

# City “Creates Own Luck” - Wins 3-1 Over Vancouver

by Nathan Tucker  
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**ST. LOUIS** - St. Louis City SC hosted Major League Soccer’s westernmost team in the Vancouver Whitecaps on Saturday night. City greeted their visitors from 1770 miles northwest with three goals, winning 3-1.

“We knew what was coming on our doorstep,” said St. Louis City head coach Bradley Carnell. “Despite the game that they had in midweek and despite their travel and what-have-you, we knew it was going to be a game to be taken seriously and reckoned with.”

Just 10 minutes into the match, City won a free kick on the left wing, about 30 yards away from goal. Indiana Vassilev and Eduard Lowen both stood over the ball, giving the option for an in-swinging or out-swinging cross depending on who would take the free kick.

Vassilev faked a step, but Lowen ran up and smashed a right-footed curler, one that kept curling and curling until it was in the back of the Vancouver goal. CITY PARK erupted, and Lowen's fourth goal of the season was by far his most sublime.



“We scouted him doing these great things, especially with corner kicks,” Carnell said of Löwen's first goal.

“He puts a lot of pace and whip on the ball and makes it a tough decision for the goalkeeper to come out or not, and the keeper chose to stay on his line this time, and fortunately we did score on that one.”

Soccer can be a funny game. You spend days, a week, sometimes more planning a strategy for a certain type of game, a certain team's style, or planning to counter an opposing team's plan for you.

Vancouver's plan to absorb City's pressure and defend in numbers basically went out the window with Löwen's arcing free-kick goal. They were forced to attack, forced to try to claw the game back, which played right into Bradley Carnell and St. Louis City's hands.

City thrives in chaos, thrives when teams are forced to stretch themselves and attack, leaving space open in defense and midfield. As they chased the game, the Whitecaps were forced into playing City's game.

With a stretched field, Vancouver players all over the place, City found their second goal of the night before halftime. In what has to be the most peculiar goal of the MLS campaign to date, a long pass from Eduard Löwen intended for a running Jared Stroud was broken up by Whitecaps defender Tristan Blackmon.

Instead of heading the ball forward, Blackmon headed the ball backward, presuming his goalkeeper Thomas Hasal would be standing in his goal to scoop up the loose ball. Hasal was not there, instead Hasal had drifted to claim the errant Löwen pass.

With the goal gaping, Blackmon's header bounced harmlessly to the back of the net, and Hasal and Blackmon could do nothing but watch.

Some around MLS have called City lucky for some of the goals they've been gifted this season. City players believe that luck is a result of their endeavor.

"I definitely do think that we create our own luck," said City midfielder Indiana Vassilev.



“ came from playing vertically instead of playing the short pass, which is just something that we talked about during the past week. Obviously, the center back headed into his own goal, and it ultimately was a miscommunication. But I think we definitely create our own luck.”

City had two goals and were flying despite not really having a ton of clear chances. Vancouver’s best chance of the first half came very soon after the own goal, with former SLU standout striker Simon Becher rushing towards the City goal.

Becher was one-on-one with City captain Roman Burki, and Burki swiped the ball clean off his right foot. It’s not the first time Burki has bailed out City this season, and seemingly won’t be the last.





Thanks to a sensational free kick strike, a stroke of luck, and Roman Burki's usual handiwork, City went into the break up two, clearly in the ascendency despite not really dominating play.

After the break, Vancouver piled on pressure, looking for the goals required to get back into the match. But that attacking impetus played into City's hands, and they were able to create chances on the counter attack.

Vancouver found the scoresheet in the 83rd minute in the waning moments of the second half. The goal had been coming, as the Whitecaps were really dictating tempo and play late in the half.

An ominous smoke (from a warehouse fire downtown) filled the stadium. It felt like the game was turning on its head at CITY PARK. The clean sheet was gone, and a once sure-fire win seemed largely in doubt.

Out of the smoke, came fire from the City faithful. The decibel level rose as City needed support to withstand the Whitecaps attack. With time winding down, the decibel level jumped off the scale, when MLS homegrown and St. Louis native Miguel Perez scored City's third goal.

It was a counter-attack off a clearance for City. With Vancouver pushing players forward to join in the attack for an equalizer, there was a lot of open space to run into.

City substitute Aziel Jackson picked up the ball and ran into open space, until being hauled down by Vancouver's Ryan Gauld while running toward the Whitecaps goal.

Eduard Löwen fired a free kick that was parried into the path of City sub Tomas Ostrak, who clipped a pass back to Miguel Perez who fired a shot from short range into the roof of net and blew the roof off CITY PARK.



The noise heard in Downtown West was unlike anything heard throughout the first three months of MLS play in St. Louis. The roar when the PA read Miguel Perez's name was akin to a walk-off Cardinals home run.

“What a moment for him,” Carnell said. “You can see what it meant for him. He's got one in the Open Cup and now he's got one in the MLS. These are incredible moments as a young man, and he keeps on growing with us every single day.”

Perez has quickly become a fan favorite, an MLS homegrown talent, a St. Louis resident, and as of Wednesday a graduate of Pattonville High School.

“Yeah, it's a nice graduation gift for him on this great weekend,” Carnell laughed. “But we have said a lot about Miggy and we haven't said enough about Miggy, and we'll continue to write great things about Miggy, I'm sure.”

Perez is proof of City's concept, that this is a city that not only can support a soccer team, but it's a city with plenty of MLS-level talent that the team can tap into.

The final whistle blew minutes later, and again CITY PARK erupted. After a tough month for St. Louis City, they're winners of two straight and have scored seven goals in two weeks without their star striker.

City plays at home again next Saturday as they host the Houston Dynamo in another MLS Western Conference matchup, and look to sweep their three-game MLS homestand.