



## Beer bet for Obama

Belgian Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo challenged U.S. President Barack Obama to a bet over Belgium's impending World Cup knock-out match against the United States, offering the prospect of some 'great Belgian beers' should the U.S. team win. "Hey @BarackObama, I am betting some great Belgian beers that our @BelRedDevils will make it to the quarter final!" Di Rupo tweeted in the early hours of Friday. As of Friday morning, the U.S. President had not replied to the challenge. It was not clear precisely what beers Di Rupo was offering in the bet.



Star DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 28, 2014  
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# SPORT



**TODAY'S MATCHES**

**BRAZIL CHILE**  
Time: 10:00pm  
Venue: Estadio Mineirao

**COLOMBIA URUGUAY**  
Time: 2:00am (Sunday)  
Venue: Estadio do Maracana



Playmaker James Rodriguez will be looking forward to bettering Colombia's World Cup record -- an appearance in the round of 16 in 1990 -- when they take on a Luis Suarez-less Uruguay today.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## COLOMBIA V URUGUAY

# La Celeste seek to recover

REUTERS, Rio De Janeiro

Uruguay must recover from the shock of losing star player Luis Suarez, who was kicked out of the World Cup for biting an opponent, if they are to stop high-scoring Colombia in an all-South American, second-round clash on Saturday.

Uruguay have long relied heavily on Suarez in attack and the controversial striker scored half of their four goals so far in the competition in Brazil.

He was thrown out of the World Cup on Thursday for biting Italian defender Giorgio Chiellini in a group match, dealing a huge setback to Uruguay, who battled their way to the semifinals of the 2010 tournament in South Africa.

Colombia head to the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro in more buoyant mood, having won all three of their group games and racked up nine goals in the process, a tally surpassed so far only by the rampant Netherlands.

There had been fears that the loss of striker Radamel Falcao to injury before the tournament would be a big blow for Colombia, appearing at their first World Cup in 16 years.

But Falcao's understudy Jackson Martinez has been one of the tournament's revelations so far, helped in large part by playmaker James Rodriguez.

With those two in fine form, Colombia, under Argentine coach Jose Pekerman have wowed crowds in Brazil with the kind of fast, flowing play that the locals demand of their own team.

They have also entertained fans with

their salsa-inspired goal celebrations.

A place in the quarter finals against either Brazil or Chile is at stake on Saturday and Uruguay will be seeking to channel the spirit of 1950 -- when they shocked Brazil by beating them to win the World Cup in Rio.

It will probably fall to veteran striker Diego Forlan to take the place of Suarez in the starting 11 in the Maracana as he did in their shock opening loss to Costa Rica in Group D while Suarez was still completing his recovery from injury.

Uruguay played poorly in that match which they lost 3-1 but looked better in their next, a 2-1 win over England when Suarez scored both their goals.

After overcoming Italy 1-0 in the now infamous game in which Suarez lost his self-control, they must now cope without him again. Captain Diego Lugano vowed the team would not be distracted by his loss.

"Nothing will hold us back," Lugano wrote on his Facebook page. "We will press on with humility, unity, determination, aware of the mistakes that have been made and with our heads always held high."

With both teams likely to bring huge numbers of fans to the Rio on Saturday, security at the Maracana will be tight.

Around 200 Chilean fans stormed in for their team's first-round match against Spain. A few days earlier, a handful of Argentine fans climbed over the Maracana's perimeter fence.

## KEY STATS

Uruguay will be without star player Luis Suarez after he was kicked out of the World Cup by FIFA, banned for four months and Uruguay's next nine competitive internationals for biting Italian defender Giorgio Chiellini on Tuesday.

Colombia have reached the knockout round for the first time since 1990 while Uruguay, who reached the semifinals in 2010 have gone past the group stage for the second successive World Cup.

The last time Uruguay played a World Cup match at the Maracana they beat Brazil 2-1 in 1950 to become world champions.

Colombian keeper Faryd Mondragon became the oldest player in World Cup history aged 43 years 3 days when he came on for the last five minutes against Japan on Tuesday.



## Chileans are Europe all at sea short: Fred

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Cristiano Ronaldo, Wayne Rooney, Andrea Pirlo and Xavi have left Brazil with their tails between their legs highlighting the hard times for Europe at the World Cup.

