

Uruguay go down

Argentina ride on Palermo



ASUNCION, Paraguay, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): Boca Juniors' prolific goalscorer Martin Palermo

claimed his first two goals for Argentina on Thursday as the Copa America, which has made a hugely promising start, produced two more top quality games.

Palermo, a somewhat cumbersome looking blond-haired striker, helped Argentina to a 3-1 win over Ecuador in one of two hugely entertaining Group C games. In the other, a vibrant Colombia beat Uruguay, who share Argentina's record of 14 Copa America titles, by a single goal.

The only black mark was the two red cards shown to Uruguay, who had captain Diego Lopez and Federico Magallanes sent off in the second half.

The competition has already provided plenty of fireworks, including a five-goal opening match between Peru and Japan and Brazil's 7-0 thrashing of Venezuela on Wednesday, a game that included a magical goal by 19-year-old Ronaldo Assis.

ARGENTINA-EQUADOR

Palermo, who despite his record for Boca is still a reserve for his country, was only called up after European-based Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo asked to be rested.

He staked his claim for a regular place in the best way possible.

In the 54th minute, he received a crossfield pass from his Boca team-mate Guillermo Barros Schelotto, pulled the ball down and then blasted a left-foot shot past Jose Cevallos.

Eight minutes later, he scored with a right-foot volley on the turn after Ecuador failed to head clear a free kick from the right.

Ecuador was far from disgraced but paid for poor marking in defense, which also allowed Diego Simeone to give Argentina a 13th-minute lead. After causing the Argentine defense constant problems with skilful attacking football, Ecuador got a deserved consolation in the 77th minute when Ivan Kaviedes scored direct from a free kick.

COLOMBIA-URUGUAY

Colombia, fielding a new-look team of young players after a decade of dependence on stalwarts such as Carlos Valderrama, was simply too strong for Uruguay, which, like Argentina, agreed to rest some European-based players after a long season with their clubs.

Victor Bonilla scored the only goal in the 27th minute but

Colombia, playing the same neat football as ever but with more purpose and bite than in the past, could have won by more if their finishing had been better. Hamilton Ricard was the main culprit, missing three acceptable chances in the first half.

Colombia gave 16-year-old Jhonier Montano a 20-minute appearance in the second half.

"We were daring and outlandish," claimed coach Javier Alvarez. "This is a team that always wants to score goals and put on a show."

They are unlikely to match, however, the effort by Ronaldo Assis, which some feel can be compared to Pele's legendary goal in the 1958 World Cup. But his more famous namesake Ronaldo, who scored two goals

against Venezuela, said Thursday: "It is a goal that will go down in history."

The action continues Friday with host Paraguay, held to a 0-0 draw by Bolivia, meeting guest Japan in a match the Paraguayans are under huge pressure to win in Group A. This is preceded by Peru vs. Bolivia in a double bill at the Defensores of the Chaco stadium.



Martin Palermo, the Argentina striker is jubilant after scoring his second goal against Ecuador at Luque on July 1. —AFP photo

Media irks Salas

FOZ DE IGUAZU, Brazil, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): Chilean striker Marcelo Salas was angry on Thursday over media claims he had asked for a team mate to be substituted during the Copa America defeat by Mexico.

"It's not me who makes substitutions, the coach makes them," he told reporters.

"I'm asking you if anyone heard me ask for a substitution," Chilean media claimed Salas had been behind the second half substitution on Wednesday of David Pizarro for the more experienced Fabian Estay.

The 1-0 defeat left Chile, who face Venezuela on Saturday, in an awkward situation in group B and in danger of first round elimination for the fourth successive Copa America.

The top two teams in the three first round groups qualify along with the two best third-



MARCELO SALAS placed teams.

Most worrying was the failure of the Za-Sa strikeforce to ignite, with both Lazio's Salas and Inter Milan's Ivan

Zamorano having subdued games.

"We're now in the situation Chile are always in, needing to win or to win. That's how it always is with us," Salas admitted after training in Foz de Iguazu, across the border from the Paraguayan town of Ciudad del Este where group B is being played.

Zamorano said: "Yesterday's defeat was unthinkable, we didn't expect it."

