



Brazil breeze into quarters

AP, Manchester



Neymar set up two goals and scored another off a free kick Sunday to help Brazil beat Belarus 3-1 and advance to the quarterfinals in men's Olympic football.

Neymar scored with a right-footed shot in the 65th minute as Brazil struggled to get near the Belarus goal despite controlling possession at Old Trafford.

Belarus had taken the lead when Brazilian-born playmaker Renan Bressan scored in the eighth minute, but Alexandre Pato tied it up with a header in the 15th after a cross by Neymar. The Brazil star also set up Oscar's final goal in injury time.

The victory gave Brazil six points in Group C, three more than Belarus.

Earlier at the same venue Egypt and New Zealand played to a 1-1 tie in their Group C encounter.

New Zealand forward Chris Wood gave his team the lead from in front of the goal after a corner in the 17th minute at Old Trafford, and Egypt forward Mohamed Salah equalised from close range following a counterattack in the 40th.

Both teams had chances at the end but

couldn't capitalize.

Egypt and New Zealand lost their opening matches and will need victories in the final round to advance. New Zealand will face Brazil and Egypt will play Belarus.

Knowing the draw wouldn't have helped much, both teams pressed forward in the final minutes.

The first chance in injury time came when Emad Meteab could have given Egypt the win but missed an open net after clearing two defenders and the goalkeeper inside the area. His teammates dropped to the ground behind him in despair.

Ahmed Fathi also came close for the Egyptians near the end, and New Zealand forward Shane Smeltz couldn't get a shot off despite a clear one-on-one chance as time was about to expire.

The Egyptians came to the London Games hoping to restore some of the country's football pride nearly six months after the stadium riot that killed more than 70 people in the Port Said tragedy.

Meanwhile, substitute Giovanni Dos Santos scored twice in the second half to give Mexico a 2-0 victory over Gabon in Group B.

Dos Santos came on after the break and opened the scoring in the 63rd minute before converting a penalty in injury time at the City of Coventry Stadium.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil forward Alexandre Pato (C) scores with a header against Belarus during their Group C match of the London Olympics at Old Trafford yesterday.

Farce at the judo court

AFP, London

The Olympic judo quarterfinal between world champion Masashi Ebinuma and Cho Jun-Ho of South Korea descended into farce on Sunday after Cho was awarded victory only for his Japanese rival to be declared the winner moments later.

The fight remained level after a five-minute contest plus an extra three minutes of golden score, meaning it went to a judges' decision.

All three judges on the mat awarded the bout to Cho, clad in blue, but the International Judo Federation's Refereeing Commission then intervened.

Following frantic discussions on the sidelines, referees director Juan Carlos Barcos, who had been seen consulting federation president Marius Vizer, called the judges over and told them to change their minds.

The three judges then went back onto the mat and having originally all lifted blue flags denoting a Cho victory, this time thrust up three white ones instead.

Ebinuma was declared the winner and will fight Georgia's Lasha Shavdatuashvili in the under-66kg semi-final.

The crowd, who were upset over the original decision anyway and jeered loudly, became even more vocal following the farcical overturn and Cho was afforded a standing ovation as he left the mat.

Rhode's historic 5th

AFP, London



Shooter Kim Rhode missed just one shot out of 100 -- equalling the world record -- as she became America's first individual medalist at five straight Olympics with gold in the women's skeet Sunday.

Rhode, an Olympic shooting medalist at Atlanta, Sydney, Athens and Beijing, dominated proceedings at London's Royal Artillery Barracks.

China's Wei Ning won silver with Danka Bartekova of Slovakia taking bronze after a shoot-off.

Rhode, 33, won golds in women's double trap in Atlanta in 1996 and in Athens in 2004, taking bronze in the event in Sydney in 2000.

She switched to skeet full-time when women's double trap was discontinued as an Olympic event after Athens, and grabbed silver in the discipline four years ago in Beijing.

After a bright start to the day in south London, storms swept across the temporary venue but the rain held off for the final, where Rhode finished with 99 hits out of 100 of the fast-moving clay pigeon targets.

Wei was a distant second with 91 hits, while Bartekova was involved in a shoot-off for bronze after she finished level on 90 hits with Russia's Marina Belikova.

Rhode had also won the qualifying competition, hitting 74 targets out of 75 to notch a new Olympic record.

Skeet requires competitors to hit a clay target moving away from them. The top six shooters from the qualification go into the final, where they fire a further 25 targets, with the scores added to their qualifying tally.

