

Uruguay striker Luis Suarez (L) heads the ball past Mexico goalkeeper Oscar Perez (C) during their crucial Group A match at the Royal Bafokeng Stadium in Rustenburg yesterday. While Mexico went down 0-1, they still go through to the second round with Uruguay.

## Uruguay, Mexico thru' to R2

SOCCERNET

A first-half goal from Luis Suarez was enough to help Uruguay secure top spot in Group A and progress into second round of the World Cup after a close victory over Mexico, who also qualified.

The only goal came two minutes before half-time when Edinson Cavani's superbly floated cross allowed the Ajax striker to head in at the back post.

With hosts South Africa unable to alter the goal difference too much in their 2-1 win over France, the result in Rustenburg also put the nervous Mexicans through.

Their coach Javier Aguirre made two changes to his line-up, bringing in veteran Cuauhtemoc Blanco for his first start in place of the injured Carlos Vela up front, while Andres Guardado was in for the suspended Efrain Juarez.

Uruguay also made one surprise change, with Diego Godin dropping to bench in place of Mauricio Victorino.

There was a buzz in the Royal Bafokeng Stadium at the start, with most of the noise coming from the fans in green, who outnumbered those in blue. But the Mexicans and their supporters were almost silenced early on.

First Maxi Pereira saw his rising 30-yard free-kick fly over, and then an error from Hector Moreno allowed Suarez in but the



Mexico (4-3-3): Oscar Perez, Francisco Rodriguez, Carlos Salcido, Rafael Marquez, Ricardo Osorio, Hector Moreno (Israel Castro, 57), Gerardo Torrado, Dos Santos Giovani, Andres Guardado (Pablo Barrera, 46), Guillermo Franco, Cuauhtemoc Blanco (Javier Hernandez, 63)

Uruguay (3-5-2): Fernando Muslera, Diego Lugano, Jorge Fucile, Mauricio Victorino, Alvaro Pereira (Andres Scotti, 77), Diego Ruso, Maximiliano Pereira, Egidio Rios, Edinson Cavani, Luis Suarez (Alvaro Fernandez, A, 85), Diego Forlan

Venue: Royal Bafokeng Stadium, Rustenburg



striker only managed to send his shot across the face of goal.

Perez punched weakly at a

Forlan cross, but there was no

one following up at the back

post. The chances seemed to

dry up 15 minutes before the

break, but then Suarez broke

change at the break, bringing

Pablo Barrera for Guardado.

And his side had the first

chance of the half courtesy of a

Blanco free-kick 25-yards out

that was curled into the arms of

bled the advantage when

Forlan swung over a free-kick

from the right, but Diego

Lugano's powerful header

drew an excellent low save

The Daily Star

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Uruguay then almost dou-

Aguirre decided to make a

the deadlock.

Muslera.

El Tri had a good chance moments later when Giovani dos Santos crossed for Blanco, but the 37-year-old headed over.

After 15 minutes Victorino managed to find space from a corner but nodded his free header over, before Alvaro Pereira drilled his shot wide after racing down the left much to the fury of the unmarked Diego Forlan in the

Midway through the half, Guardado almost stunned Oscar Tabarez's side with a wicked 30-yard effort that beat Fernando Muslera, but not the underside of the crossbar.

At the other end, Oscar from Perez.

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#### Grudge match! AFP, Rustenburg

Kevin-Prince Boateng has revelled in his 'ghetto kid' image in the past but he will need all his streetwise skills when the Ghanaian midfielder comes up against the country of his birth Germany in their final World Cup Group D match on Wednesday.

The 23-year-old Portsmouth player is persona non grata back in Germany ever since his brutal tackle on German captain Michael Ballack in the FA Cup final ruled the then Chelsea star out of the tournament.

Boateng, who played up to under-21 level for Germany before swearing allegiance to the country of birth of his father, did apologise over the incident but to no avail as far as a distraught and furious Ballack was concerned.

