



Japan shock for Spain

AGENCIES, Glasgow

Japan scored one of the greatest upsets in Olympic football history Thursday after stunning reigning world and European champions Spain 1-0 at Hampden Park.

A first-half goal from Yuki Otsu secured a famous victory for Japan that revived memories of their famous Olympic upset of mighty Brazil at the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

Earlier, ten-man Morocco held on for a 2-2 draw against Honduras in the men's football Group D opener at the Olympics.

Morocco opened the scoring in the 39th minute with a superb volley from Abdelaziz Barrada. Honduras equalized in the 56th with a tap-in from Jerry Bengtson, who then converted a penalty in the 65th to give the Central American team a 2-1 lead.

But Honduras' advantage only lasted two minutes, with Morocco forward Zakaria Labyad chipping the goalkeeper from inside the area. Morocco left back Zakarya Bergdich was then shown a straight red card in the 71st for kicking Mario Martinez in the left knee, but Honduras

RESULTS

Mexico 0 South Korea 0
Honduras 2 Morocco 2
Spain 0 Japan 1

couldn't take advantage.

In the other match, South Korea wasted a number of scoring chances against Mexico as the two teams opened Group B at the Olympics with a 0-0 draw.

With forward Giovanni Dos Santos on the bench from the start, Mexico showed little promise of being a medal contender as its opponent dominated at St. James Park.

Both teams struggled to find their rhythm on the slippery turf, but the tempo picked up in the second half, which saw more scoring occasions.

Koo Jacheol came close to breaking the deadlock in the 53rd minute as the South Korea captain swiveled to send a volley off the crossbar. Koo headed the game's best chance wide in the 80th after getting free inside the box.

Substitute Raul Jimenez nearly helped Mexico escape with three points but curled his effort off the post after a swift counterattack in the last minute of play.



Japan striker Yuki Otsu scores the all-important goal past Spain goalkeeper David de Gea during their Group D match of the London Olympics in Hampden Park yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Organisers say sorry



AFP, London

London Olympic organisers apologised on Thursday after a mix-up over North Korea's flag prompted its women's football team to walk off the pitch in an embarrassing start to the Games.

The North Korean squad were pictured next to the national flag of South Korea -- with whom the North are officially still at war -- at their opening match against Colombia on Wednesday at Hampden Park in Glasgow, Scotland.

On the first day of sporting events ahead of Friday's opening ceremony, the North Koreans walked off but were persuaded to return an hour later, when the teams were reannounced with each player's face shown next to

the correct flag.

"We made a mistake, it is as simple as that," Paul Deighton, chief executive of Games organisers LOCOG, told BBC radio.

"We have apologised and we are taking steps to make sure that absolutely can't happen again, he added.

"It was simple human error, that is why we have apologised. I can assure you that it is not going to happen again."

North Korea went on to win the match 2-0.

SIMPLE HUMAN ERROR

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge on Thursday blamed human error for the flag blunder which drew a protest from

North Korea in the women's football tournament.

Responding to a question from North Korean IOC member Ung Chang at the IOC session, Rogge said the incident at Wednesday night's game in Glasgow was simply an "unfortunate incident."

"It was a most unfortunate incident yesterday," said Rogge. "I can assure you the organising committee will take corrective action and there will be no repeat. There is no political connotation just a simple human mistake."

In Britain, North Korean officials have blocked South Korean media from covering their athletes' training sessions, according to the South's Yonhap news agency.

N. KOREA TO BROADCAST GAMES

The London Olympics will be broadcast in North Korea after Asia's broadcasting union agreed to provide the secretive country with TV and radio coverage, South Korean state television said Thursday.

Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) said in a statement that, Kim In-Kyu, president of KBS and the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), had reached agreement in Pyongyang this week with the North's radio and television broadcasting committee (KRT).

BOA chief slates Sepp

REUTERS, London

FIFA president Sepp Blatter was wrong to suggest Gareth Bale could be banned for playing for his club Tottenham Hotspur after pulling out of the Olympics, British Olympic Association chairman Colin Moynihan said.

Welshman Bale withdrew from the Games with a back injury, but played in a friendly for his club before Britain's first match against Senegal on Thursday.

Blatter suggested earlier this week that soccer's governing body could ban the 23-year-old winger if the British team lodged a complaint.

"I understand the response from some football fans who were hoping to see him play as part of Team GB," Moynihan said at a news conference in the Olympic Park on Thursday.

"My view is different. I welcome the fact that he has returned from injury earlier than expected. I don't agree with Sepp Blatter's comments about banning him."

OLYMPICS IN BRIEF

Discus thrower kicked out

AGENCIES, Undated

Zoltan Kovago became the second Hungarian discus thrower to be kicked out of the Olympics on Thursday after he refused to undergo a drugs test, the country's athletics federation said.

Kogavo, who was a silver medallist at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, refused to provide a test sample, a move deemed as a positive test result, the domestic MASZ news agency reported, and he was suspended for two years.

Fellow discus thrower Robert Fazekas was last week also kicked off the team for the London Games.

Weightlifters fail drug tests

Two weightlifters have been kicked out of Turkey's Olympic squad on suspicion of doping offences, the Anatolia news agency reported here Thursday.

Turkey Weightlifting Federation (THF) president Hasan Akkus confirmed that weightlifters Fatih Baydar and Ibrahim Arat had been expelled after failing dope tests on July 7.

Baydar, 29, won a silver medal in the 85 kilo-gram category during the European Championships in Antalya, Turkey earlier this year. Arat, 23, finished fourth in the 94 kilo class at the same championships.

Phelps won't march

Michael Phelps will spend his last Olympic Opening Ceremony the same way he spent his first three.

The 14-time gold medalist told reporters he won't join his teammates during Friday night's celebration in order to rest for his first event the

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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TEN Cricket

West Indies v New Zealand

First Test, Day 3

Live from 8:30pm

ESPN & STAR Sports

London Olympic Games

Opening Ceremony



Premier Div Hockey Super League

Mohammedan v S Bima

Time: 3:00pm

Venue: Maulana Bhasani

Flag faux pas mars Day One

REUTERS, Cardiff

A major diplomatic incident marred the first day of competition at the London Olympics on Wednesday when the North Korea women's soccer team walked off after the South Korea flag was mistakenly displayed before their match against Colombia.

The error occurred at Glasgow's Hampden Park stadium which was hosting one of the day's six matches kicking off the women's tournament and led to a delay of more than an hour before the game eventually started with the Koreans winning 2-0.

In the day's other matches, reigning Olympic champions the United States, bidding for a third successive gold, came from behind to beat France 4-2, world champions Japan defeated Canada 2-1 and hosts Britain overcame New Zealand 1-0.

RESULTS

Great Britain 1 New Zealand 0
Cameron 0 Brazil 5
Japan 2 Canada 1
Sweden 4 South Africa 1
USA 4 France 2

Brazil, among the favourites for gold, thrashed Cameroon 5-0 and Sweden, another possible medallist, thumped

South Africa 4-1.

However, the pre-match drama in Scotland overshadowed what followed on the pitch as sporting action began around Britain two days before the official opening ceremony of the Games in London on Friday.

North Korea return to Hampden on Saturday for their next group match against France, who lost their opening game to the United States despite leading 2-0 after only 14 minutes.

France's advantage did not last long, however, as the U.S. rallied to take all three points with Alex Morgan scoring twice, Abby Wambach once and substitute Carli Lloyd grabbing the other.

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