

Singapore U23s finish fourth at the Gia Lai VTV Cup after a 3-1 loss to Thailand

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Singaporeâ??s Under-23s finished fourth and last at the Gia Lai VTV Cup 2026 in Vietnam after a 3-1 defeat by Thailand at Pleiku Stadium on Saturday, 14 November, a result that closed a week of hard lessons before the 2027 SEA Games.

Captain Amir Syafiz scored the teamâ??s only goal of the four-nation tournament. A goalless draw with Qatar and a 1-0 loss to the hosts left Firdaus Kassimâ??s side with one point from three games. Vietnam won the tournament on seven points, ahead of Qatar on five and Thailand on three.



Singapore U23 against Qatar U23 at the Gia Lai VTV Cup in Pleiku, Vietnam, November 2026. Photo: FAS

A clean sheet, then two defeats

The campaign started well enough. Against Qatar on 10 November, Singapore spent most of the afternoon in their own half, faced 13 shots and managed one on target, but goalkeeper Aizil Yazid and a disciplined back line held out for a 0-0 draw.

Two days later the hosts edged them 1-0. Against Thailand, who had lost their first two games, Singapore pressed higher than before and went behind on 33 minutes. Amir levelled from close range

before the break, the teamâ??s first goal in Pleiku, but Thailand took over in the second half. They went ahead again on 64 minutes, when a runner beat the offside trap and finished past Aizil, and sealed it with a left-footed strike on 79 minutes. The win lifted Thailand above Singapore into third.

What the coach wanted from the trip

Firdaus had picked a new group, and the tournament was mainly a chance to see how they measured up against stronger sides from the region and beyond. â??The objective of this tournament was to give this new group of players the opportunity to benchmark themselves against some of the best teams in Asia,â?• he said.

He added that the squad needed to understand â??the demands, intensity and standards required to compete at the highest levelâ?•, and that the staff would use what they saw to prepare the group for the future.

Some U23 players were away with the senior national team during the international window, and Firdaus used the gaps to look at others. â??With some players away on national team duty, this tournament allows us to give opportunities to the other players,â?• he said. â??We want to continue building a squad with greater depth, where more players are ready to contribute when they get called up.â?•

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Singapore U23 players in training ahead of the Gia Lai VTV Cup. Photo: FAS

The captainâ??s view

Amir, the 22-year-old forward who led the attack in Vietnam, did not dress up the results. â??Although the results were not what we hoped for, this tournament was a good learning experience for the team,â?• he said. â??Playing against different opponents showed us the areas where we still need to improve, and we have to take responsibility for that as players.â?•

He also said there was â??still work to be doneâ?•, and that the players needed to keep pushing themselves and supporting one another.

The road to the 2027 SEA Games

The trip was part of the teamâ??s build-up to the 2027 SEA Games. Vietnam and Thailand will both be at that tournament, so Gia Lai gave the staff a direct look at two regional rivals.

The 23-player squad came from across the Singapore Premier League, with overseas-based forward Kian Ghadessy the exception. Three players born in 2008, Andy Reefqy, Harith Danish and Sarrvin Raj, joined after the AFC U20 Asian Cup qualifiers, where that side won two of three games to reach the next editionâ??s qualification phase.

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Singaporeâ??s 23-player U23 squad for the Gia Lai VTV Cup 2026, as announced in November 2026. Image: FAS

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