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El Salvador Punishes USVI in 7-0 Rout

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El Salvador scores a goal Saturday night at the Estate Bethlehem Soccer Stadium on St. Croix. By. KYLE MURPHY FOR VI CONSORTIUM

ESTATE BETHLEHEM, ST. CROIX — The Virgin Islands will finish in the bottom of Group A in their 2022 World Cup Qualifying campaign after a deflating loss to El Salvador 7-0 Saturday night, with 5 goals being scored in the last 15 minutes of the contest.

El Salvador dominated possession from the start of the game and their initial breakthrough came in the 22nd minute when Marvin Monterrossa volleyed a cross and found the back of the net. Juan Carlos Portillo tapped the ball into an empty net for El Salvador's second goal after a teammate caused the goalkeeper to charge before passing him the ball in the 30th minute.

The Virgin Islands' most dangerous moment of the game came in the second half when the team got a free kick just outside the 18-yard box, but the attempt didn't require a save by El Salvador as it flew over the crossbar.

The El Salvadorian chances started to mount in the second half, and when the goals finally started scoring, the ball couldn't stop finding the back of the net.



In the 77th minute, David Rugamas scored and the floodgates opened for El Salvador. A minute later Walmer Martinez scored as El Salvador wasted no time getting back possession and creating a dangerous chance that Martinez converted. Rugamas scored again in the 82 and 89th minutes while Monterrosa scored his second in the 86th minute to round out the El Salvadoran scoring for the night.

The Virgin Islands head coach for the match, Roberto Da Silva said during a post-game press conference, "It's always tough to play one of the best countries in our region. It's a challenge."

When asked why did the game go south, Mr. Da Silva said, "Maybe because it's a younger group, maybe they felt the pressure playing at home in front of the crowd. It's a process to give them the experience that they need. It takes time."

He added, "We got to give the younger players a chance to play and get the experience that they need and see what happens. I believe it takes a good 2-3 years to give them the experience and exposure that they need and become a better team."

Mr. Da Silva was filling in for the national team manager Gilberto Damiano Maciel Junior.

Goalkeeper for the USVI, Lionel Brown, said "We are a growing team, so we are going to have some growing pains and this is part of the process. You never want to lose like this, especially at home but you try and take the positives as much as you can and try to learn from it."

Defender Karson Kendall said, "The majority of the game it was 2-0 and I thought we did a pretty good job, but when it rains, it pours."

The Virgin Islands will finish the group in last place after failing to score a goal or record a point in their four games in 2022 World Cup qualifier.

Mr. Brown understood why El Salvador did not let their foot off the pedal. "Qualification is going to be tough because there's two teams fighting for that top spot so goal difference does become an issue, which does increase the urgency for them to get as many as they can. They are going to go for blood which is the right thing to do in this sport; there's no need to have mercy. If we give you something, take it and that's what it's about and that's exactly what they did today and they punished us every chance they got," he said in the post-match press conference.

With the lopsided results Saturday night, El Salvador will need just a draw to advance to the second round of the World Cup qualifying games when they take on Antigua and Barbuda Tuesday night.