



## Singapore Lions Gear Up For ASEAN Championship 2026: Vietnam, Indonesia And Cambodia Await In Tough Group A

### Description

The Singapore Lions face defending champions Vietnam, rising force Indonesia, and Cambodia when the ASEAN Hyundai Cup 2026 kicks off on 24 July. Four-time winners Singapore are the most decorated side in the tournament's history but Gavin Lee's men enter a tough Group A that will test them to the limit, and with the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 looming on the horizon, every game matters.

"The draw presents a strong and exciting challenge for us, an opportunity for growth," said head coach Gavin Lee. "Our priority is to focus on ourselves, prepare thoroughly, and make sure the players are ready to go into every match ready to win." Having navigated a busy June international window, the Lions have meaningful match sharpness to draw on.



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## Group A: Three Fixtures, Three Different Tests

Singapore's three Group A fixtures are:

**24 July: Singapore vs Cambodia** – The most winnable fixture in the group and the ideal opener to settle nerves. Cambodia have improved in recent editions but remain the most beatable side in this group. Three points here would be a strong foundation.

**31 July: Vietnam vs Singapore** – The defining group fixture. Vietnam are the defending champions, having won the 2024 final convincingly, and they eliminated Singapore 5-1 on aggregate in the semi-finals of that same tournament. The Lions took a 0-0 draw in the group stage but could not handle the pace and intensity in the knockout rounds. The rematch on 31 July will be the litmus test for how far this squad has grown.

**7 August: Singapore vs Indonesia** – Indonesia are arguably the most dangerous side in Group A. They reached the third round of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Asian qualifiers and have enriched their squad with foreign-born players of Indonesian heritage from clubs across Europe. The Garuda are widely considered overdue for a breakthrough, and Singapore will need to be at their organised best to contain them.

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## Singapore's June Window: Cause For Optimism

The Lions showed strong form in the June international window, with results that offer real grounds for optimism ahead of the ASEAN Championship. A commanding [4-0 victory over Mongolia on 31 May](#) was historic – captain Hariss Harun surpassed Daniel Bennett's long-standing record to become Singapore's most-capped player ever, earning his 147th cap and counting. It was a night that encapsulated everything the Lions camp is building towards.

The 2-1 [defeat to China PR on 5 June](#) was disappointing in result, but showed Singapore's attacking intent. Ilhan Fandi, the Buriram United forward, scored Singapore's consolation goal and looked sharp throughout at Jalan Besar Stadium. Against a China side ranked far higher, the Lions competed for long stretches - a sign of genuine improvement.

Key players to watch in the ASEAN Championship: Ilhan Fandi and Ikhsan Fandi (BG Pathum United) in attack; Shawal Anuar and Hami Syahin (both Lion City Sailors) in midfield; Hariss Harun as the commanding captain and defensive anchor; and young midfielder Nathan Mao, who earned his first senior cap at just 18 years old in June - a name to remember for the future.

## Can Singapore Finally Win The ASEAN Championship Again?

Singapore's last ASEAN Championship title came in 2012 - now 14 years ago. The Lions have reached the semi-finals in each of the last two editions but have not been able to go all the way, falling short at the final hurdle each time. This squad carries the hunger of near-misses, and with the additional motivation of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 on the horizon, there is real belief that the time is now.

"We've grown a lot as a squad, and now, with the Asian Cup ahead, everyone is raring to go and see how far we can push ourselves," Hariss said. "Singaporeans have stood by us, and we want to keep making them proud."

The ASEAN Hyundai Cup 2026 group stage runs from 24 July to 7 August. The semi-finals take place on 15 August (home-and-away legs), with the two-legged final on 22 and 26 August. Singapore will be aiming to make those dates count.

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