



# St James stalls seeing sad soca soccer

Photographs and story by MARK LYNDERSAY

**F**ROM one end to another, St James, the citycentre that “never sleeps,” took a nap while the Trinidad and Tobago played its last, decisive match against Paraguay on Tuesday. It must have been like this across the nation, but seeing this hub of activity silenced was a sober echo of the seriousness that people invested in that final match.

Along with the schools that dismissed their pupils at midday and the banks that shutdown for the day, businesses either closed for the afternoon or left their doors open, attracting patrons looking for a side to watch the game.

In bars, the crowds were rowdiest, beers fueling angry outbursts and furious recriminations as the play progressed and the Soca Warriors’ chances at making it into the second round grew ever more remote.

At the very end, red clad supporters trickled onto the streets almost deserted at 4:30 in the evening. Slowly, the music began to build and the St James fans began to sing. No tears, but a profound sadness at a grand journey now at an unequivocal end.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT...

- At Courts, the ground floor was deserted and upstairs, the staff watched the match unfold on a dreamscape of wide screen televisions.
- A roulette wheel is abandoned as patrons of the St James Private Member’s Club take in the match projected on a screen on the stairwell.
- Curling iron lie cooling as the stylists at the Cutting Edge Unisex Salon fret over the game.
- You can usually get a paper here...
- Bob’s Racing Service served two masters, carrying racing information on the small screens and the match on the big ones.
- Hardly fruitful, this popular vegetable stand could only weigh the local team’s chances.
- Yes! Well, maybe not. A fan, desperate for a goal, preempts reality at Universal Bar.

