Son blames ‘mistakes’ after South Korea held by Palestine in qualifier

AFP – Son Heung-min said South Korea had themselves to blame and could learn from “inspiring” opponents Palestine after being held 1-1 in World Cup qualifying.
South Korea are still firmly on course for the 2026 World Cup in North America but Tuesday’s stalemate in Jordan left skipper and talisman Son frustrated.

In what was nominally a home match for Palestine, they took a shock lead on 12 minutes in Amman when Zaid Qunbar pounced on a mistake by South Korea’s Bayern Munich defender Kim Min-jae.

Son levelled four minutes later with his 51st goal for his country and despite the visitors dominating after that, Palestine defended bravely to hold on.

“I think we made the match a bit difficult due to our mistakes, but even after conceding the goal, we managed to bounce back and quickly equalise,” Son told reporters.

“If we had converted all our chances into goals we definitely could have won, so I feel a bit regretful about that.”

South Korea still lead Group B with four games left in this decisive qualifying phase, with the top two going to the World Cup.

Palestine are bottom of the six-team group but their dreams of a first World Cup are not over, with sides finishing third and fourth going into an extra qualifying phase.

The 32-year-old Spurs attacker Son had warm words for Palestine, who play and train overseas because of the war in Gaza.

“I want to give a big round of applause to the Palestinian team,” he said.

“Despite the challenging circumstances their dedication and hard work are truly inspiring, and I believe there are definitely lessons for our team to learn from them.

“It’s disappointing that we couldn’t win, but I hope we can prepare well for the upcoming matches and achieve great results next year.”

South Korea play home to Oman and Jordan in March as they attempt to seal a spot at the World Cup.

AFP