

SPORTS



Best in Major League Soccer Timbers find perfection as post season champs

(AP) The Portland Timbers had a plan to attack early in their first MLS Cup appearance. They didn't expect it to work to perfection so quickly.

Diego Valeri scored 27 seconds after the opening whistle for the fastest goal in Major League Soccer Cup history to stun the Columbus Crew and their home fans Sunday in Columbus, Ohio.

A second goal in the seventh minute by Rodney Wallace provided all the scoring the Timbers needed to beat the Crew 2-1 for their first league title.

The first goal came when Columbus midfielder Wil Trapp sent a back pass to goalkeeper Steve Clark, who tried to move the ball from his right foot to the left for a clearance. But Clark didn't see Valeri closing and the midfielder

poked the ball away from him and into the goal. The Crew had barely recovered when a mental gaffe gave Portland a controversial second goal.

Crew midfielder Tony Tchani and several teammates stopped playing when the ball rolled several feet over the right boundary. Instead of a stoppage for a throw-in, Portland's Darlington Nagbe kept going with the ball and sent a pass wide to Lucas Melano, who found Wallace for the header.

Kei Kamara, the Crew star who tied for the MLS regular-season lead in goals with 22, made it 2-1 in the 18th minute off a poor punch of the ball by Timbers goalkeeper Adam Larsen Kwarasey.

But that was the only shot on target among the nine Columbus took in the match.

"We were never in danger," Portland coach Caleb Porter said. "We were comfortable. We were tight. We saw the game out. We shut it down. That's a part of winning."

The victory capped a three-year mission for Porter, who led the University of Akron to an NCAA title in 2010 before leaving in August 2012 to join the Timbers.

Even though Portland has been in MLS only since 2011, the Timbers go 40 years back to the North American Soccer League when they played for a championship and lost to the Tampa Bay Rowdies in the 1975 NASL Cup.

The Timbers are the 13th club to reach the MLS Cup and the 10th to win it.

Columbus Crew midfielder Wil Trapp (left) heads the ball away from Portland Timbers forward Darlington Nagbe in the first half of the championship MLS Cup match Sunday in Columbus, Ohio. Portland went on to defeat the Crew 2-1 to claim their first national title. (AP photo)

Far West Classic Returns

The spirit of a legendary 40-year holiday basketball tradition returns this month when Oregon State University and University of Portland host the Far West Classic Invite at Moda Center.

The two-day doubleheader features the Pilots against Weber

State on Friday night, Dec. 18, followed by Cal State Fullerton and the Beavers. On Saturday, Dec. 19 Portland faces Cal State Fullerton while Oregon State takes on Tulsa.

For tickets and more information, visit rosequarter.com

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