

Mexico, Honduras into semis

 Football

AFP, New Jersey

Second-half goals from Aldo De Nigris and Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez lifted defending champions Mexico to a 2-1 victory over Guatemala and into the semi-finals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup on Saturday.

Second-half substitute De Nigris grabbed an equalizer for Mexico in the 48th after Carlos Ruiz' fifth-minute strike put Guatemala ahead.

Hernandez scored the match-winner in the 65th as Mexico advanced to a semi-final clash against Honduras, who advanced 4-2 on penalties against Costa Rica after they played to a 1-1 draw in extra time.

Honduras advanced in the first game of a doubleheader at New Meadowlands Stadium that drew a largely pro-Mexican sellout crowd of 78,807.

Mexico and Honduras will play on Wednesday in Houston.

The remaining two quarter-finals are slated for Sunday in Washington, where the United States will face Jamaica and Panama take on El Salvador in the regional championship for North and Central America and the Caribbean.

The winners of the tournament book a berth in the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Mexico stayed on course for a title repeat despite a squad reduced to 17 men after the national federation withdrew five players who tested positive for banned clenbuterol at a pre-tournament training camp in May.

Guatemala came out clearly focused on

pulling off the upset, and Ruiz's quick strike shocked the pro-Mexico crowd.

Elias Enoc Vasquez's long pass started the play. After Mexican defender Hector Moreno failed to kick the ball clear, Guatemalan captain Ruiz floated it over Mexico keeper Alfredo Talavera.

Ruiz came close again in the 73rd, with Talavera making a narrow save of his 25-yard shot to keep Mexico ahead.

Mexico, whose 14 first-round goals were seven more than any other team in group play, made one substitution at halftime as De Nigris replaced Israel Castro and made an immediate impact.

In the night's opening match, Honduran goalkeeper Noel Valladares saved a penalty in regulation for the second time in as many matches as Honduras and Costa Rica ended extra time level at 1-1.

Costa Rica's Celso Borges and Alvaro Saborio both hit the crossbar on their shoot-out attempts as Honduras won the decider.

Jerry Bengtson had given Honduras the lead in the 49th minute, with Dennis Marshall equalizing in the 56th.

Valladares made sure the match stayed level in the 76th with a diving stop of Saborio's penalty attempt.

"I've felt the emotions of scoring a goal for my country, but you can't compare it to stopping a PK," Valladares said. "I've lived (stopping PKs) more, and I've felt it more."

Carlo Costly, Victor Bernardez, Wilson Palacios and Bengtson all converted in the penalty shoot-out for Honduras.

Bryan Ruiz and Joel Campbell converted in the shoot-out for Costa Rica.



Mexico's Aldo De Nigris (2nd from R) is congratulated by teammates after scoring the equaliser during their Gold Cup quarterfinal against Guatemala on Saturday at New Jersey.

PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona secure Sanchez deal

INTERNET, Undated

Barcelona could complete their negotiations with Udinese and sign Chile international Alexis Sanchez by Tuesday, according to a number of Spanish reports.

After Barca sporting vice president Josep Maria Bartomeu confirmed the club began negotiations for the winger, Sport.es and El Mundo Deportivo now report the whole transfer could be completed within days.

The latest from Spain is that the Pozzo family, Udinese's owners, have struck an agreement with Barcelona, with Goal.com having exclusively revealed in May that the Italians are holding out for 30 million euros for the 22-year-old's services.

And, with a deal between the club's seemingly finalised, Sanchez, is now expected to fly to Spain so he can negotiate with the Catalans.

It is said Chile have allowed him permission to travel, and he could be in Barcelona on Monday to have a medical.

Once this is complete, the winger will finalise personal terms and contract length to then put pen to paper.

Tevez likely to stay at City

 Football

SOCCERNET

Carlos Tevez is likely to stay at Manchester City as he seeks to bring his family over from Argentina, according to his representative.

Tevez, who submitted a transfer request in December, had been expected to leave Eastlands this summer and recently told an Argentinean TV programme that he does not enjoy life in North-West England.

However, amid reports that Tevez has been told he will be allowed to return to Argentina on a free transfer if he stays another two years, agent Kia Joorabchian has now claimed the forward is hoping to resolve his personal problems and stay at Eastlands.

"I don't think speculation about Carlos leaving is fair at the moment," Joorabchian told the Daily Star Sunday. "I don't think money is a consideration. Maybe it's a case of his family coming over to him. That's something he's trying to sort out."

"I'm sure in the next week he will sort the family issue out. Once he does, he will announce it and everyone will be in a better place."

He added: "Carlos has always had a goal. The goal was that City needed to get into the Champions League and win a trophy, and they won a trophy and achieved that goal. Now that has given him a tremendous feeling. He held that trophy with a lot of pride."

"If you look at the team they are going to get stronger and stronger and, if Carlos stays, they would be my favourite to win the title. I'm sure that will be a factor in his mind and, the fact that City fans have embraced him, will count for a lot along with his great relationship with the supporters."

"I think all these factors will be positives for him to stay. Carlos has not made any decision to move. We have not asked to leave the club."

Kun to stay in Madrid: Maradona

INTERNET, Undated

Diego Maradona has disappointed Chelsea and Juventus by revealing that his son-in-law Sergio Aguero has no intention of leaving Madrid this summer.

Reports on Sunday indicated Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich had sanctioned a 50 million pound offer for the club's long-term target, while Juventus have also shown a strong interest in taking him to Italy.

However, Maradona says Aguero, who has announced he wants to leave Atletico in search of a new challenge, will not consider moving away from the Spanish capital.

That would seemingly leave Real Madrid as the overwhelming favourites to have Aguero as a member of their squad when the new season starts in August.

