

KEY

STATS

In the teams' six meetings, Argentina have scored 14 goals to Switzerland's three

Both teams are among the cleanest so far in the World Cup. They each received just one yellow card in their opening three games

Switzerland have not made the quarterfinals of the World Cup since 1954 when they hosted the tournament

Argentina are one of just four teams to have won all three of their World Cup group games



Lionel Messi (L) needs support from the likes of Ezequiel Lavezzi (R) upfront if Argentina are to do better than what they have done so far.

PHOTO: AFP

মানসম্পন্ন

বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের ব্যবহার

শিল্প বিকাশে সহায়ক

CROWN CEMENT

FOR SOLID FOUNDATION

ARGENTINA V SWITZERLAND

Albiceleste eye last 8

AFP, Sao Paulo

Lionel Messi's goals have fired Argentina into the World Cup last 16 but they will look for a better all-round performance when they meet Switzerland.

The diminutive four-time world player-of-the-year has finally sparked for his country, hitting four of their six goals as Argentina qualified top of Group F.

But Argentina needed Messi's late winner to overcome Iran 1-0 and they also shipped two goals before beating Nigeria 3-2, lowering expectations of a third world title.

They will face their toughest opponents yet in Switzerland, who put seven goals past group opponents Ecuador, France and Honduras, including three from Xherdan Shaqiri.

"Now we can't make any mistakes as any error will see us getting knocked out," Messi warned after Argentina negotiated the group stage.

"There is nothing more beautiful than to be world champion, to achieve that with my country."

In Argentina's favour it is more than 100,000 of their fans are expected to flood Sao Paulo ahead of Tuesday's game, including many inside Corinthians Arena.

But they will have to cope with the loss of Manchester City forward Sergio Aguero, who is out with a muscle injury after going off in the first half against Nigeria.

Both Messi and coach Alejandro Sabella acknowledge that Argentina are a work in progress but they will now hope to raise the heat on their slow-burning campaign.

"We've got nine points, but we can always get better," Sabella said.



Former Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld will relish the clash against one of the pre-tournament favourites in what he says will be his last hurrah before retirement.

Despite their 5-2 hammering by France, Switzerland have twice bettered Latin American opposition already after their 2-1 and 3-0 wins over Ecuador and Honduras respectively.

Their attack will be spearheaded by one of the revelations of the tournament, 22-year-old Shaqiri, who hit all three goals against Honduras to secure Switzerland's qualification.

The winger, the first Swiss player to score multiple goals in a World Cup match since 1954, has hit the headlines after going off in the first half against Nigeria.

"It will be relatively hard to shut him out, but he's not the only dangerous player in a very good team."

"Argentina don't revolve just around Messi even though he's their superstar. But we know all about the skills he has and it helps that we've seen a lot of him."

Hitzfeld's attacking options have been reduced by a cruciate knee ligament injury suffered in training by forward Mario Gavranovic, an unused substitute in all three group games.

Aguirre set to become Japan coach

AFP, Tokyo

Mexican Javier Aguirre has agreed to become Japan's new coach following the resignation of Alberto Zaccheroni after his side's World Cup flop, local media reported on Monday.

The 55-year-old Aguirre, who led Mexico to the last 16 of the World Cup in 2002 and 2010, will reportedly pocket around 2.45 million dollars a year -- more than twice what his predecessor was on.

The Japan Football Association (JFA) told AFP no formal decision had been made, but the former Espanyol manager could travel to Japan to be unveiled next month, according to the Nikkan Sports daily.

The two sides have reportedly reached a basic agreement on a four-year deal through the 2018 World Cup in Russia, which would make Aguirre the highest-paid Japan coach ever.

Italian Zaccheroni stepped down after Japan's meek exit from the World Cup, where they were beaten by Ivory Coast, held to a goalless draw by 10-man Greece and thumped 4-1 by Colombia.

"We have achieved something big as little Switzerland, I am proud of my three goals."

"Anything is possible now in the last 16."

Switzerland have never beaten Argentina in six previous attempts and are also bidding to reach the World Cup quarterfinals for the first time in 60 years.

Shaqiri proved his form with a hat-trick in their final group match to set up Tuesday's last 16 dream clash.

"He has already showed what he is capable of. Xherdan wrote a page of history against Honduras," said Switzerland's German coach Ottmar Hitzfeld as the Swiss chase an historic win.

"If we put in a similar performance, then we also have a chance against Argentina."

In their most recent meeting, the Swiss were drawing with Argentina in a Bern friendly in February 2012 until Messi hit two

Shaqiri: The Messi of the Alps

AFP, Porto Seguro

Xherdan Shaqiri, dubbed 'the Messi of the Alps' thanks to his World Cup hat-trick, hopes to conquer new peaks when Switzerland faces Argentina in Tuesday's last 16 clash.

