

Orlando City Scores Second Straight Victory at ESPN Wide World of Sports

With the win over Charleston Battery, 1-0, Orlando City SC moves into first place in the USL PRO

Orlando City SC secured their second consecutive win on Saturday night against the Charleston Battery at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. In his debut appearance, F.C. Dallas loanee Brian Span scored his first goal in purple and white and helped move City into first place in USL PRO.

“Apart from a few isolated incidents, I thought that it would have been a travesty had we not won the game tonight,” said Head Coach Adrian Heath. “Overall I’m pleased with the win, and I’m pleased that Cobi [Brian Span] got a goal because he’s been working very hard in training.”

Both Orlando and Charleston are responsible for the past four USL PRO Championships and, as a result, a rivalry has been created. Over the years, the two sides have competed in many memorable matches, and tonight was no different.

The beginning of tonight’s match featured a similar theme to the opening three games, as Orlando City SC was the more dominant side in terms of possession but struggled to break-through due to Charleston bunkering in.

With several crafty and technical players in the midfield for Orlando, possession seems almost routine, but the two players providing the majority of the chances for the Lions were full-backs Luke Boden and Tyler Turner.

The two defenders spent more time in the final-third than in their own half and were instrumental in whipping crosses in the box.

Due to Turner and Boden placing several dangerous balls in the six-yard box, the Battery were then forced to adjust- allowing Molino, Ceren and da Luz to get more involved in the attack.

In the 12th minute, the Lions would nearly break-through when da Luz played a lovely no-look pass to spring Corey Hertzog in behind, but the striker was unable to notch his first-goal since arriving to the City Beautiful.

Hertzog would have another close-chance in the 45th minute when Turner pinged a driven ball across the six, but the former Vancouver Whitecap was unable to latch on to it.

The second half featured more direct play from the Lions, particularly after new loanee Brian Span was brought on along with attacking players Dennis Chin and Adama Mbengue.

Span joined City earlier this month on loan from MLS side F.C. Dallas and was brought on for the first time by Head Coach Adrian Heath. The 22-year-old couldn’t have had a better debut, as the powerful midfielder was able to find the back of the net within 15 minutes of entering the match.

After a long spell of relentless attacking from Orlando City, Mbengue was able to get enough space on the left-side to pull the ball across the box to Span, who was all alone on the back-post.

City would have two more opportunities to add to the score-line in the waning moments via Chin and Mbengue, but a great save by Cooper and a goal-line clearance prevented the Lions from securing a second.

With a second victory secured, Orlando has momentum heading into their two-game road trip. Next week, the Lions will take on the F.C. Dallas reserves and expansion side, OKC Energy F.C. shortly afterward.

City’s next home game will take place on Wednesday, April 30, against the Tampa Bay Rowdies in the I-4 Derby before returning back to league-play with another home fixture set for May 4 against OKC Energy F.C.

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