

Singapore U23s hold Qatar 0-0 at the Gia Lai VTV Cup, with hosts Vietnam next on Thursday

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Singaporeâ??s Under-23s opened their Gia Lai VTV Cup campaign with a 0-0 draw against Qatar at Pleiku Stadium in Vietnam on Tuesday, 10 November 2026, a clean sheet earned almost entirely in their own half. Hosts Vietnam are next, on Thursday 12 November at 8pm Singapore time.



Singapore U23 players in training, in a photo FAS published with the Gia Lai VTV Cup squad on 7 November 2026; training session undated. Photo: Football Association of Singapore

Head coach Firdaus Kassim has framed the tournament as a gauge before the 2027 SEA Games, against three sides that all played at the recent Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya. On the evidence of the opener, the test was mostly about defending.

Qatar had the ball, Singapore had the goalkeeper

Qatar finished with 63 per cent of possession and 13 shots, four of them on target. Singapore managed one shot on target and did not win a corner, while Qatar had five.

Goalkeeper Aizil Yazid, the Hougang United SPL2 captain, kept the score level. He survived a nervy moment in the sixth minute, coming off his line for a back pass and clearing to the touchline just before a Qatari forward closed in. After that he was sharp: a diving save from a long-range drive in the 19th minute, then a reflex stop from close range in the 35th, after a Qatar combination inside the box.

Qatar kept attacking down both flanks and crossing, but the Singapore back line held its shape. The first Singapore effort on target did not arrive until the 51st minute, and it was a tame one.

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Head coach Firdaus Kassim, in a photo FAS published with the teamâ??s departure for Gia Lai on 9 November 2026; photo undated. Photo: Football Association of Singapore

A rough last 15 minutes

The second half brought more Qatar possession and very little change in the pattern. Singapore lost forward Garv Sahoo in the 58th minute, after he landed badly in a challenge and had to come off.

The closing stages turned scrappy. Players from both sides squared up after a series of fouls, and the referee went to his pocket for yellow cards to calm things down. Nobody found a way through, and the draw left Singapore and Qatar level on a point each.

Where the table stands

Vietnam beat Thailand 3-0 in the evening match, so after one round the hosts lead on three points with a goal difference of plus three. Qatar and Singapore have one point each, and Thailand have none.

The four Under-23 sides play each other once. The winners take US$100,000, the runners-up US$40,000 and third place US$20,000.

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Singaporeâ??s 23-man squad for the Gia Lai VTV Cup 2026. Illustration: Football Association of Singapore

The next two games

- Thursday 12 November, 8pm Singapore time: Singapore v Vietnam, Pleiku Stadium
- Saturday 14 November, 4pm Singapore time: Thailand v Singapore, Pleiku Stadium

The 23-man squad is drawn from across the Singapore Premier League, plus overseas-based forward Kian Ghadessy. It includes three 18-year-olds, Andy Reefqy, Harith Danish and Sarrvin Raj, who played in the recent AFC U20 Asian Cup qualifying campaign, alongside Lion City Sailors midfielder Asis Ijilrali and Hougang forward Khairin Nadim, both of whom have spent time with FC Vizela in

Portugal.

â??We know we will face strong opposition in Gia Lai, with all three teams having competed at the recent Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya,â?• Firdaus said when the squad was named. â??They will help us assess where we stand, identify areas for improvement, and continue building towards the 2027 SEA Games.â?•

A point and a clean sheet against a side rated above them is a fair return for that brief. Thursdayâ??s game against the hosts, fresh from a three-goal win over Thailand, will show how much of it holds up.

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