

NorthEast United FC drop points against the champions Bengaluru FC

18th Dec: NorthEast United FC faced their second defeat of the Hero Indian Super League 2019-20 against Bengaluru FC with a 0-2 scoreline at the IGA Stadium in Guwahati. The match kicked off at 6 PM.

Sunil Chhetri scored from the penalty spot in the 68th minute and Albert Serran scored the second goal for the visitors in the 81st minute of the game.

Keeping the absence of Asamoah Gyan in mind, coach Robert Jarni made three changes in his starting line-up. Rakesh Pradhan and Wayne Vaz made way for Mislav Komorski and Nim Dorjee Tamang and developmental player Lalengmawia was handed his Hero ISL debut. Meanwhile, Uruguayan midfielder Federico Gallego was named among the substitutes who was all set to make his comeback after suffering an injury in the last season's playoffs.

The hosts, as well as the visitors, started the match with attacking intent as both the teams had a go at goal in the first two minutes of the match. Debutant Lalengmawia tried his luck from the distance but his effort went just above the opposition's goal. On the other end of the pitch, Subhasish had to make his first save of the game in the 4th minute when he clinched on to Ashique's shot from the left.

In the 20th minute, the Highlanders won two back to back corners in search of the breakthrough. From Pana's second corner Puitea had a go at goal from just outside the box but the midfielder didn't manage to put his effort on target. Five minutes later, Martin Chaves made a brilliant run down the left-wing before trying to slide it past the outcoming goalkeeper but a deflection from the keeper kept him away from scoring his first goal of the season.

A couple of minutes later Bengaluru FC had a chance to on the other end but Udanta's header went off the bar and Dimas's effort from the rebound didn't trouble Subhasish's goal at all. The visitors had another chance in the following minutes from a corner and Rahul Bheke's headed effort was well saved by Subhasish to keep the scoreline goalless at the end of the first half as the remaining minutes didn't see much of action at either end.

Both the teams started the second half quietly and it was the visitors who had their first shy at goal from a header from Sunil Chhetri which was saved easily by Subhasish. It was in the 67th minute when Redeem's handball inside the hosts' box gave away a penalty for the visitors. Sunil Chhetri stepped up to take the spot-kick and was able to put it past Subhasish and make it 0-1 for Bengaluru FC.

It was then time for Federico Gallego to make his comeback into Hero ISL as he replaced Jose Leudo a few minutes later. The Highlanders had their best chance in the 78th minute when Lalengmawia found Martin Chaves upfront who then slid it past a couple of defenders to find the run of Pana whose first time attempt went whiskers past the far post and the Highlanders were made to wait longer in their search for the equaliser.

Bengaluru FC got their second goal of the game in the 80th minute when Erik Paartalu's cross from the left was headed in by defender Albert Serran. Despite being two goals down, The Highlanders kept going and a minute later Triadis had a go at goal from distance only to see his effort saved for a corner by the opposition keeper.

In the dying minutes of regulation time, Triadis again tried his luck from the distance but this time he just couldn't put enough power into his shot to trouble the opposition keeper. The last action of the match saw NorthEast United not being able to convert another chance from a corner and with the referee's whistle the Highlanders suffered their second loss of the season 0-2 against Bengaluru FC.