

Orlando City SC Wins First Match of 2014 Season at ESPN Wide World of Sports

Lions continue unbeaten streak against Rochester Rhinos

Orlando City SC gained their first win of the 2014 USL PRO regular season on Saturday, April 5, with a 3-1 victory over the Rochester Rhinos. The win against the Rhinos continues the Lions' unbeaten run against Rochester, as City have never lost to the upstate New York based club in three years (7-0-1).

"I'm pleased that we won the game and I'm pleased that we scored three goals, but I think that our performance could have been a bit better," said Head Coach Adrian Heath. "We had a bit of break when we needed it tonight, unlike last week."

After only coming away with two 1-1 draws in their opening matches against Charleston and Pittsburgh, Head Coach Adrian Heath mentioned that City needed to score early to open the game up and prevent opposing teams from bunkering in.

On Saturday night, the gaffer got his wish when attacking midfielder Kevin Molino put the Lions up 1-0 in the third minute. The Trinidadian international began the match in cracking form and was active in the final third, creating chances for not only himself but also for his fellow attacking players.

Molino missed an early strike from inside the area in the 1st minute, but would make up for it two minutes later with a comfortable finish from a Tyler Turner cross.

With the early goal secured, the Lions looked more relaxed and began playing vintage Orlando City football.

The three attacking midfielders, da Luz, Molino and Ceren were popping in and out of the free space in Rochester's defensive third, and the holding midfielders, Quinn and Alvarez, continuously made themselves available when the front three ran into trouble.

Meanwhile the backline looked equally impressive, as Orlando were fervent in their efforts to press the Rhinos high up the pitch and force them to clear it away.

However, despite not maintaining much possession, Rochester nearly equalized when Midfielder Minh Vu came close to capitalizing on a defensive error from Orlando. Luckily for the Lions, Vu tapped his strike just wide of the target.

Vu's chance was the only clear-cut opportunity for the visitors in the opening half.

Orlando, on the other hand, managed to create several in the first period. With da Luz and Molino drifting further inside, Defenders Luke Boden and Tyler Turner found more space on the wings and were able to drive low crosses to the near-post.

After coming close to scoring on several occasions, including a chance from Hertzog that ricocheted off the post, Valentino scored the second goal of the game for Orlando.

Valentino scored six goals for the Lions in 2013 and added another to his career while wearing purple and white by calmly re-directing a well-placed cross from Alvarez.

With the momentum in their favor, Orlando came close to scoring a minute later when Hertzog had a one-on-one with Goalkeeper Luis Soffner, but the former Whitecaps striker hit his final strike directly at the 'keeper.

Orlando City looked even more confident to begin the second half, but an early mistake from rookie Aodhan Quinn gave the visitors a bit of life.

Quinn attempted to play a back pass to Rusin but, instead, ending up splitting the two center-halves, and Rochester Midfielder JC Banks was able to run on to it and place it past Gallardo.

Two of three goals allowed by Orlando this year have come from their own mistakes, and City's confident play became a bit more cautious. But in the 72nd minute, Heath made a tactical change and brought on attacking players Adama Mbengue and Dennis Chin.

Within minutes, Heath's substitution would yield dividends when Chin scored a tap-in from six yards out in the 76th minute. The goal marked the first in 2014 for the Lions' all-time leading scorer.

The remaining 14 minutes featured professional football from City as they maintained possession and didn't allow Rochester to take advantage of any mistakes.

Next week, Orlando will host the Charleston Battery on Saturday, April 12, before venturing on a two-game road trip against F.C. Dallas and OKC Energy.

For more information, visit www.orlandocitysoccer.com

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About Orlando City Soccer Club:

Orlando City Soccer Club (OCSC) is Major League Soccer's newest expansion team. The club will begin play in MLS in 2015, becoming the league's 21st club. The Lions' first team has won two USL PRO regular season titles and two postseason championships and will continue play in USL PRO in 2014 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. Outside of the first squad, OCSC also has a youth club, Orlando City Youth Soccer (OCYS) and a U-23 team that participates in the PDL. For more information on the pro and youth clubs, visit www.OrlandoCitySC.com and www.OrlandoCityYouth.org.

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