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DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 15, 2006

Flying start for Spain

Spain 4 Ukraine 0

AFP, Leipzig

Perennial under-achievers Spain kicked-started their bid to top Group H with a blast here Wednesday with a resounding 4-0 win over World Cup debutants Ukraine.

With Spanish icon Raul starting on the bench, Valencia marksman David Villa took centre-stage for Luis Aragones' side with a goal in each half.

Liverpool's Xabi Alonso scored Spain's opener before the quarter-hour mark while Fernando Torres capped the scoring with a goal in the closing stages to produce the biggest winning margin in the tournament so far.

Ukraine, who were virtually non-existent in the first half, looked more lively in the second but Oleg Blokhin's men will now be going back to the drawing board.

In the early stages Spain came close through Luis Garcia and Villa before Alonso opened their account when he fought his way through the Ukrainian defence to head home in the 13th minute.

Ukraine keeper Oleksandr Shovkovskiy would have little respite throughout the game.

Barely five minutes later Villa stepped up to score from a freekick which took a wicked deflection from a Ukrainian head before leaving the keeper stranded.

Blokhin had decided to play star striker Andriy Shevchenko despite an apparent lack of match fitness, but the new Chelsea striker's class was conspicuously absent as Spain dominated.

Spain were unlucky not to have led by more after the first half.

A long-range curling drive by Brazilian-born midfielder Marcos Senna was tipped over the bar by Shovkovskiy after he had stepped around the Ukrainian defence.

Villa and Torres then enjoyed several chances each to score, with Villa almost putting Spain 3-0 up in the 44th minute after he held off a marking defender to test Shovkovskiy from close range.

Ukraine made two changes for the start of the second half, however despite a brief foray into the Spain area their luck ran out when Torres was pulled down as he ran down on goal, although TV replays showed little contact.

Vashchuk was given his marching orders, and Villa made no mistake from the spot despite Shovkovskiy getting a slight touch on the ball.

Villa, having doubled his international goals account for Spain in barely 45 minutes, was replaced by Raul shortly after his successful penalty.

As he walked off the pitch, it was clear he was soaking up the party atmosphere as the red and yellow sections of the stadium sang 'Viva Espana'.

Aragones, who is bidding to lead Spain past the quarterfinal stage for the first time in 56 years, will now look to rest key players whenever possible and he also replaced Alonso with Valencia midfielder David Albelda.

On the hour mark Ukraine were given a glimmer of hope when a scramble for the ball on the edge of Spain's area gave Andriy Voronin a chance at goal.

However with Iker Casillas beaten his impressive curling drive edged inches past the right hand post.

Raul also came close in the 68th minute after he rose to meet a

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ENGLAND V TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Time to turn on the style

AFP, Nuremberg

David Beckham has pledged England will turn on the style as they attempt to secure their passage to the World Cup second round with victory over Trinidad & Tobago here Thursday.

The Real Madrid star acknowledged England were well below their best during a drab opening win over Paraguay and are determined to lay down a more convincing marker against the Caribbean minnows.

"The fans are aware of how we can play and the potential we have in our team," the England captain said.

"We do want to perform, we do want to excite, and we want to prove to people that we can play at this level and we can perform like the likes of Brazil, Argentina, Holland or Italy."

"There's no doubt in mind that we can do it."

A win over the 'Soca Warriors' would be enough to see England into the last 16 and leave them favourites to qualify as winners of Group B.

England's players are anxious to put the disappointment of the Paraguay match behind them, when they wilted in the heat and looked anything but world cham-

pions-in-waiting.

With cooler temperatures expected in Nuremberg for a match that will kick off at 6pm local time (1600 GMT), Beckham and his teammates are aware that anything other than a victory over Trinidad will be viewed as a disaster.

But even though Beckham admitted it would be a "huge disappointment" if England failed to register a victory in a match they expect to win, he warned there would be no danger of complacency.

"We're not under-estimating them as a team but we have got a stronger team than them and we should do well and hopefully beat them."

