaders who cared. “Compassion matters,” he says. “If you’re not preparing people to eventually replace you, you’re doing your team a disservice.” He saw that modeled across his time in baseball and now tries to do the same. What does he look for in a team? “Understanding people’s needs. Helping them do their job to the best of their abilities. That’s my concept of leadership .”

Looking back, Luis wishes he had slowed down and appreciated the ride. “So much of my early career, I was thinking about what was next – would I get the job, will I get the offer,” he says. “I forgot to enjoy the process. Sports are fun. That’s why we’re here.”

### Leadership with Compassion and the Value of Belief

Luis doesn’t take for granted the chance to be around a competitive environment . “Even if my role helps just half a percent toward winning, that matters to me,” he says. “And I take pride in representing where I come from. My story might be different from others, but I want to show that Venezuelans can lead, can succeed, and can be part of this too.”

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