

Sturridge fires GB

AFP, London



Hosts Great Britain won through to the Olympic men's football quarterfinals after Daniel Sturridge's goal secured a 1-0 win over Uruguay at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on Wednesday.

Stuart Pearce's men will be back at the Millennium this Saturday to face South Korea in the last eight ahead of a possible semifinal against pre-tournament favourites Brazil at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

But had Gaston Ramirez's injury-time effort, which struck the crossbar, been a touch lower, Uruguay would have had a draw.

Instead defeat saw Uruguay, whose captain Luis Suarez was jeered throughout after the Liverpool striker was banned last season for racially abusing Manchester United's Patrice Evra, eliminated after Chelsea striker Sturridge scored in first half stoppage time.

Neat approach play by Joe Allen saw the Swansea star weave his way through the Uruguay box before driving a low cross which Sturridge, whose Olympic hopes were in the balance after he was diagnosed with viral meningitis just a few weeks before the tournament, turned in from close range.

Victory saw Britain follow their women's team into the knockout stages after both

sides had entered the Olympics against a backdrop of fierce opposition from Celtic countries fearful of losing their football independence.

"We played some outstanding football," said Stuart Pearce, coach of the first British men's team to compete at an Olympics for more than 50 years.

"Overall, I'm delighted we beat a good Uruguay side 1-0," the former England full-back added.

Brazil saw Porto star Alex Sandro sent off as they overpowered New Zealand 3-0 at Newcastle's St James' Park.

By the time he was dismissed for a second bookable offence, Internacional striker Leandro Damiao had sent the South Americans on their way into the knockout stages.

The 23-year-old set up midfielder Danilo for the opener and then claimed his second goal of the tournament before the break, with Tottenham's Sandro seal a victory which will see his side return to St James' on Saturday.

Now Brazil will play Honduras after the Central Americans held Japan to a goalless draw in Coventry to reach the last eight of an Olympic tournament for the first time.

Egypt also reached the last eight with a 3-1 win over Belarus at Glasgow's Hampden Park and will face Japan at Old Trafford in the first of four quarterfinals all being played on Saturday.

RESULTS

- Great Britain 1 Uruguay 0
- Senegal 1 United Arab Emirates 1
- Mexico 1 Switzerland 0
- South Korea 0 Gabon 0
- Brazil 3 New Zealand 0
- Egypt 3 Belarus 1
- Japan 0 Honduras 0



Great Britain striker Daniel Sturridge (L) celebrates his all-important goal against Uruguay during their Olympic Games men's football match at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

Yu quits after scandal

AFP, Beijing

One of the star Chinese badminton players disqualified from the Olympics for throwing a match has announced she is quitting the sport, saying her dreams had been "heartlessly shattered".

"This is my last time competing. Goodbye Badminton World Federation, goodbye my beloved badminton," Yu Yang said on her Weibo, or microblog, late Wednesday. "You have heartlessly shattered our dreams. It is just unforgivable."

Yu, 26, and her partner Wang Xiaoli were disqualified by the Badminton World Federation for "not using one's best efforts to win a match" -- an incident that sparked anger among Chinese sports fans.

The scandal has been one of the most talked-about subjects on China's Twitter-like microblogs, with many fans calling it a "humiliation" for the national team.

The Badminton World Federation also disqualified two South Korean pairs and one Indonesian duo for trying to lose their first-round games to secure better standing for the following knockout round.

Aussies thrash Spain

AFP, London



World champions Australia routed 2008 Olympic silver medallists Spain 5-0 in men's Olympic field hockey on Wednesday, as hosts Great Britain were held by South Africa.

Opening up Spain's defence with frequent interchanges, Australia posted their second straight win to stay on top of Pool A with six points.

The Netherlands also took their points tally to six from two outings in Pool B after posting a hard-earned 3-1 victory over Belgium, with their last goal coming in the final minute.

Australia opened the scoring in the ninth minute through Russell Ford who deflected in a ball from Mark Knowles. Matthew Butturini was on target five minutes later after creating space.

Simon Orchard's field goal in the 29th minute gave Australia a 3-0 lead at half-time.

Glenn Turner collected a long pass on top of the circle to slam past the goalkeeper in the 40th minute and Edward Ockenden rounded off the scoring with a penalty corner conversion in the 69th minute.

Spain, who now have just one point from two matches, saw seasoned player Pol Amat going off the pitch after colliding with an Australian defender.

Amat's injury came after Spain's star striker, Santi Freixa, suffered a fracture in the last match against Pakistan. Freixa has been ruled out of the tournament and replaced on the Spanish team roster.

Mink van der Weerden converted two

penalty corners for the Netherlands against Belgium.

After a goalless first half, he scored seven minutes into the second session, but Belgium equalised with a penalty corner goal of their own by Jerome Dekeyser in the 58th minute.

Van der Weerden's second goal, four minutes later, put the Dutch ahead again, but they came under sustained pressure as Belgium opted for all-out attack, even taking their goalkeeper off the pitch.

The Dutch got their third goal with just 17 seconds left on the clock when Felix Denayer shot into an open goal on a breakaway move.

British teams dropped their first point when the men's side were held to a 2-2 Pool A draw by South Africa, the lowest ranked team, who came within six minutes of a rare Olympic victory before conceding an equaliser.

And India suffered their second successive Pool B defeat when they were outplayed by New Zealand, losing 3-1.

Sandeep Singh's second-minute penalty corner goal gave them an early lead but New Zealand came back strongly to score three goals inside half-an-hour.

