



BOUNCINGS



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17 Mar 17

Stare Byki	1	National Soccer League 1st Division
Vikings	5	The Odeum 10 March 2017

Vikings too much for Byki

The second-place Vikings pounded an overmatched Byki side last Friday, winning by a decisive 5:1 margin. The score might easily have reached double digits if not for the heroics of goalkeeper Ray Najera, who saw plenty of action, and repelled a boatload of shots.

Both teams suited up just nine players, but the Vikings put on a clinic on how to play at pace, despite having to deal with a short bench. Their style emphasized possession and a high level of understanding between teammates that never left them shorthanded when they chose to push forward. "Their style is both simple and fantastic," said coach George Gorecki. "There is little wonder that they are at the top of the table."

The Byki were quite good when playing short, quick passes versus Wisla C in their previous match. But the experienced Vikings were a lot better at closing space and shutting off passing angles than Wisla's teenagers. The Byki foundered right from the outset, coughing up possession quite easily and being forced back into a defensive posture.

"Sometimes a team has to adjust to what an opponent is doing," noted Gorecki. "I wish that we had been better at ball possession. But our defensive shape was pretty good in the first half. With Ray back there, we were in it the whole time. It was then up to us to figure a way to consistently get the ball forward." The Byki never did figure it out, and for long stretches, the match resembled an offense/defense training exercise.

The Vikings wasted little time putting their stamp on the contest. They pushed forward incessantly from the start and Najera notched two top-quality saves in the first four minutes.

And the plan for the Byki was looking good when they conjured a goal against the run of play at the 5:45 mark. Alan Stevens won a loose ball at the Vikings defensive line and found Alen Mehagic in the middle. Mehagic

turned his marker adroitly and sneaked a low shot past the outstretched arm of the Vikings goalie for an unlikely 1:0 lead.

Although the Byki were unable to build much offense based on that early strike, they kept things tidy and organized in the back.

The Vikings leveled the affair with 6:35 left in the half following a sequence of withering pressure on the Byki defense. Weak and ineffective attempts at clearing the ball out of danger allowed the Vikings to enjoy an extended spell of possession. They got their reward off of a corner kick, finding an open man in the middle of the Byki penalty area. Najera had no chance on the first-time shot. The goal had a feeling of inevitability to it, yet it was a bitter pill for the Byki to have lost a mark so easily on a dead-ball play.

The score went to 2:1 just 1:56 before the break. A long pass out of the back put a Vikings striker 1 v 1 in the Byki zone. He blew into the open space and easily beat Najera on the breakaway.

The Byki desperately needed halftime to regroup and to find a way to regain the defensive discipline that had slipped away late in the first half. Instead, they crumbled under the weight of a Vikings onslaught to start the second stanza. Two goals in the first 3:38 essentially put the result to bed.

They caught the Byki on a counterattack at the 1:57 mark. The Byki had pushed players forward and were too slow to recover when they lost possession. The Vikings sprinted ahead on a 3 v 2 breakout and made it look easy at 3:1.

The fourth Vikings goal came after the Byki were too compact in their defensive zone and allowed far too much

Outdoor training

SUNDAY, MAR 19

**Olympic Park, Field 2
Schaumburg, IL**

**10.00 AM - Over 40 & Over 48
11.30 AM - First Team & Over 30**

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time and space for the Vikings to work the ball. Unmarked players are usually the ones who do the damage and an open Viking in the middle slammed the ball into the back of the net.

The Byki had no reply for this rapid blitz of goals. The balance of the match was a game of cat and mouse, with the Byki playing the role of the dazed and confused mouse.

The Vikings wrapped up the scoring when they converted a power play opportunity with 4:24 left in the match. They patiently worked the ball from side to side until they found the opening that they needed. A striker shot from the top of the arc, giving Najera no chance.

The Byki played with spirit and effort, but the Vikings simply brought too much quality. The Byki really needed to go a step above their normal level and could not find a way to get there.

BYKI LINEUP (2-2-1): Najera – Stevens, Stamatinos (c) – De Rama, Champagne – Mehagic. **Bench:** Bickel, Khankari, Rodriguez.

BYKI SCORING SUMMARY

1:0 – Mehagic 3 (Stevens); 5:45.

Byki Man of the Match: Ray Najera.

Byki Stats

FIRST TEAM, NSL 1st DIVISION

Player	G	A	Pts
Kramarz	8	9	17
Sauerman	8	3	11
De Rama	5	3	8
Rodriguez	5	3	8
Stevens	2	6	8
Ciszewski	6	1	7
Banbor	4	3	7
Sokolowski	2	4	6
Mowry	3	1	4
Stamatinos	1	3	4
Khankari	2	0	2
Mehagic	2	0	2
Sabo	1	1	2
Champagne	1	0	1
Kekus	1	0	1
Bickel	0	1	1
Boeckeler	0	1	1
Najera	0	1	1

Goalie	Min	GA	GAA
Stevens	2	0	0.00
Najera	402	46	4.35
Mehagic	38	5	5.00
Khankari	90	14	5.91
Banbor	38	7	7.00

Current record: 3-1-11

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE STANDINGS

March 10, 2017

www.nslchicago.org

CHAMPIONS DIVISION

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Albanian Stars	14	11	3	0	65	36	36
CKS Warta	14	9	3	2	58	41	30
Deportivo Guerrero	14	9	1	4	53	31	28
Bosnia-Herzegovina A	14	8	1	5	61	50	25
SAC Wisla A	14	5	2	7	47	55	17
Vikings AA	14	5	1	8	50	52	16
Real Michoacan	14	1	2	11	28	56	5
Czarny Dunajec	14	1	1	12	38	79	4

MAJOR DIVISION

	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Berber Stars	15	11	2	2	70	29	35
AAC Winged Bull	15	10	1	4	69	44	31
SAC Wisla B	15	9	2	4	84	54	29
FC Tryzub	15	9	1	5	65	49	28
Albania FC	15	7	1	7	60	60	22
HDS Eagles	15	6	2	7	60	63	20
Jagiellonia	15	6	0	9	52	57	18
Urahan FC	15	5	1	9	58	71	16
Stal Mielec	15	4	0	11	42	89	12
SC Unia Chicago	15	3	0	12	32	76	9

FIRST DIVISION

Red Section	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts	Blue Section	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
FC United	15	13	1	1	101	36	40	Chicago Dynasty FC	15	13	1	1	83	28	40
Vikings AA Over 30	15	13	1	1	82	29	40	Matehuala FC	15	8	2	5	69	58	26
FC Kosova	15	8	0	7	77	70	24	HNK Primorac	15	7	2	6	82	66	23
Chicago Inter Blue	15	5	1	9	46	71	16	Chicago Blast	15	7	1	7	72	60	22
Bosnia-Herzegovina B	15	5	1	9	72	79	16	SAC Wisla C	15	2	1	12	54	97	7
Stare Byki FC	15	3	1	11	52	72	10	Chicago Inter Yellow	15	0	0	15	25	149	0