



# POC Online

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## Football: Vietnam - 3, RP - 1

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Jakarta—Group B favourite Vietnam stayed on the Filipino goalkeeper's face too close and too many times than he could handle to overcome an early deficit and win convincingly, 3-1, in the inaugural football match of the 26th Southeast Asian Games at the Gelara Bung Karno field inside the Senaya Sports Complex.

Goalie Roland Richard Muller was easily the busiest man on the field protecting the Philippine turf from piercing shots of the Vietnamese, who obviously did not panic despite the sneaky conversion of midfielder Manuel Ott, the last man in for the Philippine team who flew in only last Wednesday night, at the 40th minute.

Vietnam's persistence, sprinkled with a dose of luck, paid off on the 60th minute when wingman Nguyen Trng Hoang hit a sharp liner that struck Jason de Jong and got by Muller to tie the score and silence roughly a hundred Filipinos based in Jakarta who cheered gamely against an equal number of Vietnamese in the gallery.

This was the cue for Vietnam to charge more and using fantastic skills and offensive finesse, Lee Hong Thien lured Muller out of position in the 74th to give his squad the edge after teammates had failed to break the Filipino with a series of shots from left, right and center, some of them inside the penalty kick area.

" I thank everyone, my fellow German coach Falko Gerd Gotz more so Vietnam for missing many, many opportunities to score and I am very proud of our goalkeeper, Muller, who played a fantastic game today," said Philippine coach Hans Michael Weiss.

"Many of our players had suffered from jet lag and I think that was evident in the way they played but we have a total of four games so we would like to take it day by day. We will get this game behind us," he added.

The other group B match today features Laos and Myanmar which is also a contender for the two semi-final slots.

Group A, otherwise known as the "group of death" begin hostilities on November 9 pitting Singapore against defending champion Malaysia and host Indonesia against lowly Cambodia.

The Filipinos next face little-known Timor Leste on November 7 at 4 p.m. before taking on Laos on November 11 and Myanmar on November 13 to complete the elimination phase.

The two top teams from the two group will advance to the medal round.