

Florida Poly Falls Just Short Against Florida National, 2-1

AUBURNDALE, Fla. — The Florida Polytechnic University men's soccer team suffered its first loss of the season Thursday night, falling 2-1 to Florida National University in a hard-fought matchup in Auburndale. Despite controlling much of the attacking pressure and finishing with advantages in both shots and corner kicks, the Phoenix were unable to complete a late comeback. Florida Poly moved to 3-1-0 on the season with the defeat.

Florida National struck first just over eight minutes into the contest. After an early stretch of pressure from the visitors, David Luque converted a penalty kick at the 8:03 mark to give the Conquistadors a 1-0 advantage. Florida Poly quickly settled into the match and began creating opportunities of its own. Tarquin Adams forced goalkeeper Ignacio Pacheco into a save in the 17th minute before Felipe Romero tested him again less than two minutes later. The Phoenix generated three consecutive corner kicks between the 17th and 19th minutes as they continued pushing for the equalizer.

Florida Poly maintained the pressure throughout the remainder of the opening half. Michael Archer put an attempt on target in the 28th minute, while Adams, Julian Villegas and Arthur Vega each generated additional scoring opportunities before halftime. Vega forced another save from Pacheco in the 37th minute, and Ahmad Hijaz had a shot blocked with just seconds remaining in the period. The Phoenix entered halftime trailing 1-0 despite outshooting Florida National 9-7 and producing all four of the first-half corner kicks.

Florida National came out aggressively to begin the second half, but goalkeeper Andres Villegas kept Florida Poly within striking distance. Villegas made three saves on Luque in a span of less than three minutes from the 54th through the 56th minute. The Conquistadors eventually doubled their advantage in the 62nd minute when Juan Pugin found the back of the net to make it 2-0. Villegas answered with another save on Pugin in the 68th minute to prevent Florida National from extending the lead further.

The Phoenix refused to go away. Florida Poly continued creating chances through the middle stages of the second half, including a saved header and an attempt from Hijaz before finally breaking through in the 75th minute. After Archer had an effort blocked inside the attacking area, Florida Poly earned a penalty kick. Adams stepped to the spot and converted at 74:56, cutting the deficit to 2-1 and giving the Phoenix life with just over 15 minutes remaining.

Florida Poly continued pressing for the tying goal in the closing minutes. Julian Villegas put a shot on goal in the 86th minute before Vega forced Pacheco into another save with less than three minutes remaining. The Phoenix ultimately ran out of time, however, as Florida National held on for the one-goal victory. Florida Poly finished the night with a 16-13

advantage in total shots, a 9-8 edge in shots on goal and a dominant 8-1 advantage in corner kicks. The Phoenix also drew 19 fouls from Florida National while committing 10 themselves.