

# AS Roma Bests Orlando City SC in International Friendly at ESPN Wide World of Sports

## **Italian football legend, Francesco Totti scores deciding goal early in the first half**

Lake Buena Vista, Fla. (May 23, 2014) – Serie A giants AS Roma beat Orlando City SC 1-0 in an international friendly on Field 17 at ESPN Wide World of Sports. World-renowned Midfielder Francesco Totti scored the deciding goal early in the first half.

“That was a monumental effort from our players tonight,” said Orlando City Head Coach Adrian Heath after the match. “I’ve come down on them pretty hard recently, but I’m delighted with every single one of them. I think they did outstandingly well tonight.”

Despite going up against a higher division club, Orlando didn’t look scared to venture forward and had countless additional opportunities to find the back of the net in the first half.

The first chances for the Lions were provided by Adama Mbengue, who came close to finding the back of the net on two occasions in the first ten minutes. The Senegalese midfielder’s efforts stemmed from two precise crosses from full-backs Luke Boden and Tyler Turner, but a well-timed tackle from Leandro Castan and a miss from Mbengue saw the score-line remain level.

Featuring a line-up of mainly younger players, AS Roma seemed to be in second gear during the early stages of the first half and strived to create chances on the counter.

Veteran and former Italian National Team Midfielder, Francesco Totti, was included in the starting 11, however, and would produce an early goal for Roma in the 20th minute. Totti was able to get on the score-sheet after a probing ball from Dodo inside the area landed to the midfielder on the edge of the box. Displaying his clinical finishing, Totti calmly took a touch before volleying a powerful strike into the back of the net.

Mbengue nearly responded four minutes later after an efficient counter-attack from the Lions. After receiving the ball in space on the edge of the area, the midfielder blasted a low driven strike towards the target but had it deflected just wide of the near-post.

With five minutes to go, both Span and the trialist up front managed to get in behind the Roma defense, after good build up play in the midfield.

Unfortunately both players were ruled offside on very close calls, sending the City fans into an uproar as the trialist’s effort rolled into the back of the net.

Not too long afterwards, the referee blew the half-time whistle and the Italian side maintained a 1-0 advantage heading into the changing rooms, after a brief moment of brilliance from Totti, and a series of unlucky plays in the final third for City.

In the second half, Roma began playing with more energy and posed more of a threat going forward. The Italian side

looked to possess the ball more, straying away from their first half tactics that featured an attempt to capitalize on the counter after giveaways from City in the attacking end of the pitch.

In the 56th minute, Totti came close to scoring another after a poor turnover from Ceren on the edge of the Lions' area. Totti pounced on the loose ball and went through for a one-on-one with the trialist goalkeeper who did well to tip it in the air, allowing Brad Rusin enough time to clear it off the line.

On the other hand, Orlando looked a bit tired to start the second half, which is likely a result of the Lions already playing six matches in the month of May. As a result, Head Coach Adrian Heath made multiple changes in the 65th minute, bringing fresh legs back into the squad.

Following the substitutions, Orlando reverted back to its attacking ways and came close to scoring on two occasions via Molino and Hertzog. Molino's effort went just wide of the far post in the 75th minute, but Hertzog was able to find the back of the net two minutes later, only to be ruled offside in the midst of his celebration.

The missed chances and the tight offside decisions would prove to be City's Achilles heel all night as the match would finish with Totti's goal as the decider. Nevertheless, the 1-0 result against a side that finished second in the Serie A this year proved to be a significant improvement after falling 5-0 to Roma in a previous matchup in 2013.

After the match both Head Coach Rudi Garcia and Totti were highly complimentary of the Lions.

"I really like the way that Orlando City plays," said Garcia. "They play very European with short passes and they try to keep everything on the ground."

"Orlando City really surprised us tonight," added Totti. "They have some good attacking players and I think the team has a great future."

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