Mexican scorer Luis Hernandez said his partnership with Cuauhtemoc Blanco was every bit as dangerous as the Za-Sa pairing.

"We proved it," he said. "With a bit of luck we could have scored more."

Hernandez, top scorer with six goals in the last Copa America two years ago, scored from a pass by Blanco who tormented the Chilean defence, creating several more chances.

Blanc felt unwanted

UNDATED, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): French World Cup defender Laurent Blanc has said his surprise transfer to Inter Milan was due entirely to Marseille no longer wanting him in their squad.

"I have not gone to Inter for financial reasons. The sole reason for my departure is that OM and their trainer didn't want to keep me in their squad," Blanc said.

"I was convinced I would finish my career as a player in OM's colours before becoming an actor (behind the scenes) in the club in the years to come," the 33-year-old libero told a news conference.

"The club ... put me on the transfer market without warning me," he said.

"At the France team camp at Clairefontaine (early in June), I was sought again by Liverpool who had already contacted me the previous season," Blanc said.

"I was then surprised and also very disappointed to learn that the club were signing players telling them that Laurent Blanc would no longer be in the squad next season."

Coach Roland Courbis said on Monday that he signed central defender Eric Decroix from Nantes in preparation for Blanc's possible departure.

Blanc said he was surprised by the speed with which the deal -- sealed at a surprisingly low 3 million dollars for a 1998 World Cup winning player -- was completed.

I was contacted for the first time on Friday and I signed in Milan on Monday," said Blanc, who is returning to Italy after a spell with Napoli in the early 1990s.

Marseille fans were outraged at the news that the club were selling one of their best players, a key figure in their return to the top of the French and European game in the last two seasons.

Their ire was mainly directed at Courbis, with whom Blanc appears not to have enjoyed a close relationship or been consulted on tactics.

"My only regret is not having won a title with OM," Blanc added.

Club president Robert Louis-Dreyfus had said he was sorry to see him go but also that it was the best solution.

MU sacrifice in vain?

UNDATED, July 2 (BBC/Internet): Could United's FA Cup sacrifice turn out to be as wasted gesture?

The unprecedented move to let Manchester United miss next season's FA Cup is unlikely to improve England's chances of hosting the 2006 World Cup, according to football governing body FIFA.

"The Football Association has allowed holders United to sit out the FA Cup so they can take part in the inaugural World Team Championship in Brazil next January."

The FA believes that by taking part in the new tournament, which is the brainchild of FIFA president Sepp Blatter, United will aid England's campaign to win the race for 2006.

United accepted the argument and on Wednesday they reluctantly withdrew from the FA Cup - against the wishes of many of their supporters, who have been vocal in their condemnation of the proposal.

However FIFA's head of communications Keith Cooper has warned that United's sacrifice could be unnecessary.

He dismissed the theory that United have improved the 2006 bid and insisted the World Team Championship is a separate issue from who hosts the World Cup.

"I think the two things are completely separate," he said.

"The position on who will host the World Cup in 2006 will be taken by the 24 members of the executive committee in March next year and the criteria that they choose to apply is entirely their business."

Cooper's comments will add further fuel to the controversy raging over United's withdrawal from the oldest and most famous knockout competition in the world.

But one of the leading figures within international football took the opposing view and feels England's hopes have been boosted by the United situation.

Trinidad & Tobago's Jack Warner, a FIFA vice president and president of the north and central American federation, CONCACAF, welcomed the move.

Warner, one of 24 FIFA officials who will vote on who hosts the 2006 World Cup, said: "This can only augur well for England's bid to host World Cup 2006."

"If England want to be taken seriously by the world of football it's only right they take the world of football seriously themselves."

"I am therefore very pleased to hear that Manchester United will be taking part. It speaks volumes for the efforts of the club and country."

UEFA amends result

DUBLIN, July 2: UEFA have amended the result of a European under-21 match to 3-0 to Ireland because opponents Macedonia fielded an ineligible player, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

The Group Eight qualifier in Galway on June 8 ended in a goalless draw.

UEFA, European soccer's governing body, said Macedonia's Iliir Elmazovski had sat out only one game of a three-match ban and was therefore ineligible to play against Ireland.