Having provided seven of the last eight World Cup semifinals, Europe's dominance appears to be on the wane after a brutal group phase for the continent's teams.

Where Latin American sides such as Chile and Costa Rica created sensations, Europe's powerhouses flopped, with Italy, England, Portugal and defending champions Spain among seven teams from the UEFA zone eliminated in the first round.

European superstars disappointed. In sharp contrast, World Cup crowds have thrilled to the virtuoso performances of Neymar and Lionel Messi, the swashbuckling football of Chile and Colombia, and the daring displays of giant-killing Costa Rica.

While France, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Greece remain in contention for glory, the tournament has done little to encourage hope of a first European World Cup success in the Americas.

"It cannot be a coincidence that a European team couldn't win a World Cup held in South America," declared Switzerland's decorated German coach Ottmar Hitzfeld before the tournament.

"Not in Uruguay, not in Mexico, not in Argentina, and for sure not in Brazil."

Europe's World Cup difficulties may be part of an emerging trend.

Whereas European teams filled 10 of the last-16 places in five of the first six tournaments after the round was introduced in 1986 (with nine getting there in 2002), only six made it in 2010 and this year.

With tens of thousands of fans from neighbouring countries flooding into Brazil, the South American teams have clearly benefited from home advantage.

REUTERS, Teresopolis

Brazil aim to make their height advantage count against Chile when the teams meet in a Round of 16 World Cup match on Saturday, striker Fred said on Thursday.

"I've talked to our fullbacks, our wingers: They [the Chileans] are short," Fred told reporters at Brazil's training camp in Teresopolis, near Rio de Janeiro.

Fred, who scored with a header in Brazil's 4-1 victory against Cameroon on Monday, measures 1.86 meters. That gives him a sizeable advantage over the three defenders Chile used in its last two games -- Francisco Silva (1.78 m), Gonzalo Jara (1.77 m) and Gary Medel (1.71 m).

Not everyone on the Brazilian side is a giant by comparison -- Neymar, for example, measures 1.75 m. But Brazil do have several tall players including defenders David Luiz (1.89 m) and Thiago Silva (1.82 m), both of whom have a strong record of heading in goals.

The team could get even bigger if right-winger Maicon (1.86 m), who practiced in place of Daniel Alves on Thursday, gets the nod in Belo Horizonte.

"With our height, free kicks could be a good weapon for us," Fred said.

He added that the Chileans have made up for their lack of stature so far in the tournament with strong ball possession.

"The great quality of Chile is their tactical skill," Fred said.

"And they have players up front who can make a difference. From what they've been showing in the Cup, they're going to try to attack Brazil, too."

## THIRD EYE

# Battle lost but war conquered

AARONY ZADE

The question on everyone's mind after the group G clash between Germany and USA has been whether the Germans are really strong enough to go all the way after their unconvincing win against a "weaker" side such as the USA. The answer is simple; they are not a weaker side and you cannot take USA for granted anymore. In fact, even Americans are not taking football or soccer as they call it across the Atlantic, for granted anymore.

The front page of Daily News yesterday displayed a bold headline "Now, let's get this!" and explained how they are just four wins away from winning the cup. While that is a cute thought, USA has surpassed the expectations of many with what they have done on the pitch as opposed to many who failed to live up to the hype (USA's next opposition Belgium comes to mind).

An adamant goalkeeper Tim Howard and defender Omar Gonzalez kept the German attack at bay during the first half. However, Germany found the only goal of the match in the 55th minute through none other than

Thomas Mueller. The problem Jurgen Klinsmann still has to address is USA's defence as they were more familiar with a diamond formation prior to this tournament but switched to a lineup that allows them to push forward more as well as defend the centre of the field rather than having to deal with attacks from a closer range, which worked out against a side like Germany, a side with a number of playmakers.

The last group game brought back memories of 2002 as well where USA's passage depended on Portugal. It was Portugal's loss to South Korea that sent the yanks through even after losing their last group match. Thursday night's case was quite the opposite. While they lost the battle against Germany at Recife, the news from Brasilia assured them the war has been won.

The buildup to the match was quite amusing from the states as the national team's official twitter account sent out a letter template signed by Jurgen Klinsmann asking employers to give a day off to anyone who will be following the game that morning. It even went on to ask the

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