Whitecaps finally earn right to lift Voyageurs Cup with 2-0 win over Impact

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By Israel Fehr   8/27/2015

VANCOUVER – They'll tell you it's been a long time coming: the Voyageurs Cup finally belongs to the Vancouver Whitecaps.

The Whitecaps beat the Montreal Impact 2-0 on Wednesday night at B.C. Place to win the Amway Canadian Championship for the first time in the eight-year history of the competition.

Long-time fans know the drought dates back longer than eight years, too. Even between 2002 and 2007, when the Voyageurs Cup was awarded to the club with the most points from USL First Division games involving Canadian teams, Vancouver never came out on top.

Now they've got their hands on this trophy, and they're coming for more.

"[We've had] too many heartbreaks with this tournament – disappointments for the fans, disappointments for us. It's about damn time we won it," said midfielder Russell Teibert, who was named tournament MVP.

"We gotta get used to winning trophies. We gotta get used to winning championships. This team, it's our time now."

The sides came into the second leg tied at 2-2, and the Whitecaps' away goals advantage ultimately didn't matter at all in the end. With a starting XI stocked with regulars, the hosts were the brighter team to start. Kekuta Manneh had a scoring chance in the second minute that forced Impact 'keeper Eric Kronberg to make a leaping save. It was far from the last time Kronberg was called into action, as the 'Caps kept him on his toes all night.

The Impact's two designated players – Didier Drogba and Ignacio Piatti – didn't make the cross-country trip for the match due to injury, but head coach Frank Klopas was still able to field a strong lineup.

It was Vancouver's best that were buzzing early, though. After a few determined runs, Octavio Rivero was fouled just outside the box by Victor Cabrera in the 30th minute. Cabrera, already on a yellow card, picked up his second yellow and was sent off, leaving Montreal to play with 10 men for over an hour and leaving Klopas frustrated with the officiating.

"There were two games tonight. The first in the opening 30 minutes, then after that it was a different story. It's tough and unfortunate to play with 10-men for 60 minutes," said Klopas. "We moved the ball well in the beginning, but the cards changed things. It's disappointing."

Soon after Cabrera left the game, Laurent Ciman lofted a free kick just wide off the right post and that was as close as the Impact would get to scoring Wednesday. They didn't register a shot on goal the entire game.

Already down a man, it didn't take much longer for the Impact to make the game even more difficult for themselves. A sloppy pass back by Montreal's Nigel Reo-Coker was intercepted by Cristian Techera. Despite pressure from a charging Kronberg and defenfer Danny Toia also in his way, Techera maintained possession and managed to get a shot off. The ball deflected off Kronberg and rolled toward the wide-open goal. Rivero smashed it into the net just before the ball crossed the goal-line to put the Whitecaps up 1-0 in the 39th minute.

The only real worry for the Whitecaps in the first half was when goalkeeper David Ousted went down after a collision with centre back Tim Parker and Reo-Coker. Fortunately for Vancouver, Ousted was fine and stayed in the game.

In the 53rd minute, Parker steered a header from a Pedro Morales corner kick into the Impact goal to make it 2-0 Vancouver. With the lead in hand they continued to carry play, coming close to adding a third multiple times as they cruised comfortably to victory.

The win also ensures the Whitecaps will return to the CONCACAF Champions League next season. Vancouver is currently playing in the group stage of the competition, tying Seattle 1-1 in their lone match to date.

Sitting in second place in the Western Conference, the Whitecaps have got their eye on MLS Cup success too. Considering what Robinson and the organization are trying to build, winning the Voyageurs Cup is a very nice start.

"It's great for the club," said head coach Carl Robinson. "It feels nice to win. We're trying to create something here at this club. People kept reminding me that we hadn't won it. Today, we made a little bit of history, which is fantastic, and hopefully it's the start of many.

"We've managed to win the Cascadia Cup two years in a row, which is great. But we haven't done this. It's a first step. Everyone wants success overnight. It very rarely happens. It's a process. I'm so proud of [all my players] tonight."

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