Shevchenko the sixth



Andrei Shevchenko, Ukraine's ace striker, poses with the AC Milan jersey after signing for the Serie A champions on July 1 in Milan. —AFP photo

COSTLIEST TRANSFERS

LONDON, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko became the sixth-most expensive player when he moved from Dynamo Kiev to AC Milan for \$25 million dollars on Friday.

Following is a list of notable transfers in the last 15 years:

Player	Year	From	To	Fee (in dollars)
Christian Vieri	1999	Lazio	Inter Milan	50.0 million
Denilson	1997	Sao Paulo	Betis	35.0 "
Vieri	1998	Atletico Madrid	Lazio	28.0 "
Ronaldo	1997	Barcelona	Inter Milan	27.9 "
Rivaldo	1997	Deportivo	Barcelona	26.7 "
Andriy Shevchenko	1999	Dynamo Kiev	AC Milan	25.0 "
Alan Shearer	1996	Blackburn	Newcastle United	23.3 "
Gianluigi Lentini	1992	Torino	AC Milan	21.5 "
Dwight Yorke	1998	Aston Villa	Manchester Utd	20.5 "
Ronaldo	1996	PSV Eindhoven	Barcelona	20.0 "
Marcelo Salas	1998	River Plate	Lazio	19.7 "
Juan Veron	1998	Sampdoria	Parma	19.7 "
Gianluca Vialli	1992	Sampdoria	Juventus	19.6 "
Vieri	1997	Juventus	Atletico Madrid	19.3 "
Juninho	1997	Middlesbrough	Atletico Madrid	19.3 "
Sonny Anderson	1997	Monaco	Barcelona	19.3 "
Ivan de la Pena	1998	Barcelona	Lazio	17.0 "
Dani Garcia	1999	Mallorca	Barcelona	15.5 "
Enrico Chiesa	1996	Sampdoria	Parma	15.0 "
Sima Sabrosa	1999	Sporting	Lisbon Barcelona	15.0 "
Oliver Bierhoff	1998	Udinese	AC Milan	14.1 "
Dejan Stankovic	1998	R.S. Belgrade	Lazio	14.0 "
Joerg Heinrich	1999	Dortmund	Florentina	13.7 "
Roberto Baggio	1990	Florentina	Juventus	13.0 "
Sinisa Mihajlovic	1998	Sampdoria	Lazio	12.4 "
Ronald de Boer	1999	Ajax Amsterdam	Barcelona	11.0 "
Frank de Boer	1999	Ajax Amsterdam	Barcelona	11.0 "
Marcelo Gallardo	1999	River Plate	Monaco	9.4 "
Diego Maradona	1984	Barcelona	Napoli	9.0 "
Andrei Kanchelskis	1988	Florentina	Rangers	9.0 "
Raul Gullit	1987	PSV Eindhoven	AC Milan	8.5 "
Marcel Desailly	1998	AC Milan	Chelsea	8.5 "
Alain Boghossian	1998	Sampdoria	Parma	7.9 "
Paul Gascoigne	1995	Lazio	Rangers	6.8 "
Luigi Sartor	1998	Inter Milan	Parma	6.8 "
Dennis Bergkamp	1993	Ajax Amsterdam	Inter Milan	6.3 "

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Yaw's pair
6 Proscription
9 White House monogram
12 "Hil" to Ho
13 Vb. form
14 AP counter-part
15 Star, in brief
16 Wise guy?
18 Top
20 Source
21 Quitters' get-together
23 Soap opera story line
24 Report-card data
25 Coffee-shop equipment
27 Up
29 Way
31 Undo
35 Where the action is
37 Sunday paper

DOWN

38 Pupa-to-be
41 Put together
43 Statute
44 Lotion additive
45 Child's play
47 GI Joe, e.g.
49 Mrs. Jason
52 Compass pt.
53 Commotion
54 Teheran denizen
55 Roman royal
56 Small gull
57 Lincoln's

11 Palette array
17 Demos-thenes, for one
19 Business
22 Previous to
24 Long March leader
26 Got rid of whiskers
28 Down need
30 Man-mouse link
32 Loneliness in Leon
33 Plato's H
34 Without further ado
36 Close-minded
38 "Star Wars" weapon
39 Sans escort
40 Watchword?
42 Relinquish
45 Eliot's "Adam—"
46 Curaceous figure?
48 —the Walrus
50 Remnant
51 Unaus' kin