Shaqiri lived up to his flattering nickname with a hat-trick in his team's 3-0 romp against Honduras in their final group match to set up Tuesday's last 16 clash in Sao Paulo against Lionel Messi and Argentina.

"It's a dream tie for us, little Switzerland is facing a big challenge," said the 22-year-old as Swiss newspaper Blick proudly boasted "We have our own Messi."

"We have achieved something big as little Switzerland, I am proud of my three goals."

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Karagounis bows out

REUTERS, Recife

Greece captain Giorgos Karagounis announced his retirement from an international football career spanning 139 caps over 15 years following his team's World Cup round of 16 exit to Costa Rica on penalties on Sunday.

"This was my last game for Greece," the 37-year-old told reporters.

"We wanted to stay on another week or even longer but you can't change it now."

The midfielder, who had his biggest moment when he helped Greece surprisingly win European Championship in 2004, said he would move aside for younger players.

"The national team has grown up, younger players have won invaluable experiences. This is no small thing and as we helped the team come of age we hope it will continue to be as successful in the future."

The hard-working Karagounis, who scored 18 goals for Greece, made his first appearance in 1999 against El Salvador and went on to play in three European Championships as well as two World Cups.

He scored the opening goal in their successful Euro 2004 run against Portugal in the group stage but missed the final due to suspension.

BELGIUM V USA

Operation 'Attack'

AFP, Salvador

United States coach Juergen Klinsmann says attack will be the best form of defence when his American underdogs tackle Belgium on Tuesday for a place in the World Cup quarterfinals.

The United States confounded all pre-tournament predictions by battling their way out of a daunting Group G, finishing behind Germany but claiming the runners-up spot ahead of Portugal and China.

Klinsmann acknowledged, however, that his team must improve on last Thursday's 1-0 defeat by the Germans in Recife if they are to provide another shock by eliminating Belgium, regarded by many as tournament dark horses.

Of particular concern to Klinsmann is his team's attack. According to FIFA statistics compiled after the completion of the first round, the United States had just 72 attacks in three games -- putting them 31st among 32 teams.

Klinsmann says he wants to buck that trend against a Belgium side who may be missing centre-backs Vincent Kompany and Thomas Vermaelen, both of whom are battling to recover

from injuries.

"It's definitely something we learnt out of the Germany game," Klinsmann said. "We were too deep, especially the first 20 minutes."

"I was screaming my lungs out there to get the back line out and to move the entire unit higher up the field."

"So we'll work on that over the next couple of days in training, to shift the entire game forward and through that put more pressure on the opponent and create more chances. This is really one of our goals."

"It was good at the other end. We didn't give away too many chances. But this is something we have to do better, we have to bring up the players higher and create chances."

Klinsmann was criticised by sections of the US media on the eve of the tournament for stating that his side had no realistic chance of success.

But since reaching the knockout phase, Klinsmann has changed tack, bullishly telling his players they can go beyond the last 16 and ordering them to change their return flights for the Monday after the July 13 final.

His side will also be playing familiar opposition. In two friendlies in the last three years, Belgium have recorded two victories, winning 1-0 in 2011 before recording a 4-2 success away in May last year.

"They are full of individual talent, there's no doubt about it," Klinsmann reflected.

"We had the opportunity to play them twice in the last two years. Both times they came out as the winning team, but we also believe we can have enough confidence going into this very special knockout game to say we are able to beat them."

Klinsmann's Belgian counterpart, Marc Wilmots, meanwhile has shrugged off suggestions that his team have so far failed to contribute to the feast of attacking football being laid on at this World Cup.

Three group wins over Algeria, Russia and South Korea were secured with very little flair, but Wilmots is not concerned.

"If you ask whether I'd rather put on a good show and go out at the first stage, or win games 1-0, I prefer to win 1-0," Wilmots said.



Attack is the keyword ... USA forward Clint Dempsey trains at Sao Paulo for their World Cup round of 16 game against Belgium.

PHOTO: GETTY

Penalty divides Dutch

AFP, The Hague

Dutch newspapers remained divided Monday on whether Arjen Robben's match-winning penalty against Mexico was "deserved" or "exaggerated" but all praised the Orange's "miracle" victory.

Seconds before a dramatic end to the game, Bayern Munich star Robben tumbled to the turf after making contact with Mexico defender Rafael Marquez.

Robben has admitted he dived when trying to win a penalty in the first half but insists the late spot kick converted by Klaas-Jan Huntelaar for the 2-1 win was justified.

