

Friendly Match: Iran 0-1 Iraq



IRAQ SECURE MUCH-NEEDED WIN OVER RIVALS IRAN IN FRIENDLY

In a behind closed doors friendly game, Iraq became the first team to defeat Iran for two years in a game that should boost Iraq's confidence ahead of the Australia and Saudi Arabia qualifying games.

Both sides were missing key players; Iraq's most notable absentees included Dhurgham Ismail, Ali Faez, Ali Husni and Justin Meram with Iran missing a number of foreign-based players too.

Iraq's line-up for the match was as follows:

GK: Jalal Hassan

DF: Ali Bahjat, Ahmed Ibrahim, Rebin Sulaka, Alaa Mhawi

MF: Amjad Kalaf, Saad Abdul-Amir, Amjad Attwan, Ali Adnan

FW: Mohanad Abdul-Raheem, Alaa Abdul-Zahra (C.)

The game was not broadcast on television and it was goalless at half-time. Radhi Shenaishil made four substitutions at half-time: Hammadi Ahmed replaced Mohanad, Ahmed Yasin replaced Alaa, Waleed Salem replaced Mhawi and Bashar Rasan replaced Adnan. The game-winning goal came in the 72nd minute, when Iraq won a penalty and Saad Abdul-Amir (who took the captain's armband when Alaa was subbed off) duly converted it.

Iran have only been beaten twice by Asian teams since May 2013 - both times against Iraq - and this is their first loss since they were defeated by Sweden in a March 2015 friendly. This should therefore be a major confidence for the Iraqis as they try to restore some pride and improve their ranking in their upcoming World Cup Qualifiers, considering that World Cup qualification would now be a miracle for Radhi's side.