



Fraser Valley Soccer League



October 11, 2019

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

The Umbro Premier League well and truly got into swing this week with all eight of the FVSL's top flight teams in action. Vancouver United and Langley United lifted the curtain on the UPL season last week so both sides got their second matches of the campaign under their belts this week, while the rest of the sides joined in to begin their league seasons. It was an official debut at the highest level for newcomers CCB Azad and newly promoted SAFC Red Bulls, while there was also a spicy preview of the upcoming Soccer City Premier League Cup final to whet the appetite between Coastal FC and Port Moody Gunners.

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

SAFC Red Bulls 3-0 Vancouver United – Friday 8:45pm; Cloverdale Athletic Park #1

Just like their first top level match in the SC Cup, SAFC Red Bulls began their life in the UPL with a win. To keep the similarities going, SAFC were once more led by standout striker **Emmanuel Ekeh**, who opened the scoring when he took advantage of a mistake in the Vancouver United backline to pounce and slot away the game's first goal. United were not deterred though and fought their way back into the match, particularly through **Maninder Dhillon** who had numerous looks to get the visitors on the board but was denied at every time of asking by SAFC keeper **Cameron Frost**. Even though both teams were creating chances, it would be the Red Bulls who found the crucial second goal with Ekeh once more the lynchpin, though **Christian Mendoza** would get credit for the goal. In the second half the physical play increased and SAFC were reduced to ten men. Vancouver United tried to push for a route back into the match with **Ben Crowther** and **Yimar Palacio** driving them on, but once more it was SAFC who struck the telling blow. **Kevan Nagra** looped a free kick from 30 yards out over United goalkeeper Jaskaran Dhillon to make the points safe. SAFC defenders **Brandon Nair** and **James Heffey**, along with keeper Frost, were instrumental in keeping the clean sheet for the Red Bulls while **Hamadoun Issabre** also had a top outing. Despite the loss, Vancouver United felt they played well and are close to capturing their first win of the season.

Langley United 0-2 Surrey United Firefighter – Friday 9pm; Yorkson Turf

It was yet another meeting for two of the FVSL's and UPL's most bitter rivals as Surrey United began their UPL campaign with a visit to Langley. Langley were coming off a win in their UPL opener the previous week when they beat Vancouver United and were looking to keep that momentum going. They certainly started the match brightly, doing much of the early running, but they found a resolute **Nuno Jesus** in the Surrey goal standing tall to repel them. Langley's leading scorer from SC Cup play, **Brody Thomas** was once more a menace on the night and with the newly returned **Connor Hildebrandt**, along with the always influential **Scott Barling**, Langley were battering Surrey in the opening exchanges, but they simply could not find a way through. Surrey were far from flustered by what Langley were throwing at them and **Sammy Kajzerek** and Firefighter veteran **Dave Adams** were slowly bringing the visitors into the match. Surrey were looking dangerous on the counter attack and they did indeed sting Langley when the pacey **Josh Miles**, who ran his usual marathon up and down the flanks all night, got down the wing and finished to give Firefighters the lead. Now trailing, Langley had even more impetus going forward but when called upon Jesus continued to make crucial saves until Surrey's U21 call up **Zack Scott** was able to double their advantage and ensure that Firefighters got their campaign off to a winning start. Despite the loss **Spencer McKinnon** and **Ryan Freda** also had good performances in this match as Langley were left scratching their heads about just how had their old rivals managed to steal the three points away in this match.



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Port Moody Gunners 1-3 Coastal FC – Saturday 4pm; Trasolini Turf

One week before they were due to meet in the SC Cup final, defending UPL Champions Port Moody Gunners welcomed last seasons runners up, Coastal FC, to Trasolini to kick off the league schedule for both teams. However, Port Moody will need to be much better next weekend if they hope to come away retaining the SC Cup as they were on the back foot for most of this match, largely as architects of their own down fall. A loose early pass gave Coastal's **Sean Northcote** a chance to intercept and get in on goal and he finished coolly to open the scoring and maintain his strong goal scoring form to begin the year. Then Coastal turned on the style as another of their plethora of offensive weapons, **Isaac Kyei**, latched onto a lovely through ball over the top and smashed it in on the half volley to score Coastal's second of the night. The Gunners turned to their bench to search for a spark and while **Vaughan Andrews** and **Corey McIlroy** certainly gave the home side a lift, it was Dale Long who really put in a top performance to try and help Port Moody fight their way back into this match. Long would get himself a goal, but Coastal's **Taj Sangara** scored a third goal for the away side when he nodded home from close range. Port Moody did not fold up shop though and continued to search for a way back into the game, unfortunately for them the door was firmly slammed shut in their face when Coastal keeper **Andrew Nemeth** made a top save on a penalty with ten minutes remaining. Despite not getting on the score sheet himself for the first time this season, Coastal's **Jake Starheim** was once again in top form as the straw that stirred the drink for the visitors. He and his teammates will hope to continue these strong performances next week in the SC Cup final, while Port Moody will be left ruminating on what potential adjustments to make ahead of the crucial cup showdown.

