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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reading United defeat Christos in Open Cup thriller *United win penalty shootout 5-4 to claim victory*

READING, PA (May 9, 2018) – Reading United A.C. overcame an early setback and the lottery of a penalty kick shootout to survive and advance in the 2018 Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup, claiming a 5-4 win in the shootout over visiting Christos FC following a 1-1 draw after extra time. Kieran Roberts' goal in the 59th minute allowed United to tie the match and his clutch kick from the penalty spot in the shootout set off joyful celebrations around Alvernia University Stadium as United advanced to the Second Round of the U.S. Open Cup for the seventh straight season.

Christos FC jumped out to an early lead in the game's 4th minute. A clumsy challenge following a turnover in the Reading United half gifted Christos a free kick and early scoring opportunity. Tyler Rudy took the free kick twenty-five yards from goal and saw his effort deflect off the Reading United defensive wall and left United goalkeeper Bennet Strutz stranded as the ball nestled into the net to stake the visitors to a 1-0 lead.

The hosts roared back as United created a catalog of chances throughout the first half as they looked to even the scoreline. Khori Bennett nearly equalized in 29th minute when he raced into the box and unleashed a low blast that Christos GK Phil Saunders palmed away. A minute later, United midfielder Aaron Molloy was unlucky to have not tied the match as he took a shot through traffic that the Christos defense scrambled off the goal line.

United continued to pile the pressure on Christos. In the 37th minute, Saunders denied United forward Kieran Roberts' stinging effort with an athletic diving save.

As the teams went into the locker rooms at halftime, Christos clung to a slim 1-0 lead as Reading United failed to capitalize on their many chances in the first half.

The opening minutes of the second half was more of the same as United continued to lay siege to the Christos defense. The hosts would finally breakthrough as the match neared the hour mark.

Reading substitute midfielder Sebastian Hauret darted through the Christos midfield and played a well weighted ball to the feet of Roberts, who had gotten in behind the visitors backline and slotted home to pull Reading United level at 1-1.

The two teams battled back and forth throughout the game's final thirty minutes, but a combination of solid defense and unlucky finishing saw the sides knotted at 1-1 as the referee blew for full time.

In extra time, United again had the better opportunities as the visitors began to tire. Reading had a golden chance to take the lead in the second half of extra time following a foul by a Christos defender 30 yards from goal. Aaron Molloy, United's free kick specialist, cracked a shot that seemed destined for the back of the net, but Saunders denied the Irishman with an acrobatic diving stop.

With nothing to separate the two sides, the match went to penalty kicks. United goalkeeper Bennet Strutz denied Christos' second spot kick to open the door for Reading. Molloy, Hauret, Thibault Chretien and Alex Lipinski scored on their penalty kicks to set up the chance for Roberts to be the hero. The Englishman sealed the win as his penalty kick sent Saunders the wrong way. Reading will face professional opposition in the second round in the form of the United Soccer League's Richmond Kickers.

Reading United will look to carry the momentum from the big win in the Open Cup through to their next match as the team opens league play this Saturday, May 12th when they make the short trip to Allentown to face Lehigh Valley United. Kickoff from Allentown's J. Birney Crum Stadium is set for 7:00pm. Reading's first home league match is set for Saturday, May 26th against F.A. Euro at Wilson High School's Gurski Stadium in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania. Tickets for all Reading United home matches are available online at www.readingunitedac.com/tickets or on game day at the Gurski Stadium ticket office.



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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-third 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 Latin 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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