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BYU soccer falls to  
Coventry City

**JARED LLOYD** - Daily Herald

The BYU soccer team entered Tuesday's friendly match at South Field knowing it would be facing a more talented, more practiced, more battle-tested squad in English Championship League visitor Coventry City.

But even though the visitors looked to have most of the advantages, the Cougars proved that they can play soccer, as well.

Although the home team ended up on the short end of a 3-0 score, BYU had to be pleased with its overall performance.

"Although we're not as good as they are, we went toe-to-toe with them after the first 10 minutes," Cougar head coach Chris Watkins said. "I thought both our starters and our reserves did well. At the end, we went a little too deep on our bench and it cost us."

Early on, the more experienced visitors looked like they would run BYU off the field. The Sky Blues put a pair of precise crosses into the Cougar penalty box and only failed to score because they couldn't get the ball on target.

But BYU settled down and squeezed in the defense, making it more difficult for Coventry City. The professional team still dominated play, possessing the ball with ease and putting almost continual pressure on the BYU goal, but things broke down as it neared the penalty box.

"I thought our play in the attacking third in the first half was sloppy," Coventry City manager Micky Adams said. "In the second half we picked up the pace and did better."

The starters for both teams performed well and neither team scored before heading into the lockerroom.

"Our guys were excited," Watkins said. "It was awesome. Then in the second half we got some great chances and that's all you can ask for."

The visitors finally broke through in the 58th minute and star striker Gary McSheffrey made it worth the wait.

He took a pass from Stephen Hughes in full stride down the left side of the field. Barely slowing, he flicked the ball behind his front leg to get past a BYU defender, then buried a shot inside the far post to put the Sky Blues in front.

Even though both sides made wholesale changes, the Cougars didn't fold. They made things interesting in the final 15 minutes by attacking and trying to get the equalizer.

BYU just missed scoring on a couple of opportunities, one of which might've been a defensive handball but no call was made.

Coventry City then proceeded to put the game away, taking advantage of some mix-ups on the right side of the Cougar defense to put in two more goals in the last four minutes of play.

Adams said he was impressed with the overall product BYU put on the field.

"Give all the credit to BYU," he said. "I've never seen a team that was more fit or more energetic. They're a credit to the university and to themselves."

The Coventry City manager said he thinks that what BYU needs to get to the next level is just "football knowledge."

"You get that by playing games against better players," Adams said. "It's something you acquire over years of play. To be a professional, you have to understand the game."

Watkins said he thinks his squad can learn from what the visitors showed on the field.

"They played with confidence," the BYU coach said. "I was impressed with their movement of the ball and their technical knowledge. Those were good things for us to see."

The two teams will play another friendly match tonight at South Field at 7 p.m.

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