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Serrano nets hat trick as CSUF men's soccer dominates home opener, 6-1

By Grace Min
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Midfielder Erick Serrano recorded his first career hat trick, converting on all three shots he took. (Robert Gonzalez / Daily Titan)

After three consecutive losses on the road, the Cal State Fullerton men’s soccer team dominated against Utah Tech, winning 6-1 in the team’s home opener at Titan Stadium Sunday.

The win was much needed for the team that had been outdueled by multiple tough squads to open the season.

For midfielder Erick Serrano, who recorded the first hat trick of his career, it was a matter of time before the Titans came together and displayed their renowned offensive capabilities.

“From the beginning, we came in with intensity,” Serrano said. “After losing three games on the road, there’s a lot for us to look at, it just brings this hunger out in you that you have to get the first one.”

Serrano was one of four goal scorers for the Titans, joined by offensive threats Roberto Ordonez, Sulaiman Bah and substitute forward Mario Carlos.

“I told the guys we’re gonna unload on somebody because of our frustration, and we know we can score goals,” said head coach George Kuntz. “This is a group that can score goals, and it was just a matter of time.”

Ordonez and Bah, the Titans’ two leading scorers last season, each recorded three assists, reflecting the selfless and confident effort often displayed by the team.

Making the proper corrections as a team after the three losses was essential to the team’s success Sunday.

“We scheduled intentionally to play tough teams, to expose what weaknesses we have and to challenge us,” Kuntz said. “We want our guys to be confident.”

The Titans hit the ground running early in the game, scoring the first goal within the first 10 minutes of the match. Serrano blew past the defenders to rack up his first of three goals, set up on a pass from Jorge Quintero at the ninth minute.

The team quickly found their rhythm on the field, translating strong defense into offense.

“We talked about defending better today,” Kuntz said. “The counterattack was on cue, especially in the second half.”

In the second half, Carlos scored the Titans’ second goal at the 61st minute, just before Utah Tech forward Elijah Dinkel cut the lead in half just three minutes later.

In the 74th minute, Bah scored the team’s third goal off a counterattack. Shortly after, he and midfielder Robert Ordonez assisted Serrano’s second goal of the game to extend the lead.

“Today we had to, from the first minute on, keep the same energy and be aggressive,” Bah said. “That’s what we did, and that’s what got us the result today.”

At the 79th minute mark, Serrano managed to gain possession and set up a sequence for Bah and Ordonez to assist him yet again to complete his hat trick.

“The biggest thing for us is that we’re a family. This is the second year that the front lineup has been playing together, so we compliment each other really well,” Serrano said.

In the end, the team’s camaraderie shone through, as Bah and midfielder Damian Espinoza assisted Ordonez for his first goal of the season in the 85th minute.

“A lot of people look at the previous scores that we’ve had, but looking at the score is far more beyond what it’s really been,” Serrano said. “I knew that eventually things were going to fall into place.”

CSUF will look to build off the offensive barrage against another tough test, as they face UCLA this Thursday at 7 p.m. at Wallis Annenberg Stadium.

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