Rhode's build-up to the London Games was hit when flight problems forced her to miss her team's training camp in Denmark, and when her four-month-old puppy ate her plane ticket.

Black Sticks stun Aus

AFP, London

New Zealand pulled off a shock 1-0 victory over former champions Australia in the opening game of Olympic women's field hockey on Sunday, a first ever win over their rivals in Games history.

New Zealand rode on an early goal from Cathryn Finlayson in the Group B match to secure their landmark triumph.

It was the first time the Black Sticks had taken even a point off Australia in the Games, having also lost by at least three goals in the past.

Finlayson scored from a corner in the third minute with a follow-up shot from eight yards after the initial drive by New Zealand captain Kayla Sharland had been saved.

'I defied parents'

AFP, London



Olympic judo champion Sarah Menezes revealed Sunday that her parents tried to stop her from taking up the sport which they believed was for men only.

The 22-year-old from Brazil became the first woman from her country to win an Olympic judo gold before admitting that she had to overcome a series of barriers to succeed.

"When I started judo my parents said it was a sport for men. My whole life I've liked challenges," said Menezes.

"The truth is the major problem was my studies so I came to an agreement with them. In order to continue in the sport I had to do well in my studies."

Despite their initial objections, her parents came to appreciate her skills.

"When I started to travel (to competitions) my parents realised I had talent," added Menezes.

It was a good decision as it set the amiable under-48kg fighter on the path to fame.

Having won bronze in the previous two years at the world championships, she finally ascended the top step of the podium in London.

And at just 22 years of age, there may be much more to come from the world number three and twice former world junior champion.

Earlier this year she also won her first Grand Slam event in Moscow.

And now she says the increased confidence success has brought to Brazilian women over the last few years will help them -- and indeed her -- in the future.

She expects her gold medal to become the first of many for her country's women.

"It's really very, very important because it took many years to happen," she said.

"Now I hope that my medal can open up the way for many more. What's changed is that we've developed the belief that we can win because everyone is strong.

"We've stopped doubting ourselves and now we know we can beat anyone, and that's

Guo defends pistol title



China's Guo Wenjun signals number one after winning the women's 10m air pistol event at the Royal Artillery Barracks on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, London



China's Guo Wenjun showed nerves of steel as she came from behind on the very last shot to successfully defend her 10m air pistol Olympic title in thrilling fashion here on Sunday.

With her final effort, Guo shot a 10.8, just 0.1 points short of a maximum score, drawing gasps from the packed crowd at the Royal Artillery Barracks and overhauling France's Celine Goberville, who had led going into the last round.

Goberville could only manage 8.8, putting her level on points with Athens 2004 gold-medallist Olena Kostevych of Ukraine.

In a shoot-off, Goberville recovered from her disappointment at missing gold and secured silver.

Ice-cool Guo, 28, who said her motto was, "Never give up", maintained she always felt she had a chance of gold going into the final shot -- even though she was trailing by 0.5 points.

"I just focused on doing my best on the final shot," she said, adding: "I think everyone is good, I just never give up."

Guo said she put a poor eighth shot out of her mind as the competition reached its nail-biting climax, adding: "It was done. I just couldn't keep thinking about it."

The Chinese crack shot, who topped the earlier qualifying round, lost ground after the first shot of the final when she only managed a score of 8.0.

And as the rain thundered onto the roof of the temporary building that houses the competition, the pressure built, with neither athlete able to forge a decisive lead, leading to the dramatic climax.

Guo finished with a total score of 488.1, 1.5 points ahead of Goberville.

Goberville said she was proud to win France's first medal of the Games and was not disappointed to miss out on gold by such a slender margin.

"I didn't think about winning a medal. I've had a good season but these are my first Olympic Games and for me I thought the podium was not reachable," she said.

"Before the last shot I tried not to look at what was happening in the rankings but I had to and it didn't disturb me. The last shot, I can't explain why I missed it. It's not because it was the last shot."

SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION

Which country will win the highest number of medals in the London Olympics?

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ESPN & STAR Sports
London Olympic Games
Day Three

DAY'S EVENT

Premier Div Hockey Super League
Mohammedan v Sonali Bank
Time: 3:00pm
Venue: Maulana Bhasani

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Head Office : 9/D, Dilkusha, C/A, Dhaka-1000
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E-mail : agbkfrmd@bangla.net, dgmfrmd@agranibank.org
Phone : DGM : +880-2-9563942, 01713480109 AGM : +880-2-9560822

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