

York9FC secure Morey Doner and Diyaeddine Abzi through the 2020 Season

York9 FC sign fullbacks Morey Doner and Diyaeddine Abzi through the 2020 season.

After finishing in third place overall last year, York9 FC wasted no time securing the indefatigable fullback tandem that were important to last year's success.

Head Coach Jimmy Brennan stated, "both players had tremendous years and we're looking forward to working with both of them to get the best out of them. Their careers are on the upswing and we felt it was important to get them both back in York9 jerseys."

21-year-old Moroccan-Montreal native Abzi was nominated for CPL Fan Awards Team of the Year and Canadian Premier League Best Canadian U21 Player Award. Abzi totalled 30 appearances on the season tallying one goal and four assists.

A similar stat line follows the former Aurora FC player Morey Doner. The 25-year-old Collingwood native jumped right out of the gate this year tallying one goal, four assists and winning York9 player of the year voted by the fans.

Doner said he was delighted when he earned this reward.

"I was happy with myself and the progress that I made over the season," he said. "I told myself that whenever I would get the chance on the field, I would never take it for granted, because growing up as a boy, I never wanted to do anything else but be a footballer."

Moving into the second year of the Canadian Premier League, Doner said he's excited to be a part of York9 FC.

"I am most excited about having another consistent season and taking my all-around game to the next level. Last year I learned a lot about my game, more specifically how to be a pro in my first season."

The inaugural year gave young players a chance to become professionals. Canada's vision of enhancing its talent in soccer stems from this league. With the World Cup on the horizon in 2026, it is prudent this league continues to build. And build, it shall.

The first ever match of the Canadian Premier League hosted champions Forge FC take on York9 FC at Tim Horton's Field in Hamilton, ON. 17,611 attendees witnessed a gruelling 1-1 draw.

Since then, 27 more league matches by each club took place, including matches against the Canadian MLS clubs. You might say

expectations this year exceeded previous doubts.

It surprised a lot of people and was a really special year, with special moments, Doner explained. Our series against the Montreal Impact and of course, Cavalry FC beating the Whitecaps, were great for everyone, supporting a league that we can now call our own.

Doner also went on to emphasize, growth happens with time and you will see over the years until the World Cup and beyond that, soccer in Canada is here to stay.

According to The Guardian, the CPL has seen over 400,000 attendees, with an average of 4,279 per match. As a league, one might say this has been more than a success. It is a rendition for Canadian soccer moving forward. Signing contracts is part of the beginning.

By Robert Belardi