



Singapore Lions Drawn into Inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup 2026 Group A as They Prepare for Vietnam Test Tonight

Description

It is shaping up to be quite a year for Singapore football. Not only are the Lions in the midst of a spirited ASEAN Championship Hyundai Cup 2026 campaign â?? facing reigning champions Vietnam in a crunch away tie in Hanoi tonight â?? but the Football Association of Singapore has confirmed that the national team will compete in the inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup 2026, drawn into Group A alongside hosts Indonesia, India and Malaysia.

The FIFA ASEAN Cup, which runs from 24 September to 3 October 2026, represents a landmark moment for football in the region. Held during an official FIFA international window and sanctioned by world footballâ??s governing body, the tournament elevates competitive football in South and Southeast Asia to a new level â?? and Singaporeâ??s inclusion in the Premier Division (Division 1), competing against recognised regional football powers, signals the Lionsâ?? growing stature in the continental game.



Singapore drawn into Group A of the inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup 2026 â?? Credit: Football Association of Singapore

A Historic First for Singapore Football

For FAS General Secretary Badri Ghent, the draw could not have arrived at a better time. â??We welcome opportunities to participate in tournaments like this because they contribute to the broader development of Singapore football,â?• Ghent said. â??They help inspire the next generation, deepen Singaporeansâ?? connection with the national team and strengthen the football culture weâ??re

building for the future. Over time, those experiences create more moments that unite Singaporeans through the game.â?•

The 14-team tournament features two divisions â?? the Premier Division and the Challenge Division â?? with Singapore drawn into Group A of the top tier alongside hosts Indonesia, India and Malaysia. Division 1 matches will be played in Indonesia, making Singaporeâ??s tie against the hosts on Indonesian soil a fixture of immediate interest for the regionâ??s football community.

For Lions supporters, the group draw offers a fascinating study in familiar opposition. Singapore will face Indonesia â?? already a Hyundai Cup group-stage rival scheduled for August 7 â?? as well as Malaysia, a well-known regional foe, and India, whom the Lions faced home and away in the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers in October 2025. All three meetings promise competitive, high-stakes football with bragging rights on the line.

Gavin Lee: Building Towards the Asian Cup

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Head Coach Gavin Lee addresses media ahead of Vietnam â?? Credit: Football Association of Singapore

Head Coach Gavin Lee has been unequivocal about the bigger picture. The Lions are targeting the AFC Asian Cup 2027, and every competitive international window between now and that tournament represents a valuable opportunity to raise standards, build cohesion and test the squad at the highest

available level.

“This tournament comes at an important time for us,” Lee said of the FIFA ASEAN Cup. “Playing against quality regional opposition gives us another opportunity to test ourselves and see where we are as a team. We’ve made progress, but we know there’s still a long way to go. Every international window is another chance to raise our standards, keep improving, and become more consistent. That’s the challenge we’ve set ourselves, and our focus is on making the most of every opportunity to grow as a team.”

That measured, process-oriented approach has characterised Lee’s tenure and has been reflected in the squad’s performances during the Hyundai Cup 2026, where Singapore have opened their campaign with back-to-back victories – a 2-1 win over Cambodia and a commanding 2-0 triumph over Timor-Leste – to lead Group A heading into tonight’s high-stakes encounter with Vietnam.

Tonight’s Vietnam Test: The Defining Moment So Far

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The Lions prepare for Vietnam â?? Credit: Football Association of Singapore

Before Septemberâ??s FIFA ASEAN Cup, however, there is the small matter of tonightâ??s Hyundai Cup Group A clash with Vietnam at My Dinh National Stadium in Hanoi â?? unquestionably the Lionsâ?? toughest challenge of the group stage so far. Kick-off is at 9pm Singapore time, with live coverage on meWATCH.

Vietnam are the reigning ASEAN Championship holders, arriving into this fixture in formidable form – unbeaten in 12 consecutive competitive matches since a draw against the Philippines in December 2024. Korean Head Coach Kim Sang-sik has assembled a potent squad featuring Brazilian-born forward Nguyen Xuan Son, who scored three goals in his last two appearances against Singapore, alongside captain Nguyen Quang Hai and rising talent Nguyen Dinh Bac.

Singapore have beaten Vietnam only once in recent memory – avoiding defeat with a memorable 0-0 draw at Jalan Besar Stadium during the 2022 Hyundai Cup – and Lee is under no illusions about the magnitude of the task. But the Lions’ current tournament-leading striker Ilhan Fandi spoke with characteristic confidence ahead of the match. – ‘They are a good side, but we are going to go out there to play our football,’ Fandi said. – ‘Everybody is ready to give their best, and if we do that, the rest will take care of itself.’

A positive result against Vietnam tonight would be monumental – both in terms of Hyundai Cup group standings and as a statement of intent heading into a busy international calendar that now includes a first-ever FIFA ASEAN Cup campaign. Singapore football has come a long way. Tonight, and again in September, the Lions have the chance to show exactly how far.

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