

Singapore Lions Fall 2-1 To China PR But Ilhan Fandi Inspires Hope In June Friendly

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The Singapore Lions fell 2-1 to China PR in their second and final match of the June 2026 FIFA International Window on Friday, 5 June, but **Singapore Lions coach Gavin Lee** and the 4,688-strong crowd at Jalan Besar Stadium had plenty to feel encouraged about â?? not least the electric impact of substitute **Ilhan Fandi**, who scored within 79 seconds of entering the pitch to give the Lions a lifeline. The **Singapore Lions China PR friendly 2026** result: China PR 2-1 Singapore.

A Difficult Opening â?? China PR Apply Pressure From The Start

China PR, ranked significantly higher than Singapore in the FIFA world rankings, brought quality and physicality to Jalan Besar from the opening whistle. The visitors came closest to the opener in the 13th minute when captain Wei Shihaoâ??s header from a cross on the right flank rattled back off the post â?? a let-off for the Lions and a sign of things to come.

That early warning went unheeded. Winger Xie Wenneng delivered an inch-perfect cross into the Singapore penalty area and Sai Erjiniao rose highest to head home unopposed, giving China PR the lead. The Lions struggled to find their rhythm in the opening exchanges, pinned back by China PRâ??s pressing game and technical quality.

A second China PR goal followed to make it 2-0, leaving Gavin Leeâ??s men with a mountain to climb.



Source: Football Association of Singapore official website (fas.org.sg)

Ilhan Fandiâ??s Magic Moment â?? 79 Seconds To Inspire

With the Lions trailing by two goals, Gavin Lee turned to Ilhan Fandi in the 75th minute. The impact was immediate and electric.

In just 79 seconds â?? barely two minutes on the pitch â?? Ilhan reacted quickest to a loose clearance inside the Chinese penalty area and instinctively lashed a left-footed drive beyond Hao Li with his first touch. The Jalan Besar crowd erupted. Suddenly, Singapore had a foothold. The stadium crackled with energy as the Lions pressed for a leveller in the final quarter-hour.

Though the equaliser never came, the manner of Singaporeâ??s response â?? fighting back against a significantly higher-ranked opponent on the back of the dominant preview we published ahead of this fixture â?? spoke volumes about the character Gavin Lee is building in this squad. This was a far cry from the tentative performances that once characterised Singapore against top-ranked Asian opposition.

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Source: Football Association of Singapore official website (fas.org.sg)

Gavin Lee: â??A Lot Less Fearâ?•

Reflecting on the defeat, Lee chose to frame it in terms of growth and progress â?? and he had good reason to.

â??I thought this time around there was a lot less fear when we approached the game,â?• Lee told reporters after the final whistle. â??When we play teams of this level, they will make things very uncomfortable for us. In the past, we sometimes allowed the discomfort to own us.â?•

That shift in mentality is tangible. Just days earlier, the Lions had thrashed Mongolia 4-0 in their opening June window fixture â?? a record-breaking night that saw Hariss Harun make history for Singapore football. Back-to-back June window matches against contrasting opposition have provided Gavin Lee with a wealth of data about where his squad stands â?? and what still needs to improve.

Against China PR, the Lions showed they can compete against higher-ranked sides for spells. They showed they have match-changers from the bench. And they showed they have the spirit to keep fighting even when trailing by two goals.

Singapore Lions China PR June 2026 â?? Eyes On Whatâ??s Next

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The Singapore Lions now shift their focus firmly to two major upcoming targets: the **ASEAN Championship Hyundai Cup 2026** and the **AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027** qualifying campaign. The Lions have been drawn alongside Australia, Iraq, and Tajikistan in their qualifying group â?? a daunting but exciting challenge for a team that is clearly developing under Leeâ??s stewardship.

The lessons from this June window â?? the defensive vulnerabilities, Ilhan Fandiâ??s impact from the bench, the greater composure in possession â?? will all feed directly into Gavin Leeâ??s preparations for those crucial matches ahead.

For all the latest on the Singapore Lions and the ASEAN Championship, keep following our Sports section at Little Big Red Dot. And for the full picture on Singaporeâ??s June window squad, read our squad announcement article here.

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