



Brazil star Neymar (R) tries to run past China defender Peng Zao (C) during their international friendly at the Arruda Stadium in Recife on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Brazil go goal crazy

Football

REUTERS, undated

Neymar scored a hat-trick as Brazil crushed China 8-0 in a friendly in Recife on Monday, appeasing home fans who had jeered their poor display against South Africa last week.

The northeast of Brazil, and Recife in particular, has traditionally given the team strong support in hard times so there was no better place for Mano Menezes's beleaguered side to come than the Arruda stadium.

After losing the London Olympics final to Mexico last month, Brazil were jeered during an unconvincing 1-0 win over South Africa in Sao Paulo on Friday.

At the end of Monday's match, Brazil's players gathered in the middle of the pitch to thank the fans for their renewed support.

Brazil took time to get going before Ramires opened the scoring in the 22nd minute, exchanging a one-two with Oscar on the left and lobbing goalkeeper Zeng Cheng.

Burly striker Hulk, who scored the only goal on Friday, started the move that led to Neymar netting the second goal from Oscar's low cross.

Neymar celebrated with a wide grin and as Brazil went in 2-0 up at halftime, he said: "No one can take away my smile, regardless of the jeers or praise."

Brazil, who also hit the woodwork twice in the first half, went on to record their biggest win under Menezes, enjoying the "oles" of the Recife crowd.

Midfielder Lucas scored the third three minutes into the second half and Hulk made it 4-0 from a rebound after Neymar's shot came back off the bar.

Neymar scored his second shortly after then completed his hat-trick with half an hour still to play before coming off to a rousing ovation and was replaced by Jonas.

Brazil completed the rout with an own goal by Liu Jianye and a penalty converted by Oscar after left back Marcelo had been fouled.

UEFA goes tough on 23 clubs

REUTERS, London

Europa League winners Atletico Madrid were among 23 clubs to have prize money withheld as European soccer's governing body UEFA revealed the first sanctions under its financial fair play rules on Tuesday.

UEFA said the clubs, who also include Qatari-owned La Liga side Malaga and Portugal's Sporting, were found to have "important" overdue payments to other teams, their own employees or social and tax authorities.

As a result their money for taking part in European competition would be withheld pending further investigation, UEFA said in a statement.

The clubs will have to provide an updated report on Sept. 30 to a UEFA committee led by former Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene.

"This ... measure will remain in force until all identified balances have been settled in full or until a final decision by the (UEFA committee) is taken," said UEFA.

Among other clubs under investigation are Dinamo Bucharest and Rapid Bucharest of Romania, Turkey's Fenerbahce and Serbia's Partizan Belgrade.

All are involved in this season's UEFA competitions.

There were no clubs from the English Premier League, German Bundesliga, Italy's Serie A or France's Ligue 1

What to WATCH

ATN Bangla
Bangladesh v South Africa
Second Women's T20I
Live from 10:15am

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

STAR Cricket
England v South Africa
Third T20I

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh v South Africa
Second Women's T20I
Time: 10:15am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National

Transfers under probe

Football

AFP, Buenos Aires

Authorities in Argentina are investigating alleged tax evasion in the transfer of 444 footballers, with deals involving Manchester City's Sergio Aguero and Barcelona's Javier Mascherano among those under the spotlight.

"An investigation is under way concerning supposed (tax) evasion in transfers of footballers," a senior judicial source told AFP on Monday.

Other well-known players whose transfers are now under scrutiny include Pablo Zabaleta of Manchester City, Ever Banega and Pablo Piatti of Valencia, Martin Demichelis of Malaga and Diego Forlan, now of Internacional in Brazil.

However, the same source told AFP that the Federal Administration of Public Revenues (AFIP) will only be able to investigate any irregularities involving transfers of players from Argentina to foreign countries.

As a result, Aguero's move from Independiente to Atletico Madrid will be investigated, but not his subsequent move to

City.

Similarly, Mascherano's switch from River Plate to Corinthians is also being examined, but not his later moves to England or Spain.

Financial operations involving footballers have become less and less transparent because of the growing proliferation of private investors and intermediaries who hold player registrations.

Among the cases which persuaded federal judge Norberto Oyarbide to ask the AFIP to investigate football transfers in the country was the sale of defender Jonathan Bottinelli to River Plate.

The 27-year-old moved across Buenos Aires from San Lorenzo, although a Chilean club was also involved in the deal.

"Irregularities were detected in several transfers involving first division players," said the AFIP last month.

"One of the most emblematic cases involved the strange sale of Jonathan Bottinelli to River Plate, in which a Chilean club held the registration of the player."

Because of their suspicions, the AFIP suspended 146 agents and asked for 12 players, including Bottinelli, to be stopped

Fulham snap up Karagounis

AFP, London

English Premier League club Fulham signed Greece captain Giorgos Karagounis on a free transfer on Tuesday.

Karagounis has joined the west London side until the end of the current campaign after being released by Panathinaikos when his contract with the Greek club expired earlier this year.

