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American soccer original, two-time Olympic gold medalist Angela Hucles retires
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Today, Boston Breakers' and 2008 Olympic gold medalist Angela Hucles announced her retirement from professional soccer and the US women's national team.

Thirty-one year-old Hucles was the 24th American to earn 100 international caps and altogether performed 109 times for the United States and scored 14 international goals. In 2009, Hucles started in 19 games for the Breakers and scored two goals and one assist.

Hucles began her professional career with the Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA) in 2001 and played for the Breakers until the league's demise in 2003. Hucles won Olympic Gold Medals in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics and played in the 2007 World Cup.

Boston Pro Soccer Examiner spoke with Hucles a few hours after she announced her retirement.

LE: What was the highlight of your career?

Hucles: Definitely, the 2008 Olympics. Being able to go from 2007 World Cup and not being able to even step on the field to leading my team to the gold medal victory is definitely one of the highlights. To be able to contribute by scoring four goals in the 2008 Olympics, basically I'm ending with that memory very close.

LE: Why are you choosing to retire now?

Hucles: With the timing of the US team and the next World Cup two years away and in terms of my accomplishments in my career and feeling satisfied with it, I felt that this would be the best time for me to step away and end my career. It's been an ongoing process of coming to this decision. I definitely wanted to be a part of WPS and help the league get started.

LE: With your long history in US Soccer, this must be very emotional for you.

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Hucles: Yes, definitely. I've gone through a lot of different emotions in the last few months. Originally, I thought I'd be part of the league for another couple years and take me up into the World Cup. I've always told people, especially little children and kids, that you play soccer and continue to play soccer because of the enjoyment and love of the game, but it got to the point where I didn't have the same passion stepping out onto the field. I'm a big believer that in whatever you do, you do it to the best of your ability 110% and if I wasn't able to offer that each day I stepped onto the field, then I didn't want to be there.

It's been a range of different emotions. I've had so many amazing relationships through these different teams and I'm definitely going to miss that for sure, not just players and teammates, but coaches and other staff.

LE: Where might you go from here?

Hucles: Maybe tackle something that I've never tried before. Right now, I'm leaning to something completely different. I'm not leaving soccer for something else, I'm just moving on, keeping my options open and taking the time to evaluate and figure out what I want to do next. I've had a lot of interest in real estate over the years, but I'm not exactly sure what I'm going to try to pursue next, it's still up in the air.

LE: What do you think about WPS after its inaugural year?

Hucles: It was a huge accomplishment to get the league started. There are people who've worked for six years to start a new league for professional women's soccer in our country. This past season it was successful because it happened. I'm not exactly sure of the state of the league right now, but I'm very hopeful this league will be here for years to come.

Hopefully, it will help develop girls' soccer and women's soccer in our country because now young girls have the opportunity to see that they can turn this into a career and that's something that's extremely exciting.

LE: What do you think of MLS' new marketing plan of deploying cheerleaders?

Hucles: Interesting. There are other men's professional sports that set up cheerleaders and I'm not sure if it's an American-type of element in men's sports, but I don't think it's actually a soccer element. Maybe to attract a certain

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demographic.

LE: The Breakers already were looking for a striker, then they lost national team defender Heather Mlts to Philadelphia and now you, an attacking midfielder. Where does coach Tony DiCicco go from here?

Hucles: One of Tony's greatest strengths is organizing and getting certain players together on the field and he'll definitely have some challenges looking to create a winning team, but at the same time it's a great opportunity for some of those players maybe who didn't get this opportunity last season to really prove themselves. The Breakers are going to be fine, they will get the players that they need and can use some of the players that they already have, and I'm excited to see what next season will bring. It will bring a great challenge, but it will also bring success.