



2018 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers: United Arab Emirates 2-0 Iraq



LIFELESS IRAQ DOWNED BY UAE AS WORLD CUP HOPES ENDED

Iraq's slim hopes of qualifying for the 2018 FIFA World Cup were effectively ended as a poor performance from Radhi Shenaishil's team saw them fall to a 2-0 defeat to the UAE.

Iraq started lethargically as the UAE took control of the game from the start. Iraq were sloppy whenever they won the ball back and could not hold onto the ball for more than a few moments before it was back in the possession of their opponents and it took 26 minutes for UAE to open the scoring. Iraq were undone down the right flank. Dhurgham Ismail's poor clearance fell right at the feet of Ahmed Khalil who blasted the ball past Mohammed Hameed for 1-0.

Iraq's performance did improve after the goal and they could have had an equaliser when Mohanad Abdul-Raheem struck Ahmed

Yasin's low cross into the side netting. Ahmed Yasin was forced off due to injury at the end of the first half, but his replacement, young Bashar Rasan, almost scored immediately after his introduction but he failed to get onto the end of an inviting cross; any contact would have likely diverted the ball into the net but the Al-Quwa Al-Jawiya man missed the ball entirely.

The second half started with Iraq on the front foot as Mohanad almost equalised with a header that went wide before going close with another header that the UAE keeper saved at his left post. Iraq fans expected to see the introduction of Udinese's Ali Adnan when the ineffective Alaa Abdul-Zahra was taken off but the man who came on was instead Ayman Hussein of Iraqi club Al-Naft, while the third and final substitute was midfielder Brwa Nouri coming on for his second full international cap. Iraq's performance died down towards the end of the second period as chances became harder to come by and the much-loathed long-ball tactic started to come into play as the Iraqis looked for a way to get back into the game. The UAE counter attack was inevitable though and the Emiratis got their second goal in stoppage time when the influential Omar Abdulrahman picked Iraq apart with a through ball which eventually lead to Ismail Matar tapping in via a deflection.

The performance from Iraq was poor as they struggled to create real chances and totally failed to control the midfield. The wingers, Justin Meram and Ahmed Yasin, were more lively but the lack of movement up front meant that Iraq lacked real threat going forward and the UAE never found themselves in much danger. Iraq are now six points away from fourth and third place, and with five games left, their hopes of qualifying are over.

To see highlights of the game, [click here](#).