



Singapore Lions ASEAN Hyundai Cup 2026: Hariss Harun Leads The Charge As Fandi Brothers Eye Southeast Asian Glory

Description

The countdown to the **Singapore Lions ASEAN Hyundai Cup 2026** campaign is well and truly under way. Head coach Gavin Lee has named his 24-man squad for a centralised camp beginning on 23 June, with the Lions set to travel to Okinawa, Japan from 6 to 17 July for three warm-up matches against Japanese club opposition. The group stage begins on 24 July and Singapore know exactly what stands between them and glory: defending champions Vietnam, an on-the-rise Indonesia, plus Cambodia and Timor-Leste rounding out Group A.

The Squad: Fandi Brothers Ready, But Ikhsan Misses Out

The biggest story in the squad announcement was the exclusion of Ikhsan Fandi. While younger brother Ilhan Fandi who has been impressive for Thai club Buriram United and Irfan Fandi of Port FC have both been included, Ikhsan's absence will generate significant debate among Lions supporters. The elder Fandi sibling has had his struggles with consistency at club level, and Gavin Lee has clearly decided that the current campaign calls for players at their sharpest.



Singapore Lions in action against Vietnam – defending ASEAN champions and the Lions’ toughest Group A opponents in 2026. Source: Football Association of Singapore official website (fas.org.sg)

Hariss Harun captains the squad for what could be one of his final major international tournaments. The Lion City Sailors defensive anchor has been the bedrock of Singapore football for over a decade –

his reading of the game, aerial ability and leadership in the dressing room remain unmatched in this squad. His partnership with centre-back Jacob Mahler (BG Tampines Rovers) should give Singapore a solid defensive foundation.

Other notable inclusions are Nur Adam Abdullah and Song Uiyoung from Lion City Sailors, Shah Shahiran, Joel Chew and Glenn Kweh from BG Tampines Rovers, and Farhan Zulkifli from Hougang United. Young goalkeeper Nathan Mao (Young Lions) also earns a place, reflecting Gavin Lee's willingness to blood emerging talents alongside the tournament-hardened core.

Group A Dangers: Vietnam, Indonesia And The Road To The Semi-Finals

Singapore's Group A is formidable on paper. Vietnam arrive as defending champions, having claimed the title in their most recent campaign with a well-drilled, high-energy style that caused problems for every opponent they faced. Their squad is maturing, their coach has had time to build genuine cohesion, and they will be confident of repeating or even improving on their title win. [Singapore's preparations in Okinawa](#) have been designed in part with Vietnam's intensity in mind.

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Singapore Lions face Indonesia, one of Southeast Asia's most improved sides and a significant Group A threat. Source: Football Association of Singapore official website (fas.org.sg)

Indonesia are arguably even more dangerous in terms of upward trajectory. Their domestic league has grown in quality and ambition, and their national squad now includes a number of naturalised players

who add Premier League and European experience. The Indonesia fixture could prove to be the decisive Group A game for Singapore's knockout ambitions.

Cambodia and Timor-Leste complete the group. While they should be manageable opponents for a Lions side that is better organised and technically superior, Singapore must approach these games with full focus. As the [U19 exit in Medan](#) demonstrated not long ago, taking Southeast Asian opponents lightly is a dangerous habit. The top two teams from each group advance to home-and-away semi-finals beginning 15 August.

Okinawa-Forged: Building The Lions For The Group Stage

The decision to take the squad to Okinawa for an eleven-day camp is a significant investment in preparation. Three matches against Japanese club opposition will test the squad in a way domestic friendlies simply cannot – Japanese football at club level is quick, disciplined and technically demanding, making it an ideal proving ground for a Lions side that needs to hit the ground running in Group A.

The camp also serves an important cohesion function. Ilhan Fandi has been based in Thailand, Irfan Fandi similarly. Players like Song Uiyoung (Lion City Sailors) come from different club environments with different tactical systems. Eleven days in Japan give Gavin Lee the time to knit these individual qualities into a coherent unit – and to give Ilhan the match sharpness he needs after a demanding Thai league season.

Can Singapore Go All The Way?

Singapore last won the ASEAN Championship – then the Tiger Cup – back in 2012. Over a decade without the trophy is a long time for a nation that takes its football seriously, and Gavin Lee knows the expectation this squad carries. The talent is there: Hariss providing the leadership and defensive certainty, Ilhan and Irfan supplying the creativity and directness that can unlock the best organised defences in the region.

Vietnam's experience and quality makes them the benchmark in Group A and likely the team to beat across the whole tournament. But football has a glorious habit of defying form lines – and a Singapore side that arrives in peak condition from Okinawa, with a settled system and genuine confidence, can absolutely trouble the champions. For Lions fans, the **ASEAN Hyundai Cup 2026** campaign represents a genuine chance to believe. Check out all our [Sports coverage](#) as we follow Singapore's journey to the group stage and beyond.

Date Created

25/06/2026

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