



Cruel Colombian ... Juan Camilo Zuniga (No. 18) Knees Brazil forward Neymar out of the World Cup on Friday. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

FIFA could punish Zuniga

AFP, Fortaleza

FIFA could take action against Colombia's Juan Zuniga for the World Cup quarterfinal challenge that left Brazilian superstar Neymar with a fractured vertebrae, a spokeswoman said Saturday.

"The FIFA Disciplinary Committee is analysing all the elements provided, the videos and the match reports, and will decide whether or not to take action," FIFA spokeswoman Delia Fischer told a briefing.

Neymar was injured in Brazil's 2-1 win over Colombia on Friday when Zuniga kneed him in the back. The Barcelona forward will miss the rest of the World Cup.

Zuniga, who plays for Napoli in Italy, has denied he intentionally sought to hurt the 22-year-old Brazilian.

"When I'm on the field I always do what I have to, to defend my country and the shirt I wear, but always without intent to injure anybody," Zuniga told Brazilian television after the game.

"This was a game that everyone wanted to win so it was hot."

Tearful Rodriguez blames referee

AFP, Fortaleza

Colombian star James Rodriguez claimed Spanish referee Carlos Velasco Carballo had been a decisive influence as his country's World Cup dreams ended with a 2-1 quarterfinal defeat to Brazil on Friday.

James extended his lead as the competition's top scorer with a penalty 10 minutes from time to register his sixth goal in five games.

However, by then the damage had already been done for Colombia as goals either side of half-time from Thiago Silva and David Luiz booked Brazil a semifinal meeting with Germany.

"Unfortunately, the referee didn't help a lot," said the Monaco playmaker, who had been singled out for some rough treatment by the Brazilian players.

Manchester City's Fernandinho was particularly culpable as he hacked down James three times in the first-half alone without being booked by Carballo.

And Brazil were later to pay the price for the physical nature of the game as star striker Neymar was ruled out of the World Cup after suffering a fractured vertebrae when he clashed with Juan Zuniga two minutes from time.

"I think the referee influenced the game a lot, but that is how it is and we need to look forward."

"We are sad because we wanted to go further in the World Cup. That is what hurts most, but Brazil are a good team."

James was comforted by Luiz and a number of other Brazilian players as he left the field in tears with the Paris Saint-Germain defender gesturing to the home crowd to applaud the Colombian.

And the 22-year-old said Colombia could be proud having reached the last eight for the first time in their history.

"I want to thank the people of Colombia because they have always been there for us and had faith."

"We are sad but we also ought to be proud because we gave everything to try and continue."

Colombia coach Jose Pekerman also praised his side for the style in which they approached the tournament and won many admirers around the world.

"After being absent from the World Cup for a long time we have made Colombian football valued, with some very talented players and also competed with an important spirit," said the Argentine.

"We came here to play a great World Cup and didn't consider it sufficient to just participate. That is the most important thing I can say about this squad."

However, Pekerman refused to lambast Carballo despite his apparent reluctance clamp down on Brazil's roughhouse tactics as they committed 31 fouls throughout the 90 minutes.

"It was a match in which there was balance and very good players on both sides and when that happens it produces friction due to competitiveness because each player wants to win their individual battle."

"The tension was very high. Brazil needed to win and we always aspired to win so there was a lot of intensity."

"That cut short the play but because the two teams couldn't develop very good football, but sometimes a close game produces this."

FIFA warns NFF of ban

AFP, Abuja

Nigeria have been ordered by FIFA to reinstate the executive committee of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) not later than Tuesday or face a ban.

On Thursday, a Nigerian court sacked the NFF and the government appointed a sole administrator for the country's football.

In a letter signed by FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke, dated July 4 and addressed to NFF president Aminu Maigari, FIFA made it clear that the country stood to be banned from international football if the executive board of the NFF were not fully reinstated.

It also said FIFA would not recognize the appointment by government of a sole administrator.

They also maintained that the NFF must independently resolve their issues without influence from third parties.

"If the aforementioned NFF officials are not fully reinstated by Tuesday, July 8, 2014, we will have no choice but to refer the case to the appropriate FIFA organs for sanctions, including the suspension of the NFF," the letter read.

"We would like to underline the dire effects a suspension have on Nigerian football. It would for instance mean that no team from Nigeria of any sort [including clubs] could have any international sporting contacts [art 14 par. 3 of FIFA statutes]."

"But it would also mean that neither the NFF nor any of its members or officials could benefit from any development programme, official or training from FIFA or CAF any longer."

FIFA also stated that an extraordinary congress reportedly fixed for Abuja on Saturday is null and void.

They said an elective congress has been fixed for August 26 and only the results from this congress would be accepted.

The letter, which was copied to the Confederation of African Football (CAF), said FIFA are aware Maigari had been arrested and detained by the state security service and other NFF officials were being hunted.



