

2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RUN

Clemson Knocks Off No. 1 Oregon State in Penalties to Advance to College Cup

Corvallis, Ore. -- The Clemson men's soccer team advanced to its ninth college cup with a comeback victory against No. 1 Oregon State (14-2-4) that took penalties to decide. George Marks made two penalty saves, and his save on the Beavers' fifth attempt ultimately sent Clemson to Cary for the semifinal. Each Tiger that stepped to the penalty spot made his attempt.

With just six minutes left in the match, the Tigers seemed to be destined for a season-ending defeat, but Oskar Ågren drew a penalty which Pipe Fernandez buried into the back of the net, sending Clemson to its second overtime match of the NCAA Tournament.

After a steady Oregon State attack in the first 30 minutes of the match, the Beavers got on the board when a corner kick found the head of Sofiane Djefal. There was controversy as to whether or not George Marks stopped the ball before it crossed the goal line, but the effort was ruled a goal.

Clemson gathered some momentum in its pursuit of an equalizer. A few set pieces provided opportunities for the Tigers to get the game's second goal, but they were unable to convert. Notably, a free kick just inches outside the penalty area was blocked by the wall, and the Tigers went into the second half still searching for a shot on target. Oregon State earned six corners to Clemson's three in the first frame.

The Tigers continued pushing in the second half to find the equalizer. Clemson seized its best opportunity of the match in the 85th minute as senior Oskar Ågren drew a foul in the Oregon State penalty box. Senior midfielder Luis Felipe Fernandez-Salvador calmly walked up to the spot and crushed the ball into the upper left corner of the net to push the Tigers to overtime.

Freshman Tim Ströbeck took a dangerous shot on goal in the final minute of the first overtime and 100th minute of the match, but Beaver goalkeeper Adrian Fernandez came up with the save to push the Elite Eight battle to double overtime.

The final 10 minutes were not enough for either team to score and the Tigers and Beavers went to penalty kicks.

Senior goalkeeper George Marks shined yet again in the net, coming up huge for the Tigers and saving two of the Beaver's penalty kicks while Isaiah Reid, Oskar Ågren, Hamady Diop and Justin Malou were all perfect from the penalty spot. Both of Marks's saves came on diving efforts to the senior keeper's right-hand side.

"Incredibly happy and proud of the team," says Head Coach Mike Noonan. "Oregon State is a quality team that was deserving of the #1 ranking. We got stronger as the game went on, and I felt it fitting that we prevailed to advance. We spoke all week about doing something very hard. Trust, belief in each other and hard work carried the Tigers tonight. We couldn't be happier to represent Clemson and the ACC in this year's College Cup."

Up next, Clemson will head to the College cup for the ninth time in school history and take on ACC foe Notre Dame in the NCAA Tournament semifinal on December 10. The match will be broadcast on ESPNU and will kickoff at either 6 p.m. or 8:30 p.m.



2024 CLEMSON MEN'S SOCCER - RECORD BOOK

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Marks Comes Up Big, Malou Closes it Out as Tigers Advance to National Championship Game

CARY, N.C. -- After a penalty kick save by goalkeeper George Marks, Justin Malou placed a penalty perfectly into the right-hand side of the net, sending the Tigers to their fifth National Championship Game in program history. No. 8 Clemson (15-5-2) and No. 4 Notre Dame (14-5-5) were tied 1-1 after 110 hard fought minutes, and Clemson came out on top of the penalty shootout for the second-straight game by a score of 5-3.

After the first three penalty takers for both teams made their attempts, Marks again played hero, propelling himself to his right to stop a well-taken penalty. Malou walked calmly and confidently to the spot and slotted his game-winning kick beautifully into the side-netting.

Notre Dame threatened early when a long-distance shot struck the crossbar, but ultimately stayed out of the net. It was the Tigers who struck first when Pipe Fernandez took a touch to his right and hit a brilliant shot that banged off the underside of the crossbar and over the goal line to give Clemson the first lead of the game.

The lead however was short-lived as a dangerous Notre Dame attack resulted in a penalty kick, which was calmly slotted into the right-hand side of the net, tying the game at one apiece in the 21st minute. Both defenses held steady for the remainder of the half. The Irish outshot the Tigers 4-3 and earned two corners to Clemson's zero.

Clemson came out of halftime committed to possession, but were unable to create any clear-cut chances in the first ten minutes of the half. Notre Dame created a turnover in dangerous territory with just over 20 minutes remaining, but the resulting shot rolled just wide of the frame.

The Tigers responded with two chances of their own when a Brandon Parrish cross found Mohamed Seye's head on the back post, but the Spanish native was unable to beat the keeper. Moments later, Callum Johnson found space at the top of the box, but his shot was also saved.

With just two minutes left in regulation, a very dangerous Irish cross found a head, but bounced over and wide of George Marks's net, and the two teams headed to overtime. The Clemson defense held strong in two overtime periods, sending the match to a shootout.

The Tigers and Fighting Irish went back and forth for the first three shots with successful attempts from John Martin, Luis Felipe Fernandez-Salvador and Oskar Ägren. Hamady Diop made the first attempt of the fourth frame before, once again, the senior captain Marks shined on the biggest stage in college soccer as he dove to his right side and saved the Fighting Irish's fourth penalty, before Malou's goal pushed Clemson over the edge and into the National Championship match.

Up next, Clemson will play the winner of No. 2 Washington vs. No. 3 Georgetown, which kicked off at WakeMed Soccer Park at 8:30 for the NCAA Division I National Championship. The Championship match will be televised on ESPNU and will kick off at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 12



2021 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP RUN

CLEMSON WINS 2021 MEN'S SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

CARY, N.C. -- Junior forward Isaiah Reid's goal just 27 seconds into the College Cup final proved decisive as the Clemson Tigers upended No. 2 Washington, 2-0, to win the 2021 Men's Soccer National Championship. The victory marked the Tigers' third national title, joining the 1984 and 1987 teams, and the first under Head Coach Mike Noonan.

Several thousand Clemson fans, who made the four-hour trek to WakeMed Soccer park in Cary, N.C., shouted out the final ten seconds, as the club piled upon one another. Clemson knocked off the No. 1, No. 2 and No. 4, No. 9 and overall seeds on its tournament run.

The title was the seventh team National Championship in Clemson Athletics history, joining football (1981, 2016, 2018), men's golf (2003). Clemson is the only program in the country with three or more national championships in both men's soccer and football.

Reid, a Rock Hill, S.C. native, named the College Cup Offensive Most Outstanding Player, scored both Clemson goals in helping the Tigers to the historic 2-0 victory.

Reid's early stunner came when an Oskar Ågren clearance forced the Washington goalkeeper, Sam Fowler, to make a decision. Fowler came out to play a high bounce outside the box and missed in his effort to clear the ball, leaving Reid in on an empty goal. Reid took one touch and buried it in the open net for his eighth goal of the season.

Reid's first-half scoring wasn't done, as a brilliant cross off the left foot of senior Charlie Asensio found Reid about 12 yards from the goal. The junior forward lofted a header over the keeper, who watched helplessly as the ball sailed into the top left corner, doubling the Tigers lead and giving Reid the team-high in goals on the season with nine.

The second half was controlled beautifully by the Tigers, and George Marks, who was later named the Defensive MVP of the College Cup, organized the Tigers in the back end. He saved both of his chances on the day in picking up the clean sheet, his ninth of the season.

The Tigers managed just four shots in the game, but made them count, as two of them found the back of the net. Washington managed nine shots, with two finding the frame.

The Tigers are set to return to Clemson on Sunday night.



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