Andrew Hayward equalised with a penalty corner goal in the 12th minute, Phillip Burrows flicked in a penalty stroke in the 24th and Nicholas Wilson capitalised on a pass inside the circle in the 29th.

Meanwhile in Pool A, Pakistan beat Argentina 1-0 thanks to a first-half goal from Fareed Ahmed.

Defending champions Germany beat South Korea 1-0 for their second win to join Netherlands at the top of Group B.

RESULTS

- Spain 0 Australia 5
- South Africa 2 Great Britain 2
- Pakistan 1 Argentina 0
- Belgium 1 Netherlands 3
- New Zealand 3 India 1

Li triumphs in stormy final

AFP, London

Li Xiaoxia stunned Ding Ning to win women's table tennis gold in a stormy, all-Chinese women's singles final which ended with the world number one in tears on Wednesday.

Li won 11-8, 14-12, 8-11, 11-6, 11-4 at ExCeL as Ding, the world champion and favourite, wept and argued when she was repeatedly cautioned by the referee over her serving.

"I didn't do very well today. I had two obstacles, not only from my opponent but from the judge," said the crestfallen star.

"Not only did she give me a yellow card but she also gave me a red. There's nothing I can do. She judged my serving. I was only doing my best."

"It's quite a pity because I lost, not only because of my tactics but also outside the arena."

Li, dubbed 'Miss Number Two', can now shed the moniker as she becomes China's seventh straight women's singles Olympic champion, extending a monopoly which goes back to the event's introduction in 1988.

"I'm very excited. This has been my dream since being a little girl -- I dreamed of being an Olympic champion," she said. "We are the same level but today I performed better than I expected."

Singapore's Feng Tianwei, who was born in China, beat 19-year-old Japanese player Kasumi Ishikawa to claim bronze.

Li had never beaten Ding until June, when she registered her first win over the world and Asian champion at the Beijing Open.

"My family are in China. I want to thank my parents. They have sacrificed a lot to make my dreams come true," she said.

China's fourth straight gold

AFP, London



China's Qin Kai and Luo Yutong won the men's 3m synchronised springboard gold medal on Wednesday to make it four Chinese victories from four diving events at the London Olympics.

Qin and Luo tallied 477.00 points from their six dives to win from Russia's Ilya Zakharov and Evgeny Kuznetsov, who took silver, and the US pairing of Kristian Ipsen and Troy Dumais, who finished with the bronze medal.

Having won seven out of eight diving events when they staged the Beijing Games four years ago, China are on course for a Games clean sweep, having won all 10 diving golds at the 2011 world aquatic championships.

Qin, who retained the Olympic title he won alongside partner Wang Feng in Beijing, and said he was delighted to continue China's domination.

"I think Chinese divers have done a great job so far, we have four golds now and they all came with perfect performances," said the 26-year-old, who also won bronze in the individual competition four years ago.

The Russian pair explained how they both dipped their medals in the pool at the Aquatic Centre after leaving the dais to bring more luck to their compatriots in the swimming and diving events.

"We are really pleased to get silver, it's a great feeling," said Zakharov, who along with partner Kuznetsov won world silver behind the Chinese in Shanghai last year.

America's Ipsen and Dumais collected the United States' third diving medal in three days.

"There are no regrets, we didn't watch the scoreboard and we just focused on ourselves," said 32-year-old Dumais, who claimed his first Olympic medal at his fourth Games, with 19-year-old Ipsen making his debut in London.

After David Boudia and Nicholas McCrory of the United States won bronze on Monday in the men's 10m synchronised dive, America's Kelci Bryant and Abigail Johnston took silver on Tuesday in the women's synchronised 3m springboard.

"It's really been a dream. I competed in Sydney and at Athens with my brother, which didn't go so well, so this medal is also for him," said Dumais.

Blame it on bus trouble

INTERNET, London

Brazil's women's soccer team has accused London 2012 organizers of a "disgraceful" plot that led to its shocking defeat against Great Britain Tuesday.

Members of the Brazilian side were infuriated when they were stranded by the side of a highway for five hours as their team bus broke down on its journey to London the night before the Group E clash at Wembley Stadium. Britain won the game 1-0.

"It was a disgrace," head coach Jorge Barcellos said. "I wasn't impressed; a tournament of this size, and the delay in taking any initiative to resolve the situation was absurd."

Brazil left its base in Cardiff, about 150 miles to the west of London, for its journey to the capital, but the trip was quickly disrupted when the bus pulled over to the side of the road with mechanical trouble.

The driver reportedly was unable to call for help and the squad was forced to endure an interminable wait. Eventually, another London 2012 official bus was waved down, but, according to the Daily Telegraph, the second driver had already completed his hours quota and was not permitted to drive to London without a special permit. A replacement bus finally arrived after another two hours.

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
 Which country will win the highest number of medals in the London Olympics?
 Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
 Follow The Daily Star Sport on **twitter**
 www.twitter.com/dssport

What to WATCH

ESPN & STAR Sports
 London Olympic Games
 Day Seven
 Live from 1:00pm

STAR Cricket
 England v South Africa
 Second Test, Day 2
 Live from 4:00pm

TEN Cricket
 West Indies v New Zealand
 Second Test, Day 2

DAY'S EVENT

Premier Div Hockey Super League
 Usha v Abahani
 Time: 3:00pm
 Venue: Maulana Bhasani Hockey

PHOTO: AFP

China's Li Xiaoxia celebrates with her gold medal after victory in the women's singles table tennis finals against compatriot Ding Ning at the Excel Centre in London on Wednesday.

Ya Azim - The Great One - One who recites this name frequently will get respect from others.

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