



Fraser Valley Soccer League



January 22, 2020

From the Media Desk of the Fraser Valley Soccer League...

The final week of the 2019 schedule brought another action-packed fixture list to the Umbro Premier League. More makeup games were on the schedule so that the majority of the league went into the break with twelve matches played. This meant opportunities for the table to change before the holidays and defending champions Port Moody, in particular, made the most of their chance to climb the table.

Here's a recap of all of this week's action:

Port Moody Gunners 6-1 SAFC Red Bulls – Thursday 8:15pm; Trasolini Turf

After securing six points in two matches the previous weekend, Port Moody moved their penultimate fixture before the Winter Break to Thursday night. Perhaps this caught the visiting SAFC unprepared, as this match was all Port Moody straight from the kickoff. To follow up his impressive seven goals in two matches on the weekend, Gunners striker **Graeme Meers** made it an even ten in three games when he recorded another hatrick in this one, taking him up to 15 for the year. **Cole Almond** added a pair while centre back **Dale Long** continued his impressive habit of popping up at the opposite end of the pitch with a goal. **Mikael Mainella** had the lone response for Red Bulls and was really their only standout performers as they continue to miss key attackers **Emmanuel Ekeh** and **Brad Heffey** through suspension.

Surrey United Firefighters 9-1 Vancouver United SC – Friday 8:45pm; Cloverdale Athletic Park #2

Fullback **Tom Lowndes** led the way for Surrey United against last place Vancouver United as he registered a hatrick in their dominant win. Youth was on full display from both side in this match as Vancouver United have transitioned to a mostly under-19 lineup with several starter out long term with injuries. **Ben Crowther** put in another impressive performance for the visitors and **Simran Tiwari** played well and scored, but, ultimately, Vancouver's young guns just could not match a more veteran Surrey side. Goals from **Raq Amijee** and **Ryan Donald** along with **Nicholas Fussell** and **Ryan Uppal** ensured that Firefighters would be banking all three points in this one. Surrey United's youth was on display as well with **Jovan Sidhu** and **Adam Hajdecki** also scoring in this match. Vancouver United will hope to use the winter break to get healthy and improve in 2020, as they remain without a win at the foot of the UPL.

Langley United 1-7 Abbotsford United – Friday 9pm; Yorkson Turf

Having played the majority of their matches already this season, both these teams were looking for crucial points to close out the year and keep pace at the top of the table. With other teams catching and passing them in the standings, Abbotsford looked motivated in this match and scored inside five minutes when **Sahib Phagura** found **Connor Robillard** and, after a lovely display of skill to elude the Langley defenders, he smashed in a goal to put the visitors ahead. Just past the ten minute mark, **Roshan Gosal** was on one of his trademark runs. He deferred to Robillard and his cross took a fortuitous bounce from an Abby perspective, land right at the foot of **Brady Weir** who did not need a second invitation to double Abbotsford's lead. Down by a pair, Langley finally seemed to wake up and took control of the match for a spell. They pressure created a number of set piece opportunities, but Abby goalkeeper **Mike Haladin** had all the answers to keep the home side at bay. The Langley superiority was to be short lived however, as a wonderful dribbling display from **Connor O'Neill** created room to slip Weir in on a breakaway and his was taken down by a desperate Langley defender. **Reece Branion** made no mistake from the spot and then doubled his tally before halftime after **Ryan Liddiard** and **Kree Byrne** combined to set him up. In the second half Langley tried once more to muster some type of response, but, again, they were frustrated by Haladin in the Abby net, particularly when he made a lovely save off



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a corner kick. Abbotsford's **Parman Minhas** made his return from injury in this match and he stole the show after the break going on a lovely run before finding **Manveer Dhillon**, who scored with a low shot to the far post, and then drew a second Abbotsford penalty of the match that **Colton O'Neill** finished smartly. **Ryan Freda** provided the lone bright spot for Langley on the evening when he went through nearly the entire Abbotsford team before finally spoiling Haladin's bid for a clean sheet. It was little consolation though, especially when straight from the kickoff **David Parfett** unleashed a 35 yard bolt to instantly restore Abbotsford's six goal lead. The win keeps Abby in the title hunt, while Langley will likely concentrate on Provincial Cup qualification as they are now nine points off the pace at the top.

Coastal FC 13-1 CCB Azad – Saturday 4pm; South Surrey Athletic Park #10

Ravaged by injuries, CCB were acutely short staffed for this match. After defending resolutely for the opening quarter of an hour, their resistance was breached and the flood gates opened. Coastal talisman **Jake Starheim** took the opportunity to score five goals, allowing him to keep pace at the top of the Golden Boot race while striker **Sean Northcote** helped himself to a hatrick. **Brendan Northcote** also had a goal as well as **Sidrit Vukaj** and **Taylor Richardson**. Despite the lopsided score, CCB goalkeeper **Josh Banipal** played well and made a number of impressive saves to prevent the score from climbing even higher. Still, he was unable to stop Coastal's **Sean Kamensek** and **Amar Mander** adding their names to the scoresheet. **Deepak Bains** had a goal for CCB, but he, along with his teammates, will no doubt be looking to forget this performance as quickly as possible. For Coastal, the win sees them top at the holidays, with a game in hand, and in great position to try and reclaim the UPL title in the New Year.