The 35-year-old midfielder, who has also played for Inter Milan and Benfica, helped Greece to their shock Euro 2004 success and skipped his country at the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012.

He shares the record for most Greece caps with 120 appearances and Fulham manager Martin Jol said: "Giorgos Karagounis has a wealth of club and international experience and I'm happy that he's joined us for this season."

Ireland stars slam McClean

AFP, London



Republic of Ireland striker Kevin Doyle has revealed his team's senior players gave James McClean a stern rebuke after foul-mouthed Twitter rant.

McClean was fuming after being left as an unused substitute during Ireland's 2-1 win over Kazakhstan in their opening 2014 World Cup qualifier on Friday and the Sunderland winger took to Twitter to vent his frustration.

Describing his experience in Astana as a "f***n' joke", McClean added that he was left "embarrassed" at not being sent on by Ireland manager Giovanni Trapattoni.

McClean later apologised for the rant, but Doyle said the 23-year-old was still given a dressing down by several players, who pulled him aside straight after the game to tell him his tweet had crossed the line.

"We found out about it pretty much straight away and we said it to him straight away - it's not acceptable," said Doyle, whose country face Oman in a friendly at Fulham's Craven Cottage on Tuesday.

Wolves star Doyle has seen his fair share of off-the-field controversies with the Republic during his international career and he thinks McClean will actually benefit from the experience of his telling off.

Argentina team bus attacked

REUTERS, undated

A bus carrying Argentina's national soccer team was pelted by stones in Lima on Monday on the eve of their 2014 World Cup qualifier against Peru, according to media reports.

Windows of the bus were broken but none of the players or coaching staff were hurt in the incident outside the Estadio Nacional where South American group leaders Argentina will meet Peru (0125 GMT Wednesday).

"They threw bricks at us," Argentine Football Association official Juan Carlos Crespi was quoted as saying in sports daily Ole.

The Peruvian daily El Comercio said that after the incident police reinforced their security operation around the Argentine team's hotel in Lima's San Isidro district.

Tensions between the teams have risen amid reports Peru plan to use a tight man-marking system to stifle Argentina captain Lionel Messi.

Argentina beat Paraguay 3-1 in Cordoba on Friday while Peru climbed off the bottom of the standings with a 2-1 home victory over

Crouch faces uncertain future

AFP, London

England manager Roy Hodgson has revealed Peter Crouch snubbed his request to put the Stoke striker on a standby list ahead of Euro 2012.

Hodgson wanted to have Crouch ready for a late call-up in case of injuries before the tournament, but the 31-year-old told him he was only willing to make himself available for international duty if he was definitely going to be selected.

Despite an impressive strike-rate of 22 goals in 42 matches, enough to make him the joint 16th highest scorer in England history, Crouch has never been a regular starter for his country and the former Liverpool star has grown fed up of travelling around the world only to end up on the bench.

Japan pip Iraq

AFP, Saitama



Asian champions Japan shrugged off the late injury withdrawal of Manchester United's Shinji Kagawa to beat Iraq 1-0 and stay top of their group in 2014 World Cup qualifying on Tuesday.

Japan, hit by the loss of Kagawa just before kick-off with back pain, rode their luck at times in front of a packed Saitama Stadium but ended with all three points thanks to Ryoichi Maeda's headed goal on 25 minutes.

The result gives Japan, who have 10 points from four games, an eight-point lead at the top of Group B ahead of Tuesday's later matches. The top two in two groups of five earn an automatic ticket to Brazil.

It provided an unhappy return for former Japan coach Zico, whose makeshift Iraq line-up -- hit by a series of injuries and suspensions -- tested the hosts, especially in the opening exchanges.

Iraq, who were unbeaten after drawing their first two games, started brightly and Japanese 'keeper Eiji Kawashima was forced into action with a key stop in the opening minutes.

But it was Japan who got the breakthrough when Stuttgart's Shinji Okazaki fed Jubilo Iwata striker Maeda in the six-yard box for the game's only goal.

As half-time neared, the dangerous Ahmed Yaseen extended Kawashima with a goal-bound shot that was curling inside the far post.

Japan looked more comfortable after the break, with CSKA Moscow playmaker Keisuke Honda a particular threat, and they finished the match with high hopes of reaching their fifth straight World Cup in Brazil.

"It was really tough," said Japan's coach Alberto Zaccheroni. "We want to win the ticket to the World Cup as quickly as possible. I'm going to start thinking about our next game," added the Italian.

Japan will next play Oman away on November 14, while Iraq host Australia -- in a third-party venue, due to security fears -- on October 16.

"We tried hard to win this game, but it ended in a defeat. Japan prepared for the game very well," Zico said.

The extent of Kagawa's injury was not immediately clear. Manchester United have a Premiership clash at home against Wigan Athletic on Saturday and their Champions League opener is against Turkey's Galatasaray next week.



Japan forward Ryoichi Maeda (R) celebrates his all-important goal with teammate Shinji Okazaki during their 2014 World Cup qualifying match against Iraq in Saitama yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP