



Reading United A.C.
3103 Paper Mill Rd.
Wyomissing, PA 19610
www.readingunitedac.com

Press Release

Contact: Sean Doyle, Director of Social Media
sean@readingunitedac.com
484-269-0319

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Philadelphia Union Festival thrills local fans *Reading battle Bethlehem to a 1-1 draw in friendly match*

READING, PA (June 26, 2018) – On a picture perfect summer evening in Berks County, the 2018 Philadelphia Union Festival offered fans a healthy dose of soccer, nostalgia and a vision of the future. On the field at Wilson High School's Gurski Stadium, the professional players of Bethlehem Steel F.C. played the aspiring pros of Reading United to a 1-1 draw. The friendly match was a part of a celebration of all things Philadelphia Union and featured the return of Reading United stars from the past, appearances by some of the upcoming stars of the Union and a thrilling ending that sent fans home singing Reading United's goal song, DOOP.

The night highlighted the importance of the Union Way, a developmental path designed to funnel young local talent through the Philadelphia Union's Academy system, on to Reading United and Bethlehem Steel and culminates in a Major League Soccer contract with the Union. Union players Anthony Fontana and Auston Trusty, both highly touted graduates of the Union academy, greeted fans throughout the night. Former United goalkeeper John McCarthy, now with the Union, was back in Reading and had the honor of taking the ceremonial first kick.

The friendly match between the Union's affiliates was largely controlled by the pros from Bethlehem. Former Reading United captain and head coach Stephen Hogan, now an assistant head coach with the Steel, set out many of his side's starters such as captain James Chambers, dynamic midfielder Santi Moar and Reading alum Mike Catalano.

Steel added a pair of crafty veterans to their line-up in the 61st minute when Coach Hogan subbed on a pair of Union legends. Fred, a member of the Philadelphia Union's inaugural team, and Kleberson, a member of Brazil's 2002 World Cup winning team and a Manchester United star, entered the match to test the mettle of United's young stars. Both Fred and Kleberson are now coaches in the Union's growing academy system.

Bethlehem took the lead midway through the second half when Steel defender Prosper Chiluya hit an inch perfect cross to a streaking Connor McDonald, who thunder a shot past Reading goalkeeper Jean Carles Perez Castro to give the pros a 1-0 lead.

Undeterred by the one goal deficit, Reading United fought back and would draw level just before the final whistle. Kutztown Area High School grad Pierre Reedy started the attack down the right flank before feeding Ezana Kahsay. Kahsay drove toward the endline and curled in a low cross that found an unmarked Spencer Burkhardt, who hammered his chance into the net for the equalizer.

Burkhardt, now in his second season with Reading, was thrilled to share the pitch with the pros from Bethlehem. "We see these guys competing every week on TV and in front of big crowds. That's our dream here at Reading, to get to where they are. So just to play against them and to show how we compare is really big." Through a big grin, Burkhardt continued, "Even playing against Kleberson and Fred, former pros and a former World Cup winner, that's just something you dream about doing and it was really exciting and a great learning experience."

Former Governor Mifflin High School soccer standout Ammit Bhogal, who made his Reading United debut in the second half, summed up the evening, saying, "It's an amazing feeling. I've lived in Reading my whole life. I remember I used to be a ball boy for the team and I'd sit up in the stands every game and now I'm out here, putting on the Reading jersey, which is a dream come true."

Reading United return to league play on Friday, June 29th when they host the Evergreen Hammers at Gurski Stadium. Kickoff is set for 7:00pm

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, South America and China. 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.



Official Premier Development League affiliate of the Philadelphia Union

