



Lion City Sailors Retain SPL Title: Back-To-Back Champions After Tampines Stalemate

Description

Lion City Sailors retain SPL title for the first time in the club's six-year history, sealing back-to-back Singapore Premier League crowns with a tense goalless draw at BG Tampines Rovers on Sunday, 3 May 2026 at Our Tampines Hub. The point was all Jesus Casas's side needed, and it stretched a club-record unbeaten league run to 20 matches.

How the Lion City Sailors retain SPL title at Tampines

The equation could not have been simpler. With an eight-point cushion at the top and three rounds left, the Sailors needed only to avoid defeat against second-placed Tampines to make the maths impossible to overturn. They got it the hard way, in front of a near-capacity Our Tampines Hub crowd that lived every minute.

BG Tampines threatened inside the opening sixty seconds when Zikos Chua bundled in a rebound from Seiga Sumi's parried shot, only for the goal to be ruled out for offside. That early jolt sharpened the visitors. Christopher van Huizen whipped in a teasing corner in the 32nd minute, but Shawal Anuar could not steer his header on target.

Casas turned to his bench in the second half, introducing Tsiy Ndenge, Hami Syahin and Anderson Lopes as the Sailors searched for the winning goal that would have brought a more spectacular celebration. Ndenge came closest with a 79th-minute free kick, before Hami fired a volley narrowly over the bar five minutes later.



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

Ivan Susak the late hero

The decisive moment came at the other end. Deep into stoppage time, Tampines substitute Jacob Mahler met a delivery into the box and saw his goal-bound header tipped over the bar by a flying Ivan Susak. It was the Croatian goalkeeper's 10th clean sheet of the season – the Sailors have now kept a league-leading 12 – and the save that secured the championship.

“To win the league back-to-back is something pretty special and it just shows the character we have within this team,” vice-captain Bailey Wright said after the final whistle. “But the job is not done yet – we still have ambitions, we want to keep going and stay undefeated.”

Wright, who joined the club in July 2023, has now made 93 appearances in blue. He has been a steady presence at the back alongside Susak, and his 33-year-old voice in the dressing room has been credited by Casas as central to a season that, until 3 May, had no real wobbles.

The unbeaten run when the Lion City Sailors retain SPL title

The 0-0 in Tampines extended a club-record league unbeaten run to 20 matches. The previous mark of 19 spanned the final 18 of the Sailors' maiden championship campaign in 2021 and the opening fixture the following season. Fittingly, that earlier streak began with a 0-0 draw against Tampines too.

“To end the season unbeaten is a goal that we have in mind, and I can see the players are very hungry to achieve this objective,” Casas said. “But for now, it's important that we enjoy this moment with the team and our fans before we prepare for the next game.”



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

The challenge ahead is steep. Albirex Niigata (S) on 10 May 2026 and a return fixture against BG Tampines on 17 May 2026 are the only matches left between the Sailors and a perfect season. Albirex remains the only side to have completed an unbeaten SPL campaign, doing so in 2018 when they

competed as a foreign outfit in a different competition format.

What back-to-back means for Singapore football

This is the third SPL crown in just six seasons since the Sailors's 2020 inception, and the first time the club has retained the title. The previous editions came in 2021, the breakthrough year, and 2024-25, the first under Casas. Together with their continental progress through last season's AFC competitions, the trajectory underlines why the Sailors are now the benchmark for ambition in Singapore football.

The journey through this season has had milestones. [A 3-0 win over Geylang International on 27 April 2026](#) moved the title within touching distance, and the [Sunday showdown preview at Our Tampines Hub](#) drew Singapore's biggest weekend football crowd since the SEA Games qualifying ties.

"This club has big ambitions, and everyone knows that, from those who have been here for years to those who have just arrived," Wright reflected. "There's no shying away from the pressure and we all know we need to deliver trophies. We're growing accustomed to success here, but it's still early in the club's journey."

What is next for Singapore's champions

The dressing-room conversation has already pivoted from celebration to chase. Casas closed his post-match comments with a clear nod to next season: "We'll focus on our last two games now, but next season we want to push on and achieve strong results in continental competitions." Translated, that means the AFC Champions League Two and the Sailors are gearing up to be Singapore's standard bearer.

For the chants of "Champions Again" that rang out at Our Tampines Hub, this was about now. Susak's late save will be the image. Wright's words will be the soundtrack. And the next 14 days could turn this title into something genuinely historic. Catch up on more Singapore sports coverage in the [Little Big Red Dot Sports section](#).

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