



Fraser Valley Soccer League



December 25, 2019

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

For the first time this season the weather claimed a match in the Umbro Premier League, when Surrey against Coastal was forced to be rearranged. Coastal did get a game in though, as they played mid-week against first place Abbotsford in an important match with title implications. Abbotsford were coming off a weekend match against last place Vancouver United where they got to flex their offensive muscles, but it was a much different game against Coastal on Tuesday night. Elsewhere, a scrappy game between Langley and SAFC saw Langley earn a measure of revenge from the first meeting between those two sides this season, while some new faces helped Port Moody to a win over CCB Azad.

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

Langley United 3-2 SAFC Red Bulls – Friday 9pm; Yorkson Turf

After the last meeting between these two sides where SAFC stunned Langley with a late comeback from 2-0 down to win 4-2, it was always likely that United would be keen to rewrite that script this time around. Both teams were coming into this match after drawing the previous weekend. SAFC would have been disappointed not to find a way through last place Vancouver United in a 0-0 stalemate, while Langley saw their four match winning streak halted following a 1-1 tie with Surrey United. Possibly still harboring some pent up frustration from being unable to score last time out, SAFC did not have to wait long for a release as **Mikael Mainella** smashed home a screamer to open the scoring and give the visitors the lead. Both teams were lively going forward, but the goalkeepers were answering the bell, as SAFC's **Cam Frost** and Langley's **Hudson Nelles** both produced spectacular and timely saves throughout the match. They could not deny everyone however, as SAFC talisman **Emmanuel Ekeh** added his name to the scoresheet along with **Connor Hildebrant** and **Brody Thomas** for United. Thomas was absolutely buzzing again on this night for Langley as he continues to lead both Langley's UPL side in scoring as well as all of Division 1 where he has potted a remarkable 21 goals on the season. He could have had a plethora on this night, but his second of the game made the difference. Discipline issues then reared their ugly head for SAFC with Ekeh and **Brad Heffey** both being ejected late, ending any hopes of a SAFC comeback reminiscent of the first game between these two teams.

Surrey United Firefighters P-P Coastal FC – Saturday 2pm; Cloverdale Athletic Park #5

The decision to move this fixture to grass in order to accommodate a double header with Surrey's Masters sides ended up backfiring when freezing conditions forced this match to be postponed. This means these two side still have yet to play each other as their first meeting was rescheduled to allow for Coastal's participation in the Soccer City Cup.

Port Moody Gunners 4-0 CCB Azad – Saturday 4pm; Trasolini Turf

Despite the ultimate score line, CCB made defending champions Port Moody work hard to earn the three points in this one. **Gagan Josan** was likely in the middle of the park and CCB tested newly acquired goalkeeper **Luciano Trasolini** on a few occasions during a tight first half. Overall, though, Josan and his teammates were overmatched in midfield by a pair of top performances from Port Moody's Corey McIlroy and Kevin Comeau. This allowed the space for **Cole Almond** and **Vaughn Andrews** to fire the Gunners to a 2-0 half time lead. This left Port Moody well in control of the match and the second half was much more straightforward for the home side. Centre back **Dale Long** would nod in a pair of late



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goals to salt the game away while Trasolini was forced into one final stellar save to earn his inaugural clean sheet. **Aryan Chauhan** also stood out for Port Moody in the win.

Abbotsford United 11-0 Vancouver United SC – Saturday 6pm; Mouat Turf #3

A trip to Abbotsford turned into a nightmare for last place Vancouver United who were without no fewer than nine players due in large part to a growing injury list. Goalkeeper **Rajvir Bains** did what he could to keep the score respectable, but was largely hung out to dry on this evening as Abbotsford had a chance to pad their stats. The onslaught began just before the ten minute mark when **Connor O'Neil** was set up by **Brady Weir** to open the scoring and then Weir was the provider a minute later for **Kree Byrne** who smashed in a rocket from distance. **Reece Branion** got his first of the night after a lovely build up that ended with Connor Robillard teeing one up for Branion to finish. He would nab his second of the match moments later when **Sahib Phagura** sent him in on a breakaway. Branion then switched to set up mode as he supplied the service for Weir's first of the game, before it was once again Phagura assisting Branion to round out his hattrick. It would not be a proper Abbotsford affair without at least one mention of a **Roshal Gosal** blistering run down the wing and on this night it came just before half time as Gosal did the hard work before deferring to Branion who relayed to Weir for his second of the night. It was a 7-0 lead at the break, but Abbotsford did not let up in the second period as substitute **Ben Shumbusho** got in on the action. First he danced through the Vancouver United before slotting one home and then got a second just past the hour mark off another set up from Branion. Robillard pushed the tally to double digits thanks to a nice ball from **Tammer Byrne** and there was still time left for the energetic Gosal, who was a standout performer as usual in this match, to add another. Youth call up **Ben Crowther** stood out despite the poor overall effort from Vancouver United, while Abbotsford's **Thomas Veinot** earned the shutout deputizing for the absent **Mike Haladin**.