CRYPTOQUIP

A O X E C K Y K J P M S K R
A K O S P C S P J P "X U X Y I
T E I S M K X I K J Y K E Y
E R T Y K E Y

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I COULD EASILY IMAGINE THAT THE COMIC'S DEN HAS NUTTY PINE PANELING.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals R. The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Juventus get Oliseh

AMSTERDAM, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): Nigerian international Sunday Oliseh has joined Juventus from Ajax Amsterdam, the Dutch club said on Friday.

The 25-year-old defender and midfielder, who played for Nigeria in last year's World Cup, has signed a five-year contract with Juventus, who beat competition from fellow Italian club AS Roma.

Oliseh played 76 times and scored nine goals for Ajax, the club he joined two seasons ago. He previously played for FC Cologne, Liege and Reggiana.

At Juventus, he will join former Ajax team mate Edwin van der Sar and ex-Ajax midfielder Edgar Davids.

Ajax also announced on Friday they had signed Nigerian under-21 striker Plus Ikechukwu to a five-year contract from ASEC Mimosas in the Ivory Coast.

Ikechukwu, who will turn 19 next week, was a member of the Nigerian side which reached the quarter-finals of the recent World Youth Cup.

No financial details of Ikechukwu's contract or Oliseh's transfer were disclosed.

Marseille train Without Dugarry

MARSEILLE, France, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): France World Cup striker Christophe Dugarry, who has tested positive for a banned anabolic steroid, was missing when Olympique Marseille began preparations for the new season on Thursday.

"He really isn't in the mood to play football," a club official said as the Marseille squad gathered to travel to Hendaye in southwest France for a pre-season training camp.

"It was more sensible to let him calmly prepare his defence," he said, adding that Dugarry would probably join the squad early next week.

Dugarry tested positive for nandrolone after Marseille's French league match against Olympique Lyon on April 30.

He faces a possible suspension of at least six months, the term five other French players have served since 1997 after testing positive for the same substance.

Basking under Ronaldos



ASUNCION, July 2 (Reuters/Internet): Brazilian soccer was savouring an abundance of memorable Ronaldo moments on Thursday after two players who share the same name starred in the 7-0 Copa America thrashing of Venezuela.

The more famous Ronaldo, who scored the first and fourth goals, produced enough in Wednesday's game to raise hopes that he is returning to his best after a year plagued by injury.

His 19-year-old namesake shared some of the limelight when, two minutes after coming on as a substitute for his second international, he scored a goal reminiscent of Pele's stunning effort in the 1958 World Cup final.

Ronaldo senior was first to congratulate the Gremio youngster, full name Ronaldo Assis.

"This goal will certainly go down in football history,"



RONALDO

Ronaldo said.

Within two minutes of coming on in the 72nd minute Ronaldo Assis collected a pass inside the penalty area and flicked it over a defender without letting it touch the ground. He then swept past another Venezuelan and slotted the ball between goalkeeper Remy Vega and the near post for his first international goal.

Ironically, the Gremio player was included only after Edison was axed last week for indiscipline.

His inclusion immediately caused confusion in a country where players are generally referred to by their first names or a nickname and where there is already an overload of Ronaldos.

The most famous Ronaldo was the first to be picked when he was included in the 1994 World Cup as a 17-year-old. On the eve of the tournament a central defender by the same name was called in to replace injured Ricardo Gomes. He became known as "Ronaldao" or "Big Ronaldo".

Next year another defender called Ronaldo was also selected.

Rather than change his name, however, the Brazilian media began referring to the future Inter Milan striker as "Ronaldinho" or "Little Ronaldo".

However, this failed to catch on abroad, perhaps as the teenager was growing increasingly muscular, and he continued to be referred to as Ronaldo.

Ronaldo Assis was also being called "Ronaldinho" before joining the national team but, after some quick head scratching, the Brazilian media came up with "Ronaldinho Gaucho", the latter word meaning someone from the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul.



SENSATIONAL PROSPECT: Brazil's outstanding youngster Ronaldinho.

—Internet photo