QUARTERFINAL RESULTS

- BRAZIL 2 (Silva 7, Luiz 69)
- COLOMBIA 1 (Rodriguez 80-pen)
- GERMANY 1 (Hummels 13)
- FRANCE 0
- ARGENTINA 1 (Higuain 8)
- Belgium 0

NETHERLANDS 0 COSTA RICA 0 AFTER EXTRA-TIME

NETHERLANDS WIN 4-3 ON PENALTIES

- TOP SCORERS
- 6: Rodriguez (COL)
 - 4: Messi (ARG), Mueller (GER), Neymar (BRA), Shaqiri (SUI), E. Valencia (ECU)
 - 3: Van Persie, Robben (both NED), Benzema (FRA), Djabou, Slimani (both ALG), Mandzukic, Perisic (both CRO), Cahill (AUS), Dempsey (USA), Depay (NED), Hummels (GER), Luiz (BRA), Martinez (COL), Musa (NGR), Ruiz (CRC), Sanchez (CHI), Suarez (URU)
 - 2: A. Ayew, Gyan (both GHA), Bony, Gervinho (both CIV), Djabou, Slimani (both ALG), Mandzukic, Perisic (both CRO), Cahill (AUS), Dempsey (USA), Depay (NED), Hummels (GER), Luiz (BRA), Martinez (COL), Musa (NGR), Ruiz (CRC), Sanchez (CHI), Suarez (URU)
 - 1: De Bruyne, Fellaini, Lukaku, Mertens, Origi, Vertonghen (all BEL), Giroud, Matuidi, Pogba, Sissoko, Valbuena (all FRA), Guardado, Hernandez, Marquez, Peralta, Dos Santos (all MEX), Xabi Alonso, Villa, Torres, Mata (all ESP), Aranguiz, Beausejour, Valdivia, Vargas (all CHI), Armero, Cuadrado, Gutierrez, Quintero (all COL), Dzeko, Ibrisevic, Planic, Vrsajcic (all BIH), Dzemal, Mehmedi, Seferovic, Xhaka (all SUI), Fer, Huntelaar, Sneijder, De Vrij (all NED), Fernandinho, Fred, Oscar, Silva (all BRA), Goetze, Klose, Ozil, Schuerrle (all GER), Brahimi, Feghouli, Halliche (all ALG), Brooks, Green, Jones (all USA), Campbell, Duarte, Urena (all CRC), Heung-min, Ja-cheol, Keun-ho (all KOR), Nani, Ronaldo, Varela (all POR), Papastathopoulos, Samaras, Samaris (all GRE), Balotelli, Marchisio (both ITA), Cavani, Godin (both URU), Honda, Okazaki (both JPN), Kerzhakov, Kokorin (both RUS), Higuain, Di Maria, Rojo (all ARG), Rooney, Sturridge (both ENG), Costly (HON), Ghoorchanejad (IRI), Jedinak (AUS), Matip (CMR), Odemwingie (NGR), Olic (CRO)

মানসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের ব্যবহার শিল্প বিকাশে সহায়ক

CROWN CEMENT FOR SOLID FOUNDATION

Brazil shocked, angered

REUTERS, Brasilia/Sao Paulo

Neymar's exit from the World Cup due to a back injury left Brazilians shocked and angered on Friday, darkening the mood after the hosts' 2-1 win over Colombia in the quarterfinals had sparked nationwide celebrations.

The loss of their star player has denied Brazil's chances of winning a record-extending sixth World Cup, and first on home soil, and left Brazilians wondering who can replace him for Tuesday's semifinal showdown with Germany.

"Neymar fractures vertebrae and is out of the Cup," the country's three main newspapers headlined in their online editions, completely overshadowing accounts of the thrilling 2-1 victory over Colombia.

The papers published blow-by-blow diagrams of the play in which Neymar was kneed in the back by Colombian defender Juan Zuniga, burying coverage of the stunning free-kick by David Luiz that sealed Brazil's victory.

"This is terrible news. The worst possible news. Neymar is so important to us," said student Fabian Ruiz, 19, walking with friends down a street in Belo Horizonte, dressed in Brazil's trademark canary yellow shirts and quaffing beer from cans.

"Without him, the other players will have to fight more. It is going to be so difficult against Germany now."

A large crowd of fans wearing Brazil shirts gathered outside the hotel in Fortaleza where Neymar was taken after the match. As he was being taken in on a stretcher, they chanted: "Forca Neymar," or, "Be strong Neymar."

Social media was flooded with messages about the incident, with many Brazilians calling on world soccer's governing body FIFA to punish Zuniga in the same way Uruguay striker Luis Suarez was penalized for biting an Italian player.

One columnist went so far as to describe the challenge as a "savage attack."

"Neymar out of the Cup because of cowardice and foul play by the Colombian player," Fabricio Tavares, a Brazilian university professor, wrote on Facebook, echoing a common view heard on streets and in bars around Brazil.