"He will remain in Madrid, whether it's Atletico or Real," Maradona told Conexion Samanta en Cuatro.

"The fans love him in Spain and will continue to do so. The Maradona family will be grateful to Spain for the rest of our lives."

Lazovic stunned!

 Football

AFP, Moscow

Russian football was hit by scandal Sunday after the country's defending champions Zenit Saint Petersburg accused a riot policeman of zapping their top striker with a stun gun during an away match.

The Premier League's leading scorer Danko Lazovic -- a member of the Serbian national team who has netted nine goals in 14 games -- approached travelling supporters following his team's 2-0 away win Saturday at Volga Nizhny Novgorod.

Television footage then showed Lazovic tossing his shirt to boisterous Zenit supporters and then being approached by a riot policeman who was on the touchline to help restore order between rival groups of fans.

Zenit claims that Lazovic was then zapped by a stun gun -- a charge denied both by local police authorities and the Volga club.

Footage showed Lazovic rubbing his side as he walked away from the fans.

"FC Zenit intends to file a statement with the prosecutor's office concerning the severe treatment of its players and fans," the club said in a statement.

It added that it would also be sending additional video material to the interior ministry and Russia's Football Union.

Security at Russian football matches has come under growing scrutiny after the country won the right to host the 2018 World Cup.

Russia's top sides are often followed by groups of neo-Nazi supporters and mass arrests are a common weekend football occurrence.

Spurs aim to match Modric's ambition

 Football

AFP, London

Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp says he feels the club have to show wantaway midfielder Luka Modric he can achieve his goals with the club as the Croatian ponders overtures from Chelsea after announcing he is ready to move on from White Hart Lane.

The 25-year-old Croatia international has indicated he would like to link up with Chelsea, although Spurs' chairman Daniel Levy poured cold water on the possibility of a deal "at any price."

Redknapp told the BBC he thinks Modric does not need to join "a bigger club" to win top prizes as long as Tottenham bolster their squad.

"I think we have to show him our ambition, which we will do," Redknapp told BBC Radio 5 Live's Sportsweek.

"If we can add one or two good players to our squad there's no reason we can't

have another great season.

"So Tottenham could be a great club for him to stay with for the next few years. That's what we're hoping for."

Tottenham have rejected a £22million offer from Chelsea - a bid ridiculed by Redknapp - and the Spurs boss confirmed Sunday that other clubs were sniffing around his prize asset.

"Chelsea are not the only club that have been in for him," he said. "There have been other clubs - top, top clubs."

"But if Tottenham are looking to go anywhere we can't be selling Luka."

"We have to do something to keep him at the club. We can't afford to sell Luka Modric if we want to be a successful club."

Spurs missed out on a top four finish and Modric is tempted to move on to sample more of the Champions League fare which he enjoyed last term as the North Londoners reached

the last eight before falling to Real Madrid.

Redknapp says with Modric on board, plus new arrivals, Spurs will go places themselves.

"We want to get back in the Champions League and we need him to help us do that."

Manchester City and Manchester United are interested in the midfielder but he has indicated a preference for Chelsea as his family is settled in the capital.

Meanwhile, Spurs striker Jermain Defoe has been linked with a move amid suggestions of a shock switch to rivals Arsenal.

SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION

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South Korea's Kim Young-Gwon (R) fights for the ball with Jordan's Yousef Al-Naber (C) during their Olympic qualifier in Seoul on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Australia, Korea edge towards Olympics

 Football

AFP, Singapore

Asian heavyweights Australia and South Korea took big steps towards next year's London Olympics with emphatic qualifying wins on Sunday.

Australia sparkled to a 3-0 victory over trouble-hit Yemen, while South Korea were also well on their way to the third and final round after overcoming a dogged Jordan 3-1 in Seoul.

The Asian zone's top teams are all in action for the two-legged ties on Sunday and Thursday, with the winners split into three groups of four teams for final qualifying.

In seaside Gosford, striker Jason Hoffman scored twice and midfielder Mitch Nichols got the other to hand Australia a comfortable buffer to take into the second leg in Newcastle.

Hoffman headed home a Sebastian Ryall cross in the 14th minute, as Australia had nine attempts on goal before Yemen's first shot was saved by goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne on the half-hour.

Australia continued to press in the second half before Nichols added their second goal in the 67th minute with a close-range shot after a cross from the ever-present Hoffman, who rounded off the scoring in stoppage time.

"It could have been more to be honest. We missed some really easy chances and their goalkeeper made some outstanding saves as well," said team coach Aurelio Vidmar.

"We're pleased with that and now we'll hopefully go to Newcastle and finish it off."

Thursday's return match has been moved from Yemen to Australia due to security concerns in the Middle Eastern country following mass protests and unrest against the ruling regime.

South Korea were made to work harder for their win and had to come from a goal down after Jordan's Mahmoud Saleem Mahmoud Za'tara opened the scoring in first-half injury time.

But Kim Tae-Hwan equalised 11 minutes into the second half before midfielder Yoon Bit-Garam calmly converted a penalty with 13 minutes to go. Substitute Kim Dong-Sub put it beyond the visitors with an 86th-minute header.

Japan, China and North Korea all have home fixtures ahead of Iraq's mouth-watering clash with arch-rivals Iran later.

This week's 12 winning teams will be split into three groups of four for final qualifying, with the three top sides all gaining automatic entry to the Olympics.



STAR Cricket

England v Sri Lanka

Third Test, Day 5

Live from 4:00

TEN Cricket

West Indies v India

First Test, Day 1

Live from 9:00pm

STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships

First Round

Live from 5:00pm

ESPN

Sportscentre India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm



Bangladesh League

Farashganj v Arambagh

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Bangabandhu

National Stadium

Ctg Mohammedan v Mukti Joddha

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Cox's Bazar Stadium