

# St. Louis CITY2 Hosts Bayer Leverkusen In First Game At Brand-New CITYPARK

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ST. LOUIS - It was a night that many have been waiting years for, the first game at CITYPARK, downtown's brand new soccer stadium located at 2100 Market St. in St. Louis.

The friendly between St. Louis CITY 2 and Bundesliga-side Bayer Leverkusen had been hyped up for weeks with anticipation building every day leading up until the match.

It was officially called a sellout a couple of hours before the game as the stadium's capacity of 22,500 didn't have many empty seats. There were a few, likely from those who didn't want to brave the freezing temperatures hovering around 30 degrees all night.

Those who did show up did so enthusiastically, and while not the result CITY2 fans had wanted, they still got a show.

Leverkusen, who were coming off a three-game winning streak in the German Bundesliga and just recently competing in the Champions League, won the inaugural match at CITYPARK by a score of 3-0.



The first goal came in the 36th minute from midfielder Callum Hudson-Odoi and was assisted by forward Adam Hlozek. Hlozek scored the other two goals, one right before half time assisted by Hudson-Odoi, and another in the 51st minute assisted by defender Mitchel Bakker.

Leverkusen would outshoot CITY2 15-14, but CITY2 had more shots on goal at 5-4.

Goalkeepers Andrey Lunev, who made the start, and Niklas Lomb, who was subbed on at halftime, both combined for five saves to keep the clean sheet for Leverkusen. Lomb made one or two key saves in the second half.

CITY2's best opportunity came in the 39th minute when midfielder Eduard Lowen had a direct free-kick opportunity right outside the 18-yard box. Instead of tying the game at 1-1, his shot drilled the crossbar and went out of play.

After a successful MLS NEXT Pro season with a record of 15-6-3, one that saw CITY2 win the Western Conference final over Tacoma Defiance and then fall in the MLS NEXT Pro Cup to Columbus Crew 2, they won't be back at home until the real thing.

The real thing being Major League Soccer. The first team, made up of MLS NEXT Pro call-ups, draft/expansion picks, and homegrown talent, will begin their season in February.

