

## MATCH REPORT : QATAR 1-0 ANDORRA

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A curious fixture took place at the English FA's National Football Centre at St. Georges Park on Wednesday as 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar faced Andorra, with both teams using the occasion to prepare for their respective upcoming World Cup qualifying games.

**Result – □□ Qatar 1-0 Andorra □□ (Asad, '73)**

Both coaches took the opportunity to use this friendly as an exercise to give squad players some game time ahead of upcoming competitive fixtures. For Qatar this was the final part of a three game tour for new coach Felix Sanchez (The third manager in twelve months) who was promoted from his position with the u-23 at the beginning of July to take the reigns following the sudden departure of Jorge Fossati following disagreements over squad recruitment with the Qatari FA.

### **Promising Form**

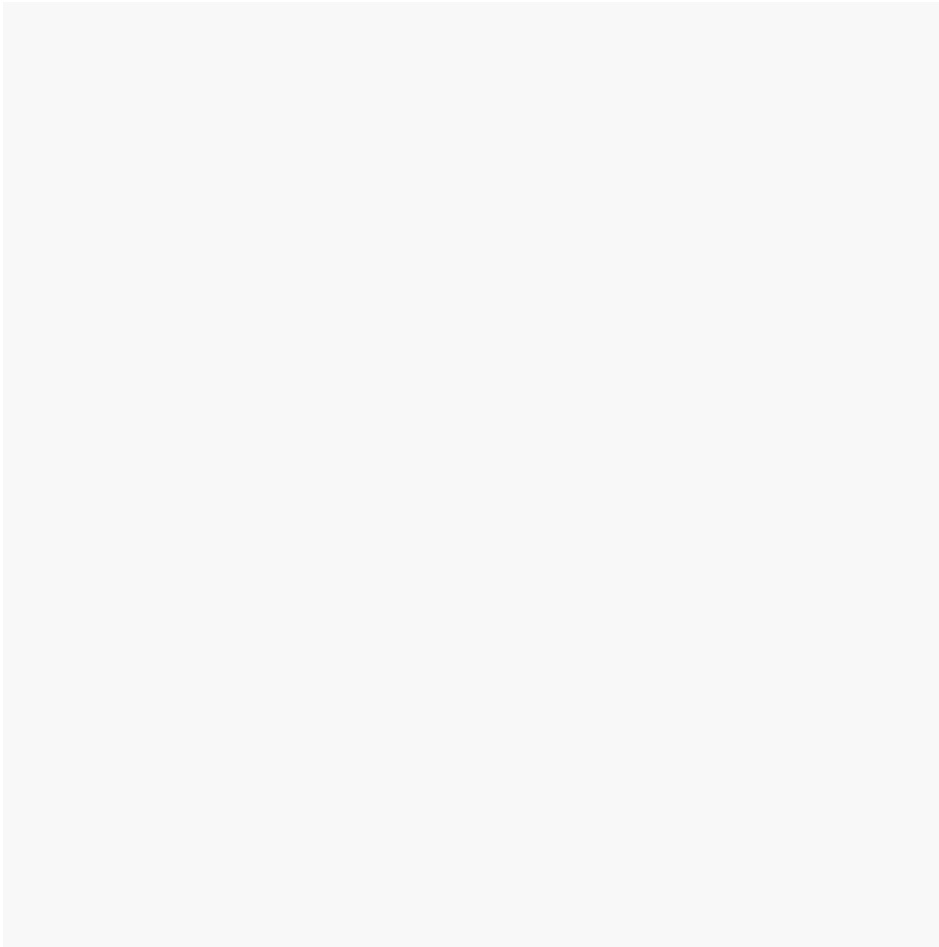
Sanchez's "Al Annabi" side had faced English championship opposition in their two previous games on this tour, recording a 2-0 win on August 9th over a Leeds United side, before losing 2-1 to a Nottingham Forest side 2-1 on August 13th, with the sole Qatari goal coming from Ismaeel Mohammad. On Wednesday they looked to bounce back against international opposition, facing Andorra ahead of crucial World Cup qualifiers ahead.

Andorra for their part had been on a remarkable run of form, with no goals conceded since last November, in a total of 342 playing minutes over 277 days. This run was highlighted with wins over San Marino and an impressive competitive qualifier victory against Hungary at home to add to a point from a 0-0 against the Faroe Islands in their preceding qualifier.

### **The Second Half Show**

A sparse crowd was on hand to see Qatar eventually come out as 1-0 winners, with Ali Asad (Ali Asadallah) scoring after 78 minutes from a well worked move down the left hand side, with Abdul Karim Ali laying the ball off to Akram Afif who found Asad in space 12 yards out to receive a well played pass from the byline and slot the ball into the bottom right hand corner of the goal.

It perhaps could have been more, had Andorran keeper Jose Antonio Gomes not excellently tipped a 25 yard thunderbolt onto the crossbar and out to safety. However this attacking action was confined to the second half, whilst Andorra created little in an attacking sense themselves throughout. Tensions spilled over as Sergio Moreno made a dangerous knee high, studs showing challenge during time added on, which saw him sit out the final moments of the game.



A post shared by Qatar football (@qfa) on Aug 16, 2017  
at 12:32pm PDT

However following their victory, Qatar's feelings of the game were reflected by Afif who was very pleased with the result, tweeting.

*Well done 🎉 congratulations for us not easy game but the most important is to win and to play good & we did it 🎉.*

*[pic.twitter.com/EZzQkoM64N](https://pic.twitter.com/EZzQkoM64N)*

*– Akram Afif 🇶🇦 🇶🇦 (@akramafif\_) August 16, 2017*

### **Moving Forward to Qualifiers**

This game provided a useful opportunity for player experimentation for both coaches, particularly with a raft of change being made during this game as both teams prepare for higher profile games. Andorran coach Koldo will lead his team into two home qualifiers against Switzerland (August 31st) and the Faroe Islands (September 3rd) whilst Qatar have a final warm up friendly, home against Turkmenistan on August 23rd before crucial World Cup qualifiers against Syria (August 31st) and China on September 5th as they look to keep their slim hopes of World Cup qualification alive.



**Lima-107 Caps**

**Ildefons Lima – Record Andorra International caps (107)**

A final note from this game was that Ildefons Lima, the longtime Andorran football servant and captain reached 107 international caps to become his countries record appearance holder, overtaking long time teammate Óscar Sonejee.

Aside from Andorra's goal finally being breached, there is little to take from this game, other than a chance to give squad players game time before more important games to come where both teams will be eyeing more significant results in what has already been quite impressive qualifying campaigns.

**Next Fixtures –**

- ☐☐ **Qatar** – (H) Turkmenistan, August 23rd
- ☐☐ **Andorra** – (H) Switzerland, August 31st