

York United knock off The Eddies, returning home this Friday

By Robert Belardi

Your first goal will always be one of the most sensational moments of your career.

It's a landmark in your journey, and for Mississauga native Isaiah Johnston, it was a remarkable moment in his young career.

Not even 10 minutes into the final match in the bubble in Winnipeg for York United, The Nine Stripes took on FC Edmonton.

Johnston had received the start from head coach Jimmy Brennan.

And in turn, Brennan's decision reaped in a reward.

Johnston and midfielder Max Ferrari had already been linking up well. And in the 12th minute, a delicious low cross from Ferrari was casually volleyed in by Johnston and The Nine Stripes were in the lead.

"The feeling was surreal. It was an amazing feeling to give my coach a goal and celebrate away; for my team too and get the three points," Johnston said in the post-match press conference.

"I feel like I'm at my best going forward and defending, so box-to-box. Gaff tells us always to gamble and that's what I did."

York hadn't had much of the ball in the first half but continued to pour in shots on goalkeeper Connor James. The boys limited FC Edmonton's chances. But when the first-half whistle blew it was as if a ubiquitous feeling had entered the dressing room. York had only had two leads throughout the early course of the season, coughing up one against Pacific FC. So, it was time to finish this one off.

The Nine Stripes weathered the storm as The Eddies fired off 10 shot attempts. Four of those hit the target and forced Ingham to make some elastic saves.

The boys dug deep and edged out the 1-0 victory for their second win of the season. In the eight matches played in the bubble in Winnipeg, head coach Jimmy Brennan said there is a key takeaway from this experience.

"One thing we can take away from this is, we've got a bunch of guys that are committed, that are willing to learn. They leave everything out on the pitch. We've asked guys to play out of position and they didn't hesitate. They filled in roles for others and these young guys that we have, they can play at this level," Brennan said.

"These young guys have embraced their opportunity. We've said it from day one: never stop expressing yourself on that pitch. And they've grabbed this opportunity with two hands."

With the boys now heading home, Brennan added there still is a lot to learn and lot to fix. Now back into a routine, he hopes the players will find that groove.

For Johnston having scored his first ever goal in the Canadian Premier League the 19-year-old said the feeling was surreal.

This Friday, York United return to York University to take on Forge FC for the first time this season. The nine Stripes are 2-3-3 so far this year.