

NEUFC in the ISL 2015



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After losing the opening three games, few would have expected NorthEast United FC to be in contention for a top 4 spot at the business end of the Indian Super League. However, the side led by Cesar Farias have put together a neat little run of late, racking up some vital points on the road. The recent performances set things up nicely for the Highlander's last five games, out of which four will be played at home.

"It is all about having patience. Everything is a product of hard work and planning things with patience.", remarked the Head Coach after the game [against](#) Chennaiyin FC. After their win [against](#) the Chennai based side, NorthEast United created history for themselves by coming from behind to win a game in the Hero Indian Super League for the first time. Cesar offered his reasoning on the same, "We were plagued with injuries to key players at the beginning of the tournament. It affected the squad balance and did not allow us to rotate the squad when our players were fatigued. We made appropriate replacements and now we are coming up with better results."

The return of Marquee Man, Simao Sabrosa from injury has also proved to be a galvanizing point for the Highlanders. "He is an inspiration to everyone in the team", Farias stated, "He has that effect whenever he walks into the dressing room. His return gave us a lift and the boys will tell you that themselves." The former Portuguese [National](#) Team captain is buoyed by the recent run, "Our team is a big family. The relationship that the players and the staff have in this team is so unique. I am happy to be with such an excellent bunch of people. We never let defeats deflate the team. We do not let victories get to our heads. The injuries that affected the team are now behind us. We are focussed on the task ahead." Scoring two penalties that handed [NEUFC](#) two wins [against](#) the Champions, Atletico De Kolkata and a sublime free-kick that hauled the side back into the game [against](#) Delhi Dynamos, the former Atletico Madrid man is a key figure in the side who leads by example."

Local boys Alen Deory and Halicharan [Narzary](#) echo Simao's sentiments, "We are one big family. Whether you play or not is inconsequential. Everyone has a part to play. Everyone is there to contribute whenever called upon. It is also about development of Indian [football](#) and we are focussing on improving our [football](#)." said young Alen when quizzed about his thoughts. Sanju Pradhan also opines along the same lines, "It takes time to settle in with the coach's philosophy and his train of thought. But we are now focussed on sealing the top 4 spot. His substitutions have always had an impact during games and the whole squad is happy with how we are performing [as](#) a unit."

The defense has certainly received a huge boost after the addition of Andre Bikey and the big Cameroonian is keeping his feet on the ground after a fleet of impressive performances, "We need to address the situation game by game. Wins need to be left behind and not [celebrated](#) because the minute the whistle blows and a few hours pass, it is in the past. We now need to maximize the games that we have at home. Once we do that, we can take satisfaction in the fact that we have given something to our loyal fans."

Team physios, Tanveer Siddiqui and Utsav Shah are happy with the fitness levels of the squad, "We believe that we have left the worst behind us. The squad is displaying remarkable levels of fitness and tenacity even though the tournament is an intense one. We believe that the tournament will favor the squad that is the fittest and we are endeavoring to make our team fit that criteria."

Few know what happened during NorthEast United FC's morale boosting draw [against](#) Delhi Dynamos FC. With more than a quarter of the stadium having ineffective flood-lights, the Highlanders had an opportunity to walk away if they would have insisted on not playing. However, the Highlanders participated in a thrilling contest and earned much good-will at the end of the game, an attitude transmitted to the team by the owner John Abraham who advocates fair-play.

[NEUFC](#)'s captain Cedric Hengbart is looking forward to the four home games that lie ahead, "Hopefully our fans would be filling up the stadium to support us and back us to the hilt. We would love nothing more than to seal a top four spot in front of them. They have been patient with us and have given us unconditional support. We want to reward them for their support."

With the [ISL](#) table extremely tight and the competition heating up, [NEUFC](#) will need to continue its good form if it is to seal a top four spot in what looks to be an extremely competitive Hero Indian Super League season.

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