

## York9 FC is coming back to Ontario after Charlottetown's Island Games



It's a ubiquitous feeling in the dressing room. Expectations were so high and the result is nowhere where it should have been.

That's the part that hurts the most: knowing you could go far until soccer's precarious wasp, for lack of a better metaphor, stings you. It's not one a sting that remains for a day. Its duration passes on into the next year and the next season.

That's what the Nine Stripes could be forgiven for feeling right now. In the final week of the Island Games tournament held in Prince Edward Island, manager Jimmy Brennan stated the goal was clear: Defeat FC Edmonton to start and then challenge an incredibly tough Cavalry FC side with everything you've got.

Against FC Edmonton last Tuesday, the Nine Stripes walked away with a 1-0 victory. Captain Manny Aparicio stepped up to the dead ball in the 44th minute and zinged his free kick past Dylan Powley's short post.

That was his second free-kick goal in consecutive matches, and the club's fifth set piece goal in three games.

Manu's great in the dressing room. He leads by example on and off the pitch. The way he trains and plays he expects everyone else to do so. We're lucky, because we have a lot of experience in that dressing room," said head coach Brennan after the match.

York9 ultimately walked away with the 1-0 victory against an Edmonton club in last place. Christopher Manella finally made his first appearance in that game following an injury that sidelined him for the tournament.

Heading into Saturday's crucial tilt with Cavalry FC, this would have been the first time in the entire bubble York9 would be a healthy squad.

Manella and Michael Petrasso came into the final match healthy. That was a positive sign.

The negative of course, is the Nine Stripes lost to Cavalry 1-0 and with a Pacific FC win against FC Edmonton on the final match-day, it was all over for Y9.

The club didn't play poorly by any means, but execution has seemingly bit them in the behind once again.

In the final four matches of the tournament, York9 did not score a goal in free play.

Managing Consultant Angus McNab delivered a hear-breaking message to fans via Instagram:

?Our time in Charlottetown may have ended prematurely but there were plenty of uplifting moments we can be proud of: some spectacular goals from our captain Manny Aparicio and recent signing Alvaro Rivero, Luca Gasparotto continuing to make CPL history by playing every available minute for our club, the solidarity and eloquence displayed by our group in raising awareness for Black Lives Matter and sharing their own experience of racism,? McNab wrote.

There will be more to come next week from the club and a look at the biggest takeaways in York9's involvement in the Island Games.

The finals of the Island Games is set to be played on September 19 at 2:00 p.m. EST.

**By Robert Belardi**