Abbotsford United 5-1 CCB Azad – Saturday 6pm; Mouat Turf #3

The other UPL debutants, CCB Azad, faced the long trek out to Abbotsford and, unfortunately for them, they were forced to journey home without anything to show for their efforts. Abbotsford got off to a bright start when Ishwar Bhatti, who was solid all match long, whipped in a dangerous cross that deflected off of CCB defender **Harman Aujla** and looped in over the CCB goalkeeper to open the scoring just ten minutes into the match. After the falling behind, CCB did well to get themselves back in the game and the contest settled in for the majority of the remainder of the first half. The visitors would eventually be rewarded for their persistence as a defensive calamity at the back led to stalwart Abbotsford goalkeeper **Mike Haladin** being judged to have handled a back-pass. This resulted in CCB being awarded an indirect from six yards out and the new boys made no mistake as **Jasdeep Gill** got the telling touch to knot the game up at one. The equalizer seemed to spark Abby, though, and, as half time approached, they were back on the front foot. **Reece Branion** had been dangerous all half and now finally took advantage on one of his chances after **Connor Robillard** spotted him around the penalty spot. Branion collected the pass and calmly tucked it away to restore the home side's lead. United would then nearly make things even better just a few minutes after going back in front when **Roshan Gosal** got in alone on a breakaway and beat the keeper, only to see a phenomenal recovery run from CCB centreback **Ernesto Artaega** allow the defender to slide in and clear the ball off the line. So Abbotsford had to settle for just a one goal lead at the break, however, only five minutes into the second period Gosal would carve out another chance thanks to some great work from **Colton O'Neill**. O'Neill had been giving the CCB defenders fits all night and this time he drove a cross through the goal area and found Gosal at the back post who tapped it in to double Abby's lead. O'Neill then earned himself a chance on goal when he got on the end of a cross from **Dan Goodey** and made not mistake on the finish. Branion rounded out the scoring for Abbotsford with his second of the match and Robillard again provided the assist. Defensively for United, Tammer Byrne was strong to rebuff CCB when they pressed in the first half as well as another good performance for Haladin in goal.



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Here's how the UPL Table looks after Week 2:

Umbro Premier (Fall) - Pool: A								
Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Abbotsford United A	1	1	0	0	5	1	4	3
SAFC Red Bulls	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
Coastal FC A	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
Surrey Utd Firefighters	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
Langley United A	2	1	0	1	3	2	1	3
Port Moody SC A	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0
CCB Azad	1	0	0	1	1	5	-4	0
Vancouver United SC	2	0	0	2	0	6	-6	0

BROWNS SOCIAL HOUSE PLAYER OF THE WEEK



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This week's Brown's Social House Player of the week is **Emmanuel Ekeh** from SAFC Red Bulls. Emmanuel followed up an impressive SC Cup campaign by leading newly promoted SAFC to victory in their first ever Umbro Premier League match. He had a goal to get things started in the Red Bulls 3-0 win over Vancouver United and was instrumental in the second goal of the match as well. Congratulations Emmanuel, you've won a \$25 gift card to Brown's Social House!



THIS WEEK'S UPL SCHEDULE:

Fri 10/11/2019 8:45PM

SAFC Red Bulls vs. Langley United

Cloverdale Ath. #1

Sat 10/12/2019 6:15PM

Vancouver United SC vs. Abbotsford United

Hjorth Turf #1

SOCCER CITY PREMIER LEAGUE CUP - FINAL:

Mon 10/14/2019 4:00PM

Coastal FC vs. Port Moody Gunners

Cloverdale Ath. #1

Some important points are on the line in the UPL this week as SAFC faces Langley for the first time at this level. Both teams already have a win under their belt this season and will be eyeing a place in the Provincial Cup come the New Year. Even though it is early in the season, pocketing these points now could be the perfect way to get a leg up given that only five teams can qualify. As for Vancouver United they are will just be looking to improve on their performance from Abbotsford's previous visit to Hjorth when the visitors coast to a 4-0 win in SC Cup play.

Speaking of which, while the UPL action should be top quality as always, the real appointment viewing this weekend have to be the first piece of silverware up for grabs in the 2019/20 FVSL season – the Soccer City Premier League Cup. This will be a rematch of last year's final and a clash of the two most recent winners of this trophy. Last season Port Moody triumphed over Coastal to dethrone them as SC



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Cup champions, having already supplanted them as UPL champions in league play. It was a bitter pill for Coastal to swallow as they were forced to settle for a pair of runner-up finishes and you can bet they have revenge on their minds. The match will also pit two of the FVSL's top strikers against each other in Coastal's Jake Starheim, who had scored in every single match so far this season until this week, and Port Moody's Graeme Meers, who won the Golden Boot last year as the top scorer in the Umbro Premier League. The teams do not have to go back far at all for inspiration though, as they happened to begin their respective UPL campaigns against each other last weekend. Coastal were the winner in that match and they will certainly be hoping that those points go some way to helping them supplant Port Moody atop the UPL and reclaiming their crown come the final tally in March. However, the points will likely do little to console them in the short term if they should wind up once more without a piece of silverware at the hands of the Gunners. This final is set to be a top showcase of what the FVSL has to offer, so come on out and be thankful for football on Thanksgiving Monday at Cloverdale Athletic Park to see who will lift this season's Soccer City Premier League Cup!

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