Surrey United Firefighters 1-2 Port Moody Gunners – Wednesday 8pm; Cloverdale Athletic Park #2

Looking to make it an impressive five wins in three weeks, Port Moody headed to Surrey prior to the Winter Break with an eye on climbing the table even further before the holidays. It certainly did not start as the Gunners would have hoped when Surrey's **Raq Amijee** got on the end of a cross, soaring through the air to put Firefighters ahead via a lovely diving header. From here, the game became a midfield war of attrition with neither team creating much to trouble the others defenders. Perhaps showing the effects of playing so many matches in such a short period of time, Port Moody looked void of ideas going forwards and the game sort of just ebbed away. A rare foray forward saw Surrey nearly put the match out of site in the second half, but the effort struck the post. With a quarter of an hour left to play, though, everything changed. A long goal kick was misjudged by the Surrey back line and the ball fell to **Graeme Meers** who was one on one with the keeper. That is certainly not the person that you would want to see that ball fall to and Meers showed his leather finishing quality, taking what was essentially he only real chance of the match with aplomb. From here on it was all Port Moody as the Gunners pushed for the win. The pressure had Surrey bending, but not breaking and then United got a chance of their own on the counter. This resulted in a freekick that saw Amijee with a chance to restore his side's lead, unmarked at the back post. Unlike his heroics from earlier in the match, this time he put his header off target. This paved the way for the Gunners to create one final chance of their own and it was **Jon Craig** who found the ball on a scramble inside the Surrey penalty area. The big striker smashed it home for his first of the season after being out with a knee injury and this secured a vital three points for the Gunners. **Cole Almond** was a top performer for Port Moody, as was midfielder **Junhyung Lee** who played every minute of the Gunners four matches over the past week and a half. Youth callup **Manmeet Jhutti** was great for Surrey all night and it was a harsh result for United who now will likely focus on Provincial Cup qualification as this result leaves them mid-table. Meanwhile, Port Moody are now up to second place, level with Abbotsford and one point behind Coastal, though Coastal due hold a game in hand on the Gunners as Port Moody look to defend their UPL crown.



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CCB Azad 2-0 SAFC Red Bulls – Wednesday 8pm; Newton Athletic Park #1

The final match of 2019 in the UPL was an important one at the bottom of the table. CCB Azad were embarrassed by league leaders Coastal on the weekend, but had to regroup quickly ahead of their make-up fixture with SAFC Red Bulls. The Red Bulls had been heavily beaten themselves six days prior by Port Moody and both these teams would have been hoping to go into the break with a better taste in their mouths. It was also a chance for SAFC to make the gap between themselves and CCB nine points, while their Surrey rivals were hoping to close to within just three points of SAFC in sixth place and the absolute safety from relegation that accompanies finishing outside the bottom two places. It was clear from the start that both teams knew just how important this game was with the match being played at a breathless pace. However, neither team was producing much in front of goal and the match was still scoreless at halftime. It was looking like it would take a moment of magic to settle this game and, in the end, it was the home side that would produce it. CCB's veteran midfielder **Gagan Josan** stole the ball from the SAFC defenders and slotted it away to give his side an important lead. As one would expect, Red Bulls immediately pushed back, but great defending from **Navraj Purewal** and **Parm Aujla**, along with the always reliable goalkeeping of **Josh Banipal**, kept them at bay. With time winding down, CCB secured a massive victory thanks to a lovely run by **Pawandeep Chahal** and a cross that he put on a platter for **BJ Rockson** to finish off. This should lead to a happy New Year for CCB and an interesting battle at the bottom of the table when Umbro Premier League action resumes in 2020!

Here's how the UPL Table looks after Week 12:

Umbro Premier (Fall) - Pool: A								
Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Coastal FC A	11	9	1	1	48	13	35	28
Abbotsford United A	12	9	0	3	54	17	37	27
Port Moody SC A	12	9	0	3	37	14	23	27
Surrey Utd Firefighters	11	6	1	4	31	18	13	19
Langley United A	12	6	1	5	25	24	1	19
SAFC Red Bulls	12	3	1	8	19	36	-17	10
CCB Azad	12	2	1	9	13	48	-35	7
Vancouver United SC	12	0	1	11	4	61	-57	1

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This week's Brown's Social House Player of the week is Junhyung Lee from Port Moody Gunners. Junhyung was instrumental in the heart of midfield for Port Moody in their comeback 2-1 win to close out 2019. He also played all 360 minutes for the Gunners throughout their four matches over the final ten day before the winter break. Port Moody won all four of those games, lifting them to second place.

Congratulations Junhyung, you've won a \$25 gift card to Brown's Social House!





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COMING IN 2020:

Sat 01/11/2020	VISL ALL-STARS vs. FVSL ALL STARS	Vancouver Island
Fri 01/17/2020 8:45PM	CCB Azad vs. Vancouver United SC	Newton Ath. #4
Fri 01/17/2020 8:45PM	Surrey United vs. Abbotsford United	Cloverdale Ath. #2
Sat 01/18/2020 4:00PM	Coastal FC vs. SAFC Red Bulls	South Surrey Ath. #10
Sat 01/18/2020 4:00PM	Port Moody Gunners vs. Langley United	Trasolini Turf

The New Year kicks off with the annual All-Star matches between the FVSL and the VISL. This year the VISL's Division 1 All-Stars will host the best from the UPL on Vancouver Island as they look for revenge after the FVSL emerged victorious last year. UPL action will be put on hold that week but when it resumes there are several key storylines to watch down the stretch. Coastal, Abbotsford and Port Moody look set for a three horse race for the title while Langley and Surrey will be battling it out to try and lock up a fourth place finish and the automatic qualification for the Provincial Cup that goes along with it. There is also the battle at the bottom with CCB, Vancouver Unites and SAFC all looking to stay out of the bottom two to avoid any chance of relegation, while also, possibly, looking to climb up and challenge for fifth place. Of course, there is also the Pakenham Cup to look forward to as well in 2020. We shall see you in January!

Send NEWS to media@fraservalleysoccer.com

And for more information on the FVSL go to fraservalleysoccer.com



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