



Reading United A.C.  
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## Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Reading United survive, advance with dramatic 4-3 win over Myrtle Beach** *Teams combine for six second half goals to set up wild finish*

**READING, PA (July 20, 2018)** – Survive and advance. It's a cliché often used during playoff season and it applied to Reading United's (13-0-2) dramatic 4-3 win over the visiting Myrtle Beach Mutiny in the Premier Development League's Eastern Conference semifinal match at Wilson High School's Gurski Stadium. United needed goals from Kalil Elmedkhar, Khori Bennett and Kieran Roberts to counter the Mutiny's three goal second half outburst. With the win, United will face a familiar foe in division rivals, the New York Red Bulls U23s, in the Eastern Conference Final at Gurski Stadium on Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm.

Following some early sparring with the South Atlantic Division champions, United would open the scoring in the game's 27<sup>th</sup> minute. Reading midfielder Felipe Hideki started an attacking move, cutting in from the right to play a quick one-two with forward Khori Bennett. The move opened just enough space for Felipe to pick out a pass to Kalil Elmedkhar, who was making a run into the Myrtle Beach penalty area. Elmedkhar flicked a shot with the outside of his right boot past the outstretched hand of Mutiny goalkeeper Jose Santos to give the hosts a 1-0 lead.

The teams would head in to halftime break with Reading holding their 1-0 advantage, but business was about to pick up in intensity.

Looking to storm their way back into the match, Myrtle Beach came out of the halftime break with their tails up. The visitors pinned Reading into their defensive half, controlling play and looking for holes in United's stout defense. Reading United would hold their guests at bay for over fifteen minutes, defending as a team to limit the Mutiny to just one shot despite a lopsided advantage in possession for the visitors.

The Mutiny would get their equalizer in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute. Off a short corner, United defender Isaac Currie mishit a wayward Myrtle Beach cross into traffic that Yuta Yamamoto headed into the Reading goal to make it 1-1.

United would strike back immediately. Reading midfielder Zach Zandi took control of possession near midfield and dribbled upfield where he played a sumptuous ball into space for Khori Bennett to run on to. The in-form United forward split two Myrtle Beach defenders and lasered a shot past Santos to make it 2-1 to Reading.

Myrtle Beach would fight back again and would even the match in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute. The Mutiny's leading scorer Jon Ander, who had entered the match in the 74<sup>th</sup> minute, lashed a low drive that Reading goalkeeper Bennet Strutz palmed wide. The rebound fell at the feet of Romario Piggott, who slammed the ball home leveling the game at 2-2.

Two minutes later, United looked primed to take the lead when a wild sequence erupted in the Myrtle Beach penalty area. In a span of seconds, Reading fired five shots on the Mutiny goal, only to be denied by a series of blocks and spectacular saves to keep the teams knotted at 2-2.

Three minutes from time, United would again grab the lead. Felipe sent substitute midfielder Matt Greer deep into Mutiny territory with a seeing eye pass down the right. Greer cut inside quickly and sent a sizzling cross across the face of goal. Bennett made a perfect run to meet Greer's cross and knocked the ball into the net to make it 3-2 to Reading.

The teams weren't finished as two minutes into stoppage time, Reading would grab what would turn out to be an important insurance goal. Kutztown High School alum Pierre Reedy found space down the right channel and beat his defender to the endline before spotting Kieran Roberts' trailing run. Reedy laid the ball off for Roberts who had time and space and rocketed a shot into the Mutiny goal to make it 4-2.

The Mutiny provided Reading and their celebrating fans with a very late scare. A defensive miscue along the Reading backline allowed the Mutiny's Ander to slip behind the Reading defense and thump a shot into the United goal to pull within one goal at 4-3.

The clock was Reading United's ally as Myrtle Beach left their rally much too late. The referee's final whistle sent United on to the Eastern Conference Final for the second time in three years and left the valiant Myrtle Beach players crestfallen on the pitch at Gurski Stadium.

Head Coach Alan McCann spoke after the match about his team's gutsy victory over Myrtle Beach, saying, "That's the playoffs, isn't it. It's a semifinal, it's win or go home. The character of the team, sticking to the game plan has come to fruition. I'm very happy with that." He continued, "We spoke about



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the hard moments that are going to come. It's part of knockout football. If you can get through it or react to it, even if you concede, then that's the character, then that's how you win a game like that."

With less than twenty-four hours to recover, United will now host the New York Red Bulls U23s in the Eastern Conference Finals at Gurski Stadium on Saturday evening, with kickoff set for 7:00pm. The winner will advance to the Premier Development League National Semifinal at a location to be determined.

#### **ABOUT READING UNITED AC**

Reading United A.C. is the Greater Reading area's premier minor league soccer team. Led by the ownership group of Berks Professional Sports, Inc. the club was founded in 1995 as the Reading Rage. As the club entered its 15<sup>th</sup> season a name, logo, and color change was made to better feature the ties to the local and state community as well as the soccer goals of the team and its partners. Now in its twenty-third season, Reading United's commitment to professional player development has produced over fifty players currently on the rosters of professional clubs throughout the United States, Europe and Latin America. Reading United is the official Premier Development League affiliate of Major League Soccer's Philadelphia Union. For more information about Reading United AC, visit [www.readingunitedac.com](http://www.readingunitedac.com).



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