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Onz Chery  · Nov 2, 2019 · 4 min read

October recap: Painful but hopeful

*Cosmopolitan Soccer League side Sporting SC went winless in October but is hopeful about next month after making a roster-makeover.*



Gameshot of Sporting SC's match versus Lansdowne Yonkers F.C. on Oct. 16, 2019.

Zum Schneider F.C. 03 was supposed to be the team they were going to beat to boost their confidence up and kick the month of October on a good note.

“We just needed that one team that we could feel confident enough to beat,” Sporting SC founder Edgardo ‘Ed’ Romero said, his voice lightly raising through the phone. “Zum Schneider, we thought it was them.”

Sporting ended their first month in the Cosmopolitan Soccer League's first division with a 1W-2L record and sat in eighth place. The Bronx based club notably stunned 2017 champions NY Greek Americans, 3-2, but bowed down to Doxa SC, 2-0, and to Cedar Stars Academy, 4-1.

SSC's match against Zum on Oct. 13 was their first ever home game in the top-flight. The location of the encounter was at Soundview Park in the Bronx, a city the club proudly reps. They're the only team in the first division that plays in the Bronx.

The fact that it was Sporting's home opener came back and haunted them. Zum Schneider noticed that the home team's nets were hanging on the turf, which is against the league's field requirements. Zum reported it to the referee.

Ed and his men tried to fix the problem but ran out of time. The referee called the game, giving ZSFC the victory.

No home opener, no chance to see if they can boost their confidence versus Zum. But instead it was an automatic third loss of the season without breaking a sweat.

"For this to happen, for us not to play and lose," Ed said a bit agitated. His voice dropped: "It kind of morally sank the team, you know what I mean?"

The Peruvian-American later added: "Ever since that Zum Schneider game, we were kind of affected mentally and morally."



Sporting SC players and manager Ed Romero (second on the right) in a huddle. Sporting SC Images

Ed made an appeal to the league but they declined it. He later made an appeal to Eastern New York State Soccer Association and is waiting for a response.

Three days after the match versus Zum, SSC had an away game against the Amateur Cup champions Lansdowne Yonkers F.C. At that time, Ed hadn't heard from the league about his appeal yet so the club didn't know whether the forfeit was going to stand or if they were going to reschedule the match.

"The guys were like 'Are we going to lose it? Are we going to get a chance to play again?' I didn't have enough time to give them an answer," the head manager recalled.

"So the guys were still thinking about that loss, not knowing what's going to happen. We tried to get them not to think about that anymore and just focus on Lansdowne."

On top of that it was raining the night of the match versus Lansdowne and some players came late to the game because of their work schedule and whatnot, two of them being one of the team's heroes in the playoffs last year, Kendon Anderson and star winger Saul Corado-Ramirez.

Lansdowne opened the scoring around the 15th minute mark. They scored two more goals in the first half and one after the break to make it 4-0.

Corado-Ramirez netted a consolation goal late in the game for SSC. Bernard 'Ben' Asiedu sent a through pass to the winger, who cut inside the box before shooting the ball to the top far-corner.

"Well, scoring a goal for the team is always something that gives pride and it reflects the hard work I put in," Corado-Ramirez said about his second goal of the season.

Nevertheless, SSC's second loss of the month was tough to swallow.

"Aw man, it was bad," Ed lamented. "We put a good effort in the second half. But we just can't be satisfied with that."

Sporting's next outing was versus fellow newcomers KidSuper Samba AC. Not only was it a must-win game but also an encounter that would tell the team if they should change things up or remain the same.

"We needed to pull a win. We needed to get everything together and pull a win against KidSuper Samba. That was the do-or-die game," Ed said.

"That's the game that was going to make a difference. It was either going to tell us we were going the wrong direction or we finally got the break we needed and now we can take this momentum to go forward."

Before this crucial match, the club was hit with a huge blow. They were building the team around centre forward Travis Cantrell, a former Ivy League phenom with University of Pennsylvania. Cantrell played a huge role in Sporting's win against the Greeks.

The American parted ways from Sporting before their must-win game to join New York Pancyprian Freedoms. Ed's men had to cope with being without their key player against their fellow newcomers.

Samba scored first around the 25th minute and then again 10 minutes later. They netted two more goals in the second period to hit SSC with a 4-0 defeat.

Hence, Ed concluded that the team was going the wrong direction. Throughout the match, he was already thinking of ways to “fix it by unfortunately making tough decisions.”

The club released 10 players, including their star forward Kendon Anderson.

On a flip note, they brought eight high caliber players: former Cedar Stars Academy man Sikele 'Kele' Sylvester, Javaun Waugh, Dwight Ceballo, ex-Suffolk County Community College star player, Joseph Lopez, Byran Dia, and defender Michael Natsu and keeper Laurence Girard returned to the team.



Former Lansdowne Yonkers F.C. and Cedar Star Academy midfielder Sikele 'Kele' Sylvester was part of Sporting SC's blitz of signings in October. Hess Boys Photography

Maximilian Mansfield also returned to the club but as the head coach.

The CSL is a league of transfers. And this game-plan had been successful over the years, for example, NY Greeks went from eighth spot to winning the league in 2017 after signing a load of players.

Sporting is playing the game as their opponents have been doing in order to survive.

“We don’t want the season to escape from us, so...” Ed said.

SSC sits at the very bottom of the standings. They will play eighth placed NY Athletic Club, ninth placed NY Shamrocks SC and league toppers Zum in November.

Ed feels optimistic going into this month.

“This is our month,” he said. “We can’t do more than this. We changed the roster and brought in good players and we’re playing two teams that are in the same situation we are in [bottom-half teams Shamrocks and NYAC].”

November surely looks brighter for SSC but only time will tell.