



Reading United A.C.  
3103 Paper Mill Rd.  
Wyomissing, PA 19610  
[www.readingunitedac.com](http://www.readingunitedac.com)

## Press Release

**Contact:** Sean Doyle, Media Coordinator  
[sean@readingunitedac.com](mailto:sean@readingunitedac.com)  
484-269-0319

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Reading United defeat Villages SC, advance to PDL Championship Game** *Kieran Roberts' game winning goal in stoppage time lifts United to 1-0 win*

**READING, PA (July 28, 2018)** – Reading United A.C. advanced to the 2018 Premier Development League Championship Game with a 1-0 victory over The Villages SC in a pulse-pounding affair that had fans at Wilson's Gurski Stadium on the edge of their seats throughout the match. Kieran Roberts scored the game winning goal in the 115<sup>th</sup> minute while Bennet Strutz and the Reading United defense pitched their ninth shutout of the season to send the club to the title game for the first time in team history.

The Villages SC, the Southern Conference Champions, came out on the front foot, putting Reading's defense under immediate pressure. The Buffalo forced some uncharacteristic sloppy play out of the United back four, forcing Strutz to come up with three key stops inside the game's first five minutes.

Having weathered a fierce opening salvo from the Villages, United settled and found their groove. The hosts used their quick passing game to begin to unlock one of the PDL's top defenses.

In the 35<sup>th</sup> minute, Reading's all-time leading goal scorer Khori Bennett nearly got his team on the board. Kalil Elmedkhar launched a cross into the box from the right channel that Bennett steered on frame. Only an acrobatic save by Villages' goalkeeper Timothy McGlynn kept the Eastern Conference Champions off the scoreboard.

United opened the second half brightly and began to control possession as the Buffalo began to sit deep in their defensive shell, waiting to strike on a counterattack. That opportunity presented itself in the 70<sup>th</sup> minute as The Villages leading scorer, Leonardo Paiva, forced United centerback Lamine Conte into a tactical foul 22 yards from goal. Paiva bent his free kick past United's three man wall, but Strutz had a clean look at the shot and gathered up the chance.

Strutz came to Reading's rescue again in the 79<sup>th</sup> minute. A ball popped away from a scrum of bodies and found a wide open Kerry DaCosta, who bent his shot toward the far post only to see Strutz get a palm to the ball and deflect the shot out for a corner kick. United cleared the ensuing corner to end the threat.

Just before the full time whistle, the complexion of the match took a dramatic turn. Villages defender Gyua VanDyke was shown a straight red card after an off the ball confrontation with Reading forward Kieran Roberts. The ejection forced the Southern Conference Champions to play extra time down a man.

United would surge forward in attack with their guests down a man, but it was the Villages SC that had a golden opportunity to open the scoring in the 100<sup>th</sup> minute. Paiva beat Conte and had Strutz off his line and finessed a shot toward United's empty net that fell just inches wide. The teams entered the second fifteen minutes of extra time still deadlocked at 0-0.

Reading continued to mount pressure on the Villages goal. Pierre Reedy was nearly the hero as he headed a shot on target, but McGlynn saved the Buffalo with a fine stop on the goal line.

Two minutes later, the stalemate would be broken. Pierre Reedy took a quick throw in deep in the Villages half that found the feet of Roberts. The powerful English forward turned his defender and fired a ball into the back of the net to give Reading a 1-0 lead and ignited wild celebrations throughout a jammed packed Gurski Stadium. The goal was Roberts' second match winner of the PDL playoffs and his seventh goal of the season.

The Villages SC put a scare in the Reading United faithful with valiant last stand that saw one of the last kicks of the game trickle just wide of the United net. But it was Reading's night as the referee's full time whistle sent the hosts to the PDL Championship Game for the first time in the club's history.

Alan McCann, who led Reading to the PDL Championship match in his first season as head coach, was ecstatic with his squad's toughness in such a meaningful match. "That character showed again. We were under the cosh for about twenty-five minutes. They really strung us about, but we came through it. We played good football in the second half, at the end of the first half we played good football. It's the way we want to play." McCann wrapped up his thoughts by talking about the meaning of taking Reading United to a championship game, saying, "We're continuing the traditions of success. It started with Brendan Burke, Stephen Hogan came in and it's engrained in us now, it's engrained in the group."



**Official Premier Development League Affiliate of the Philadelphia Union**





Reading United A.C.  
3103 Paper Mill Rd.  
Wyomissing, PA 19610  
[www.readingunitedac.com](http://www.readingunitedac.com)

Reading United will now face Calgary Foothills FC in the 2018 PDL Championship Game set to take place on Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at a site to be determined. Foothills FC, the Western Conference Champions, defeated Chicago FC United, 1-0, to advance to the championship match for the second time in three years.

#### **ABOUT READING UNITED AC**

Reading United A.C. is the Greater Reading area's premier minor league soccer team. Led by the ownership group of Berks Professional Sports, Inc. the club was founded in 1995 as the Reading Rage. As the club entered its 15<sup>th</sup> season a name, logo, and color change was made to better feature the ties to the local and state community as well as the soccer goals of the team and its partners. Now in its twenty-third season, Reading United's commitment to professional player development has produced over fifty players currently on the rosters of professional clubs throughout the United States, Europe and Latin America. Reading United is the official Premier Development League affiliate of Major League Soccer's Philadelphia Union. For more information about Reading United AC, visit [www.readingunitedac.com](http://www.readingunitedac.com).



**Official Premier Development League Affiliate of the Philadelphia Union**