"But this is football and the World Cup and we've seen already that teams that aren't as big as other teams can still play well and do well."

Trinidad and Tobago pulled off the first shock of the tournament in their opening match, holding Sweden to a 0-0 draw despite being

reduced to 10 men.

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson had been reported to be considering introducing Wayne Rooney from the substitutes bench against Trinidad but it is now unlikely the Manchester United player will feature.

Rooney has returned to full contact training and is shooting at full force with his right foot, which has recovered from a fractured metatarsal bone.

Figures in the England camp are worried however that in his determination to prove his match fitness and spearhead the World Cup challenge, Rooney could injure himself again.

Either way, Eriksson is expected to continue with the 4-4-2 line-up that started against Paraguay, meaning that Michael Owen will get another chance to play himself into form alongside Peter Crouch.

Owen was replaced after 55 minutes in England's opener and looked desperately short of his usual sharpness as he returns from injury.

Beckham is adamant that the goals will come for the Newcastle Striker.

"Michael will come good, he always does in the big competitions," Beckham said.

Trinidad meanwhile will go into the match looking to write another chapter in what is rapidly emerging as the fairytale story of the finals.

Coventry striker Stern John said TT, the smallest nation ever to participate in the World Cup, had already proved they were worthy of their place in the finals.

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banglalink goal **banglalink picture of the day**



DAVID DELIGHT: Spanish forward David Villa (C) is being cradled by his teammates after he scored his first goal against Ukraine at Leipzig's Zentralstadion on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

STANDINGS

GROUP B

Team	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
England	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Sweden	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
T&T	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Paraguay	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

TEAMS

England (4-4-2)
 1-Paul Robinson; 2-Gary Neville; 5-Rio Ferdinand; 6-John Terry; 3-Ashley Cole; 7-David Beckham; 8-Frank Lampard; 4-Steven Gerrard; 11-Joe Cole; 10-Michael Owen; 21-Peter Crouch

Trinidad & Tobago (4-4-2)
 1-Shaka Hislop; 6-Dennis Lawrence; 5-Brent Sancho; 8-Cyd Gray; 11-Carlos Edwards; 12-Collin Samuel; 7-Chris Birchall; 18-Densill Theobald; 15-Kerwynne Jones; 14-Stern John; 19-Dwight Yorke

TODAY'S MATCHES
 ALL MATCHES LIVE ON ESPN * LIVE ON BTV TOO

TEAM	TIME	VENUE
Equador v Costa Rica	6:50 pm	Hamburg
England v Trinidad & Tobago	9:50 pm	Nuremberg
Sweden v Paraguay*	12:50 am (Friday)	Berlin

THIRD EYE

AL MUSABBIR SADI

For millions of Brazil fans, the World Cup virtually started on Tuesday. But not the way they had expected although Brazil set a new record by winning consecutive eight World Cup matches. Brazil simple didn't turn out as a team in defence of their title. There were glimpses of individual brilliance and one from Kaka -- an exquisite 25-yard kick with his not-so-favourite left-foot -- gave the world champions a 1-0 win over a stubborn Croatia. Brazil would be happy to come unscathed from Berlin, where they intend to return within four weeks to make the 'Hexa' dream come true, with full points against the toughest team in Group F. But it was utterly disappointing.

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LEADING SCORERS

AFP, BERLIN

World Cup top scorers on Wednesday after the Spain-Ukraine game:

2-Bravo (Mexico), Klose (Germany), Rosicky (Czech Republic), T Cahill (Australia), Villa (Spain), Wanhope (Costa Rica)

1- Ahn Jung-hwan (South Korea), Aloisi (Australia), C. Tenorio (Ecuador), Crespo (Argentina), Delgado (Ecuador), Drogba (Ivory Coast), Fernando Torres

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today's matches
 match1: Ecuador (ecu) vs Costa Rica (cos)
 match2: England (eng) vs Trinidad & Tobago (tri)
 match3: Sweden (swe) vs Paraguay (par)

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