"Robben already deserved a penalty kick earlier in the match, when he was first touched by

Marquez and then brought down by Hector Moreno," populist broadsheet De Telegraaf stated.

"Finally in injury time Robben got his deserved penalty from [referee Pedro] Proenca and Huntelaar sent the Netherlands to the quarterfinals," it said.

"Well deserved, because the Dutch kept footballing while Mexico was merely defending a 1-0 lead," it added.

Centre-left tabloid De Volkskrant who called the win a "miracle escape due to team and fighting spirit" was more guarded.

"Robben was a boxer looking for the knockout blow against a reeling opponent," the paper said.

"Finally, [he] got a desired penalty after a somewhat exaggerated

fall over Marquez's leg," De Volkskrant said.

It eulogised Huntelaar's kick, calling him the "one-man play desk" of the Dutch team.

The progressive NRC Next tabloid called it "The Great Escape" after the 1963 classic movie, saying Robben's dive was "somewhat theatrical, but it was -- if you take the earlier missteps against him into consideration -- enough to convince the referee to award the penalty."

"From hell to heaven in six minutes," said popular daily tabloid Algemeen Dagblad, hailing Huntelaar.

"King Klaas' stayed as cool as a cucumber in the immense heat," said the paper which added: "From

Santos exits in sadness

AFP, Recife

The end of the World Cup was tinged with sadness in more ways than one for Greece coach Fernando Santos in what was his final match in charge of the side on Sunday.

Santos was sent away from the touchlines by Australian match referee Ben Williams prior to the penalty shoot-out that saw his side dominated 5-3 by Costa Rica, who went on to a quarterfinal meeting with the Netherlands.

Santos got into an exchange with the official and was forced to watch the penalty shoot-out from an office in the belly of the Arena Pernambuco.

"There was television set in the back, that's where I saw the penalty shoot-out," said Portuguese coach Santos, who hit out at the referee's decision.

"When the match ended we were all going on the pitch to give water to players," explained Santos.

"The referee tried to stop me and when I protested by saying the entire Costa Rican squad is on the pitch, why can't I go on, he said you can't talk like that to me, and ordered me off."

As well as seeing his side fail to extend their history-making run at the tournament -- Greece were appearing in the last 16 for the first time -- Santos also found out the Greek federation held little belief of their quarterfinal chances.

Santos, whose contract runs out on Monday, added: "Greece already has a new coach. That's been announced. "And now I've found out our flight home is for 1130 on Monday. I don't know if they knew we were going to get this far or not."

Wilmots backs Hazard to shine

AFP, Mogi das Cruzes

Belgium coach Marc Wilmots Sunday said he was waiting to see the best of Eden Hazard after a quiet World Cup from the Chelsea star so far.

The dynamic midfielder had been expected to set the World Cup alight but he is yet to score and had only limited influence in Belgium's three group wins.

"I think for the moment Eden wants to do more. He can do a lot for us, I think everyone knows that," Wilmots told reporters at the team's training base.

"Now I'm waiting to see it. It's not a question of putting pressure on him because I know he's already under a lot of pressure."

"But I'm waiting for him to take hold of a match and impose himself. Even if at 23 he's still young to be doing that."

Hazard will get another chance to shine in Tuesday's last 16 knock-out game against Jurgen Klinsmann's tightly drilled USA.

He was rested for Belgium's last group game, the 1-0 win over South Korea, but showed his quality when he came on in the final minutes and nearly scored.

"He can find gaps and score goals. We've discussed it together -- he wants to be more decisive, but there's a difference between saying it and doing it," Wilmots said.

"I'm confident in him and I think all of Belgium is confident in him but I think it'll take a collective effort from all of us for this to happen."

CLEMON

স্বাস্থ্যকর Freshness

INFO

ZONE

HEAD-TO-HEAD

ARGENTINA

SWITZERLAND

M	W	D	L	M	W	D	L
6	4	0	2	6	2	0	4

LAST MEETING: SWITZERLAND 1-3 ARGENTINA (29 FEB 2012, INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY)

KEY PLAYERS

LIONEL MESSI

XHERDAN SHAQIRI

89

CAPS

42

GOALS SCORED

5

WC GOALS

32

12

4

TEAM FORMATION

4-3-3

Romero

4-2-3-1

Benaglio

4: Zabaleta, Garay, Fernandez

3: Rojo, Gago, Mascherano, Di Maria

3: Lavezzi, Messi, Higuain

4: Lichtsteiner, Dmric, Djourou, Rodriguez, 2: Inler, Behrami

3: Shaqiri, Khaka, Schaer

1: Mehmedi,

HEAD-TO-HEAD

BELGIUM

USA

M	W	D	L	M	W	D	L
5	4	0	1	5	1	0	4

LAST MEETING: USA 2-4 BELGIUM (29 MAY 2013, INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY)

