



Reading United A.C.
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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reading United outlast Atlanta Silverbacks in Open Cup showdown *United advance to second round following a gritty 2-0 victory*

READING, PA. (May 11, 2016) – It wasn't pretty but for the fifth consecutive season Reading United A.C. advanced to the Second Round of the U.S. Open Cup, defeating the visiting Atlanta Silverbacks, 2-0. United used goals by Khori Bennett and Frantzy Pierrot as well as some timely defending to earn the win.

With both clubs playing their first competitive match of the season, the game got off to a choppy start punctuated by mistimed passes and clumsy challenges. Midway through the first half, United found their feet and began to string passes together, looking to unlock the Atlanta defense.

Reading found the breakthrough in the 31st minute. After United earned a corner kick, William Picoux sent lofted ball into the six yard box. With the Silverbacks unable to clear the ball, Khori Bennett pounced and poked the loose ball across the goal line to stake Reading to a 1-0 lead.

United went in search of a second goal and nearly double their lead in the 43rd minute. Centerback Will Campbell raced forward and collected a pass from Brad Fountain in the center channel. Campbell played a perfectly weighted ball to the feet of Pierrot, but forward's shot sailed inches over the crossbar.

Following the halftime break, Atlanta came out and put the hosts under pressure. Despite having just two training sessions prior to the match, the Reading defense gelled and held the Silverbacks at bay. Union Academy products Campbell and Billy McConnell dominated the Atlanta attack, limiting the visitors to just four shots.

Atlanta were gifted an opportunity to level the score in the 79th minute. McConnell misjudged a long ball forward that found the feet of Silverbacks forward Denzel Clarke. McConnell raced back and harried the attacker, eventually winning a free kick after frustrating Clarke.

McConnell talked about his gritty play that kept Atlanta off the scoreboard. "It was kind of my fault that he had that chance. I misread the header. I worked as hard as I could to get that ball back and help keep the clean sheet."

Reading would seal their place in the Second Round of the Open Cup in the 86th minute. Substitute midfielder Ismael Noumansana collected a ball in the left channel and sent a blistering cross just over the Atlanta defense. Pierrot was unmarked on the back post, rounded Atlanta goalkeeper Bryce Billington and slotted home to double United's advantage.

Atlanta surged forward in the dying minutes of the match but were unable to trouble Reading goalkeeper Steffen Kraus. The 2-0 victory sends Reading to the second round, where the club will travel to face NPSL side Chattanooga FC on Wednesday, May 18th.

After securing a win in his Reading United coaching debut, Head Coach Stephen Hogan said, "We knew Atlanta was going to come out fast, but we matched them. It wasn't pretty, it was pretty sloppy at times but we knew if we could get it forward quickly to our top guys, we will create chances and we did." He continued, "There were a few messages we tried to get through to the boys as quickly as possible and they did it. They did the work off the ball. I've been telling them the last three days. They moved the ball nicely, but it's still a work in progress."

Reading United begin league play on the road at Lehigh Valley United on Sunday, May 15th at 12:00pm. The game will be played as part of a doubleheader with fellow Philadelphia Union affiliate Bethlehem Steel FC playing FC Montreal later in the afternoon.

Reading United return to Exeter High School's Don Thomas Stadium for their first home match on Saturday, May 28th at 7:00pm. United will welcome



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the reigning PDL Eastern Conference Champions, the New York Red Bulls U23s, in a crucial early season match-up that will set the tone in the Mid-Atlantic Divisional title race. Tickets for the home opener are available at www.readingunitedac.com or at the Don Thomas Stadium ticket office. Reading United offer 2016 Game Day Youth Packages, Group Discount Packages, Birthday Parties and Fundraising Ticket Packages. Contact our ticket sales team at sales@readingunitedac.com for all your group needs.

ABOUT READING UNITED AC

Reading United A.C. is the Greater Reading area's premier minor league soccer team. Led by the ownership group of Berks Professional Sports, Inc. the club was founded in 1995 as the Reading Rage. As the club entered its 15th season a name, logo, and color change was made to better feature the ties to the local and state community as well as the soccer goals of the team and its partners. Now in its twenty-first season, Reading United's commitment to professional player development has produced over fifty players currently on the rosters of professional clubs throughout the United States, Europe and South America. Reading United is the official Premier Development League affiliate of Major League Soccer's Philadelphia Union. For more information about Reading United AC, visit www.readingunitedac.com.



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