

THE NEW JERSEY SOCCER GROUP

Press Release



**Three Goals in Second Period Overturn Blaze
South Brunswick, NJ—July 6th, 2010**



The New Jersey Blaze were unable to prevent a second defeat at the hands of current league leaders FC Sonic (9-1-1), who enter into their last game with fellow title contenders the Erie Admirals needing a win to progress to the playoffs, claiming all three points in South Brunswick Tuesday.

New to the line-up was Evans Ofori, who graduated from the Blaze U20s team after a number of excellent performances in the last two weeks. Rob Napier said at the game: "Ofori had an encouraging debut and epitomizes what the Blaze program is all about by taking his opportunity to progress. He's stood out at the U20 level through his ability and attitude and he'll continue his development at this level."

Commenting on the game itself, Napier explained: "The result is harsh and not an entirely accurate reflection of the balance of play, but goals change games and yet again, our defensive mistakes were punished." The statistics reflected a particularly hard-fought midfield game in the first period, which ended 0-0. Only one offside call was recorded, showing that players were looking to beat their men in one-on-ones as opposed to through balls.

Ansger Otto (right) and Ofori proved to have skill and pace, while Montclair State goalkeeper Kevin Gramata made three world-class saves in as many seconds as the Sonic crowded the box early and make their mark in the first half. Meanwhile, Mathieu Larroutou and Alexis Gallice worked the centre and left flanks respectively to push the ball up, though the final ball could not be converted as the strong back line of the Sonic dug deep before moving up the field gradually. With few chances in the first half, the teams went in at the break at 0-0.

Napier continued: "We were looking comfortable after an encouraging first-half. We knew, though, that we needed to test their keeper more and look to get behind them more often in order to pose more of a threat upfront."

As the record high temperatures subsided into the second half, the Sonic began to create a few more chances and stop the hosts from making more opportunities for themselves. Ricky Mucelli would claim the first goal, as the star forward latched onto a pass after great work to get through the Blaze back line. Fellow striker Joe Sales played him the final through ball across the face of goal, with Mucelli tapping in the final ball on 59 minutes.

Gallice was cleared off the line five minutes later, while Coron Short's header was also saved well. The Sonic found a higher gear than in the first half and in the final ten minutes, the visitors were able to claim another two goals. Mucelli was taken down in the box on 79 minutes and the Sonic were awarded a penalty, and Sonic midfielder and captain Ryan Hess converted it. In the 89th minute, Ryan Wetherhold, a Parkland High School graduate, scored his first goal of the campaign off a Matt Ceconni assist.

Napier said that while the players were unlucky in a number of respects, FC Sonic again proved their class away from home. "We need to bounce back immediately and show we've learned from another tough lesson, We want to finish the season positively and that starts against Maryland on Saturday. I'm looking for players with the character and mentality to stand up and be counted and make a difference."

Meanwhile, Steve Weitzman, the Sonic head coach, said: "We've been a second-half team for the most part of the season but we stick in and work for the full 90 minutes. Ricky Mucelli has been tremendous in this respect and again proved his worth tonight." He added: "We do a lot off the field and the guys who work behind the scenes really have made our club successful, though the players obviously perform and we're a strong club there too. That was a much more impressive Blaze team than we played earlier in the season. Ofori and Otto were excellent and the team as a whole has good things to look forward to."

FC Sonic will leave this game knowing that nothing short of a win against Erie will complete a great season for the squad, sending them through to the playoffs at the end of the season. Meanwhile, the Blaze will close their home fixtures - and season - when FC Reading Revolution visit Rowland Park on July 14th, 7:30pm. The Blaze will fulfill their final away tie through in Maryland against the Red Devils on July 10th.

The [New Jersey Blaze](#) are the central New Jersey members of the [National Premier Soccer League](#), the highest level of men's amateur soccer in the United States. They are part of the [New Jersey Soccer Group](#), a management company for a family of soccer based organizations offering a full range of soccer services in New Jersey.