KEY PLAYERS

EDEN HAZARD

CLINT DEMPSEY

47

CAPS

6

GOALS SCORED

0

WC GOALS

108

39

4

TEAM FORMATION

4-3-3

Courtis

4-2-3-1

Howard

4: Alderweireld, Van Buyten, Kompany, Vertonghen

3: Witsel, Fellaini, De Bruyne

3: Mertens, Mirallas, Origi

4: Johnson, Cameron, Besler, Beasley

2: Beckerman, Jones

3: Bedoya, Bradley, Zusi

1: Dempsey

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AFP, Rio de Janeiro

BRAZILIAN BOURN

Ah, World Cup penalty shootouts. The stress. The anguish. The joy. The mad dash to find somewhere else to watch the final minutes after you smash your flat-screen TV.

That, at least, was the experience of Brazilian fan Rafael Gambarim, who was so overcome with emotion while watching the host nation's penalty shootout against Chile on Saturday that he smashed his own television set.

A video of his outburst has been shared 34,000 times on Facebook and been viewed more than 36,000 times on YouTube.

It shows Gambarim and two cousins embracing and leaping with joy as Brazil's Julio Cesar saves a penalty by Chile's Alexis Sanchez after their round of 16 match ended in a 1-1 draw after extra time.

Gambarim appears to kiss and embrace the TV as it shows images of the Brazilian keeper.

Then the shot turns to Sanchez, and Gambarim smacks him in the face -- shattering his screen and leaving the Chilean forward's image frozen in place, a spiderweb of illuminated shards crackling across it.

SINGER

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LED TVs

By SINGER

MORENO SUFFERS BROKEN TIBIA

Mexico defender Hector Moreno suffered a broken left tibia during his side's 2-1 defeat to the Netherlands in the last 16 of the World Cup, his club side Espanyol confirmed on Sunday.

Moreno had to be replaced at half-time of the match in Fortaleza after clashing with Dutch forward Arjen Robben minutes before the break.

"Hector Moreno has suffered a fractured tibia in his left leg, the medical services of the Mexican national team have confirmed," Espanyol said in a statement on their website.

The 26-year-old is expected to be sidelined for several months, ruling him out of the start of the La Liga season in August.

3-MINUTE COOLING BREAK

The World Cup saw its first three minute cooling break on Sunday after 30 minutes of the last 16 clash between Mexico and Netherlands in sweltering Fortaleza.

Breaks can be ordered by the referee when the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature, which takes into account air temperature, humidity, sunlight and wind speed, exceeds 32 degrees Celsius (89.6 Fahrenheit).



XS doesn't seem to befitting ... Xherdan Shaqiri (C) scored a hat-trick in his side's previous game against Honduras and the Swiss will require similar kind of performance from the midfielder if they are to see the back of Argentina.

PHOTO: AFP

Gyan apologises for failure

AFP, Accra

Chana's captain Asamoah Gyan apologised on Sunday for the Black Stars' World Cup collapse which saw them finish bottom of their group amid money disputes in the squad.

"We went there to make sure we make the nation proud, and then things didn't happen," Gyan said before a handful of supporters at the airport in the capital Accra. "What I have to say is sorry to all the fans who were very disappointed in us."

Coach Kwesi Appiah expressed similar sentiments.

"It's really unfortunate, I know Ghanaians love football and would have loved to get much, much further," Appiah said. "I'm very sorry I could not achieve what Ghanaians expected the team to."

Ghana lost its opening Group G match to the United States 2-1 and tied Germany 2-2

in its second match.

Controversy off-the-pitch then further undermined the World Cup effort.

Players demanded that more than \$3 million in bonuses be flown to them in Brazil, an embarrassingly public expenditure for Ghana's cash-strapped government.

Before the team's final match against Portugal, the Ghana Football Association kicked key players midfielder Sulley Muntari and striker Kevin-Prince Boateng out of the squad.

The GFA alleged Muntari assaulted a staff member and Boateng insulted Appiah.

Chana went on to lose to Portugal 2-1.

The team's preparations were also tainted by allegations by Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper that a Ghana Football Association official had agreed for the national team to play in a game organized by match-fixers.

THE WORLD CUP SELFIE CONTEST 2014

The Daily Star

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THE ULTIMATE FAN

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TASTE OF TOGETHERNESS

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MY LOVE MY FOOTBALL