"It was all I could do," said Boateng, who went on to miss a penalty in the final after the incident which saw Chelsea win 1-0.

"I was late with the tackle. I apologised twice while he was still receiving treatment on the pitch, this is the third time." However, despite his apolo-

gies there has been little sympathy for him back in Germany and even his half-brother Jerome -- here with the German squad but unlikely to feature in the match itself -said he wanted no further contact with his older sibling.

Jerome on Monday called for calmer minds to prevail, though he still has no intention of talking to his half-brother.

"He remains my brother and I wish him the best, but at the moment we have nothing to say to each other, that happens in other families as well," said 21-year-old Jerome, who is set to make his English Premier League debut next season with Manchester City. Germany's general manager Oliver Bierhoff has also tried to calm tempers ahead of the encoun-

"We mustn't lose our cool," said Bierhoff, who scored in Germany's Euro '96 triumph over the Czech Republic.

"We will not be playing against Kevin-Prince Boateng, but against Ghana. He must be treated with fair-play."

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### Germany up against history

#### **PREVIEW**

AFP, Johannesburg

Coach Joachim Loew says fitness will be the key for his Germany team when they take on Ghana on Wednesday with their World Cup survival at stake.

The Germans need to get their campaign back on track after their shock defeat to Serbia and a loss to Ghana would mean they fail to qualify from the World Cup's group stages for the first time in their

Joachim Loew's side got off to the ideal start when they hammered Australia 4-0 in their opening game, but after striker Miroslav Klose was sent off, the Serbs brought them down to earth with a 1-0 defeat.

Klose, the top scorer at the 2006 World Cup, is suspended for the Ghana clash at Johannesburg's Soccer City which will decide the winner of Group D and only a win will guarantee the Germans a place in the Round of 16.

Five of the squad are on a yellow card and a second for any of the quintet will see them suspended for the last 16 match, should Germany progress.

Loew expects a tough physical encounter against Africa's Black Stars who are undefeated in Group D after a draw with Australia and a win over Serbia. "Ghana are fast and can

play well on the counter, they

**GHANA** 

**GYAN ASAMOAH** 

ASAMOAI

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don't shy away from one-toone duels as they are strong, they have players who can put in fantastic sprints," said the 50-year-old.

"The general tempo against Ghana will be higher than Serbia, the Serbs were a bit slow out of the blocks and they had a draw in mind with only one forward.

"It will be quicker, but fitness is written with a capital 'F' in the Germany squad and we can cope with it."

Brazilian-born Cacau is expected to start as the lone striker with Lukas Podolski, who missed a penalty against Serbia, Mesut Ozil and

#### Muntari very much with Ghana

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Midfielder Sulley Muntari has been reprimanded but allowed to stay with Ghana's World Cup team following an outburst after the game against Australia, the national football association said on Monday.

Ghana FA denied reports by leading German sports magazine Kicker that Muntari was ordered out following an altercation with Ghana's Serbian coach Milovan Rajevac in the team's bus after the 1-1 draw on Saturday.

"Sulley Muntari is still a member of the Black Stars team at the World Cup in South Africa," Ghana FA said in a statement on their website."

**GERMANY** 

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DSTUBER FRIEDRICH MERTESACKER LAHM



Prize

Germany striker Lukas Podolski and midfielder Marko Marin (L) play touch rugby ahead of a training session at the Super Stadium in Atteridgeville on Monday. The three-times world champions face Ghana in tonight's crucial encounter.

Thomas Mueller as an attacking midfield.

Ghana coach Milovan Rajevac expects to have his first-choice centrebacks back as captain John Mensah and fellow defender Isaac Vorsah both missed Saturday's 1-1 draw with Australia through injury.

Rajevac revealed that both experienced defenders might have been able to play against Australia if he had been willing

to risk them missing out on the Germany game.

pressure after the defeat to the Serbs punctured the optimism

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