

Over 300 soccer fans at Aurora Family Leisure Complex ?Watch Party? cheer Team Canada to shocking 6-0 win over Qatar



When Cyle Larin kicked in a rebound in the 16th minute of Thursday's match versus Qatar, over 300 fans at the AFLC erupted in celebration.

The black-jerseyed Canadian side had taken its first lead in two 2026 World Cup games and delighted 52,497 fans at BC Place in Vancouver.

The lineup for free popcorn at the AFLC, courtesy of the Town of Aurora, tripled in length after Larin's go-ahead marker.

When Team Canada veteran Jonathan David drilled the ball into the lower left corner at 29:11, the first of his three goals tallied against Qatar, the party was on in Aurora.

The spirit of David's goal celly travelled from Vancouver quite seamlessly to the Judy Sherin Memorial Arena on Industrial Parkway as hundreds of Team Canada supporters reveled in the squad's 2-0 lead.

The festive atmosphere was generated by an all-ages crowd seated in lawn chairs and stretching from the visitors' faceoff circles past the home side's blue line. The fans were clad in red or black Team Canada gear? a spirited group using maple leaf-shaped noisemakers to back the upstart national squad? and the huge projection screen set up Town staff offered a crystal clear view of our national team's dominance of Qatar.

When David's second goal the match beat Qatar goaltender Mahmoud Abundada in the third minute of added time in the first half, the rout was on and fans across the country were witnessing history. The national men's soccer team was rolling towards its first World Cup victory with a comfortable 3-0 lead at the end of the first half.

In quest of a pub setting for the second half, I raced across North Aurora and settled in at Wicked Eats at Yonge and Orchard Heights. The popular neighborhood restaurant was jammed with Team Canada supporters? all tables and bar stools filled with patrons ? and the national side did not disappoint the assembly by scoring three more times in the remaining forty-five minutes of play.

Nathan Saliba, who was substituted into the game to replace the severely-injured Ishmael Kone, scored in the 63rd minute and gave Canada an insurmountable 4-0 margin ? much to the delight of the 100+ patrons cheering on the national men's team with the same fervor as those who gathered at Wicked Eats during the Olympic Hockey final on February 22.

The outcome last Thursday evoked more joy than the devastating OT loss to the US in the gold medal game and when Jacob Schaffelburg was credited with a marker on a Qatar own goal, the Canadian side took a 5-0 lead and made history with the greatest

scoring outburst by a CONCACAF team in World Cup play.

David, who had been held scoreless in his previous four World Cup matches dating back to 2022, made up for lost time and completed his hat trick in the second minute of stoppage time as the one-sided match drew to a close.

Although Kone's gruesome injury, the vital veteran suffered a broken leg requiring surgery, cast a pall over the proceedings at Wicked Eats, an otherwise happy group cheered the winning side's moment of victory. The vocal crowd exited the pub having witnessed an historical 6-0 drubbing of Qatar that rocketed undefeated Team Canada into first place in Group B.

Canada's final Group Stage match is Wednesday, June 24 versus Switzerland in Vancouver at 3 PM EDT. The Town of Aurora World Cup Watch Party for Team Canada versus The Swiss will be held at Aurora Town Square in the David De Simone Performance Hall. Pubs and clubs around town will also be welcoming guests for the big game.

By Jim Stewart Local Journalism Initiative Reporter