Coastal FC 2-1 Abbotsford United – Tuesday 9:15pm; South Surrey Athletic Park #10

Perhaps having benefited from having the weekend off due to their postponement, Coastal came out flying in this mid-week makeup fixture. Coastal's potent twin headed attack of **Isaac Kyei** and **Jake Starheim** were rampant right from the off, with Kyei providing a great run and cross to put the ball on a platter for Starheim to open the scoring inside ten minutes. Despite having not had the benefit of the weekend off prior to this match, Abbotsford were hardly overexerted in their 11-0 home win over Vancouver United. Their offensive weapons clicked into gear and levelled the match when **Colton O'Neill** and **Brady Weir** combined to set up **Ryan Liddiard** who made no mistake with his finish. There would be no containing Starheim on this night, though. Just before halftime he put on a brilliant display of individual skill to get through the Abbotsford defense and smash an unstoppable shot into the top corner. In the second half Abbotsford probed for the equalizer and nearly had it when **Shaib Phagura** sent Weir in alone on a breakaway. Weir beat the keeper but saw his shot smash an underside of the crossbar and come down on the wrong side of the line from an Abbotsford perspective. Knowing the importance of this match, both teams were very tight defensively during the second half. Abbotsford's **Connor O'Neill**, along with brother Colton, did his best to stifle the Coastal attack while spurring United on towards an equalizer. With time running out, Abby were forced to take more and more chances going forward and this left space for Coastal to counter attack. Starheim looked certain to complete his hattrick late on, but a sharp stop from the returning **Mike Haladin** kept Abbotsford's slim hopes alive. In the end Coastal would hang on for a massive three points that could prove crucial come the New Year. "Proud of our guys for the heart and work they put in," said Abbotsford manager Alan Alderson, "and certainly disappointed to not come away with a point in a very even contest."



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Here's how the UPL Table looks after Week 10:

Umbro Premier (Fall) - Pool: A								
Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Abbotsford United A	10	7	0	3	41	14	27	21
Coastal FC A	8	6	1	1	27	10	17	19
Langley United A	10	6	1	3	23	13	10	19
Port Moody SC A	8	5	0	3	15	11	4	15
Surrey Utd Firefighters	7	4	1	2	14	10	4	13
SAFC Red Bulls	9	3	1	5	16	22	-6	10
CCB Azad	8	1	1	6	8	22	-14	4
Vancouver United SC	10	0	1	9	3	45	-42	1

BROWNS SOCIAL HOUSE PLAYER OF THE WEEK

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This week's Brown's Social House Player of the week is Jake Starheim from Coastal FC. Starheim had both goals, included an individual moment of brilliance, in Coastal's 2-1 win over Abbotsford this week. He was a force all game and was only denied a hattrick thanks to some outstanding goalkeeping. The win sees Coastal take control of the UPL title race, sitting just two points out of first place with two games in hand over their closest rivals.

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



THIS WEEK'S UPL SCHEDULE:

Fri 12/06/2019 8:45PM	CCB Azad vs. Surrey United Firefighters	Newton Ath. #4
Fri 12/06/2019 8:45PM	SAFC Red Bulls vs. Abbotsford United	Cloverdale Ath. #1
Sat 12/07/2019 4:00PM	Coastal FC vs. Langley United	South Surrey Ath. #10
Sat 12/07/2019 6:15PM	Vancouver United SC vs. Port Moody Gunners	Hjorth Turf #1
Sun 12/08/2019 6:15PM	CCB Azad vs. Port Moody Gunners	Newton Ath. #2
Tue 12/10/2019 9:15PM	Coastal FC vs. Surrey United Firefighters	South Surrey Ath. #10

It is an incredibly busy week with a pair of make up fixtures added to the schedule. CCB Azad will have their hands full with a pair of matches against established UPL opposition in Surrey United and Port



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Moody. They just played Port Moody away this past weekend, so they should know what to expect as the Gunners look to pick up an important six points against CCB and last place Vancouver United in the space of two days. SAFC Red Bulls and Abbotsford United have only each other to worry about this weekend, but it is an important fixture with Red Bulls coming off another solid performance, albeit in a losing effort, against second place Langley while first place Abbotsford were beaten in mid-week by title rivals Coastal. It is Coastal themselves who have the most compelling schedule, however. Having just beaten first place Abbotsford, they moved into pole position for the league title as they sit just two points behind Abby, but hold two games in hand. First up this weekend are another side challenging for the title, Langley United. United are currently level on points with Coastal, but, again, the South Surrey side hold a pair of games in hand. This makes this game an almost must win for Langley as they pass the halfway point of their UPL schedule. It all amounts to extra drama heaped on top of an already great rivalry. Having played twice already this season, once in the SC Cup and once in the UPL, with Coastal emerging victorious both times, Langley will be hungry for some modicum of revenge. There is absolutely no love lost between these two sides either with the teams amassing three red and eight yellow cards through their first two encounters. After that match, Coastal will make up one of their aforementioned games in hand when they turn their attention to finally playing Surrey United in mid-week after the first two meetings were both postponed.

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