



## Albirex End Lion City Sailors's Unbeaten Run: Nakano And Own Goal Seal Shock 2-0 SPL Win

### Description

The Lion City Sailors Albirex Niigata SPL encounter on Sunday (10 May 2026) at Jalan Besar Stadium had all the hallmarks of a festive season finale until two quickfire second-half goals from the White Swans brought a sudden and shocking end to the champions' unbeaten dreams. Albirex Niigata FC (S) won 2-0, handing the Sailors their first league defeat of the 2025/26 season and igniting a thrilling final-day race for second place and an AFC Champions League Two berth.

## Lion City Sailors Albirex Niigata SPL: Unbeaten Run Shattered In Penultimate Matchweek

The evening began with touching ceremony. Before kick-off, Albirex's players formed a guard of honour to applaud the champions onto the Jalan Besar pitch, joined by the Sailors' family, friends, and supporters in a warm celebration of back-to-back SPL title success. For a few warm minutes, it was a night of football at its most generous.

But on the pitch, Albirex had business to conduct. Needing all three points to keep their second-place hopes alive ahead of the final matchweek, Keiji Shigetomi's side showed no sentimentality once the referee's whistle sounded. The first half was tight and goalless, with the Sailors making seven changes to their starting line-up including leaving top-scorers Lennart Thy (14 league goals) and Anderson Lopes (11 goals) on the bench. Brazilian defensive midfielder Lucas Agueiro was deployed as an unconventional centre-forward.



Source: Lion City Sailors FC official website (lioncitysailorsfc.sg)

â??Today was a strange match because obviously we won the title last week, so while the aim was still to win, Albirexâ??s motivation was naturally much higher,â?• Sailors head coach JesÃºs Casas acknowledged after the game. â??But I think the match was more or less balanced and they just scored

from two key moments.â?•

## Two Goals In Three Minutes Seal Albirexâ??s Win

Whatever balance had existed in the first half evaporated rapidly after the interval. In the 50th minute, South Korean winger Yang Hyeon-ju â?? one of the standout performers in the SPL since joining mid-season â?? delivered a precise cross from the left, and captain Shingo Nakano rose to head home his 19th league goal of the campaign. It was a strikerâ??s header of the highest quality, and it put Nakano clear at the top of the scoring charts heading into the final round.

Three minutes later, Albirex doubled their advantage in controversial and somewhat chaotic fashion. Yangâ??s tricky footwork left Sailors fullback Akram Azman beaten before his acute-angle effort was saved by goalkeeper Ivan Susak. The rebound fell to Zulqarnaen Suzliman â?? a Sailors loanee â?? who prodded goalwards only for the ball to deflect off defender Toni Datkovic on its way in. The goal was eventually awarded as a Datkovic own goal, denying Zulqarnaen what would have been his first SPL strike since April 2022.



Source: Lion City Sailors FC official website (lioncitysailorsfc.sg)

## Final-Day Drama: ACL Two Berth At Stake

The result means the race for second place and the coveted AFC Champions League Two spot will go to the final whistle of the season. BG Tampines Rovers, who edged out a 1-0 win against nine-man Hougang United at Bishan Stadium through a late own goal from Saifullah Akbar, remain in second place on 46 points. Albirex sit five points behind the Stags but have a game in hand â?? they face Young Lions in their final match, and need Tampines to drop points against the Sailors at Our Tampines Hub on 17 May.

Albirex captain Nakano insisted his side are fully focused on the mission. â??Before the game, we talked about the Sailorsâ?? unbeaten run. But we knew it was more important for us to get to second spot. We are happy to beat them, and having a chance going into the final day is really important,â?• he

said.

Shigetomi was equally upbeat: “The boys worked really hard, and in terms of mentality, it was a perfect performance. When the opponents brought on their strong foreign players, our side showed good defence and discipline and worked hard till the end.”

For the Sailors, the loss is little more than a statistical blemish on an exceptional season. With the title already secured, the unbeaten record was the last remaining landmark and while it has now gone, two league championships in succession, a Singapore Cup triumph, and ACL Two participation remain a remarkable haul. Casas’s side face Tampines in their final fixture, a match that suddenly carries extra significance for the chasing Albirex.

Singapore football does not often produce final-day title drama, but this SPL season has delivered something special in its closing chapter. Relive how the Sailors clinched the title in our report on [Lion City Sailors retaining the SPL title](#), and read about [their pursuit of an unbeaten season](#). More Singapore sports coverage in the [LBRD Sports section](#).

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