"We were so happy but now it is sad. Very sad," said Monica Ferreira, 27, who watched the game at the bar with friends. "He is our best player. We love him because he plays so hard when he puts on the Brazil shirt."

Some fans thought Brazil's chances were over without Neymar.

"He is our best player. I don't think we can win the Cup without him," said a distraught-looking Eduardo Gomes, a 33-year-old fan, as he texted to find out more about Neymar's injury, drinking beer with his girlfriend sitting on his knee.

"Other fans, more optimistic about their country's chances, said Brazil could pull it together and play even better without Neymar, suggesting the team had relied too heavily on him.

"At this point I don't really feel that we need him so badly," said Jair de Souza, a Sao Paulo doorman who heard the news on the radio. "It's shocking but the guys have handled worse pressure."

Narciso, a waiter at a sushi restaurant in Brasilia, said there were other good players waiting in the wings.

"Today Neymar did not play well and our team still performed well," he said. "If we get past Germany, the Cup is ours."

BRAZILIAN BAURU

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

BRAZILIANS JUMP IN OCEAN

Joyous Brazilians jumped in the ocean, threw beer in the air and launched fireworks after their football team took a step closer to a dream World Cup final.

From Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach to packed bars in Sao Paulo and the capital Brasilia, Brazilians leaped and kissed each other after the 2-1 quarterfinal victory over Colombia, setting up a semifinal against Germany.

"I think Brazil are playing better every game. They'll win the cup. This Selecao has a lot of heart," said Vinicius Moraes, an 18-year-old street vendor at the official Fan Fest attended by 25,000 people in Copacabana.

About 100 fans jumped straight into the sea, most fully clothed, after the final whistle, as smoke from dozens of flares filled the air while others sang "I'm Brazilian."

Another 25,000 people were at the Fan Fest in downtown Sao Paulo, where people celebrated by jumping in the air, kissing and hugging.

"I suffered a lot during the game but less than against Chile," said Erick Silva, 28, an urban planning analyst, referring to the penalty shootout thriller in the last-16 round.

"We are going to win the cup against Argentina in the final," he said, hoping for a clash of titans between the South American historic rivals.

PENSIONER LOSES FINAL TICKET

A Brazilian pensioner who was unable to attend the 1950 World Cup trophy match in Rio and donated his carefully preserved ticket to FIFA's museum has now lost his ticket to the final.

Joel Belmont, 85, had a ticket for Brazil's loss to Uruguay witnessed by 200,000 people at the Maracana owing to a family illness.

But he kept his ticket and donated it to FIFA's football museum, who responded by giving him two tickets for this year's final, secretary general Jerome Valcke handing them over personally.

Belmont had managed to obtain tickets for several games outside Rio for this year's tournament but not the final itself until football's world body intervened.

Now his dreams of seeing the denouement of the World Cup again may be dashed as he mislaid the tickets on the way home from last week's ceremony handing them over to him, O Estado de Sao Paulo newspaper reported Friday.

"I kept a ticket for 64 years! I lost the other inside six hours," the paper quoted Belmont as lamenting.

He said he had reported the loss and FIFA had advised him to wait to see if they show up or else they will re-issue the two tickets he was given and a third he was allowed to buy.

CHINESE CASH IN ON SUAREZ BITE

Chinese online stores are cheekily trying to cash in on Uruguay striker Luis Suarez's notorious bite of an opponent at the World Cup by selling bottle openers with his image.

Liverpool forward Suarez was given a four month ban from football for sinking his teeth into Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini during their final group match in Brazil last month.

Popular Chinese retail website Taobao has retailers offering bottle openers in a cartoon image of Suarez, looking angry with his mouth wide open, for 2.70 dollars.

Spanish ref under fire

ESPNEC.COM

World Cup referee Carlos Velasco Carballo has faced heavy criticism for his inability to control Brazil's quarterfinal defeat of Colombia.

Friday's game saw a number of heavy tackles, with many going unpunished, while James Rodriguez seemed to be targeted by the Selecao players throughout the match.

Carballo showed just four yellow cards, despite blowing for 54 fouls -- a record in this World Cup -- and the Spanish official's failure to clamp down on the indiscipline ultimately led to Juan Camilo Zuniga's challenge on Neymar, which has ruled out the Brazil forward for the rest of the tournament due to a broken vertebra.

"Carballo wore the referee's kit, but he wasn't in charge for this quarterfinal in Fortaleza," former World Cup referee Graham Poll wrote in his column in the Daily Mail.

"The second half of a promising game deteriorated into a petty, ugly affair in which Carballo was happy to award free kicks but nothing else -- until it was too late.

Hulk said after the game that teammate Neymar needed more protection from referees after being repeatedly targeted by opponents.

"Every time it is like this, players always come after Neymar, the referees need to do more to keep this from happening," he said.

Colombia international Falcao, who has missed the tournament through injury, was also angered by Carballo's officiating.

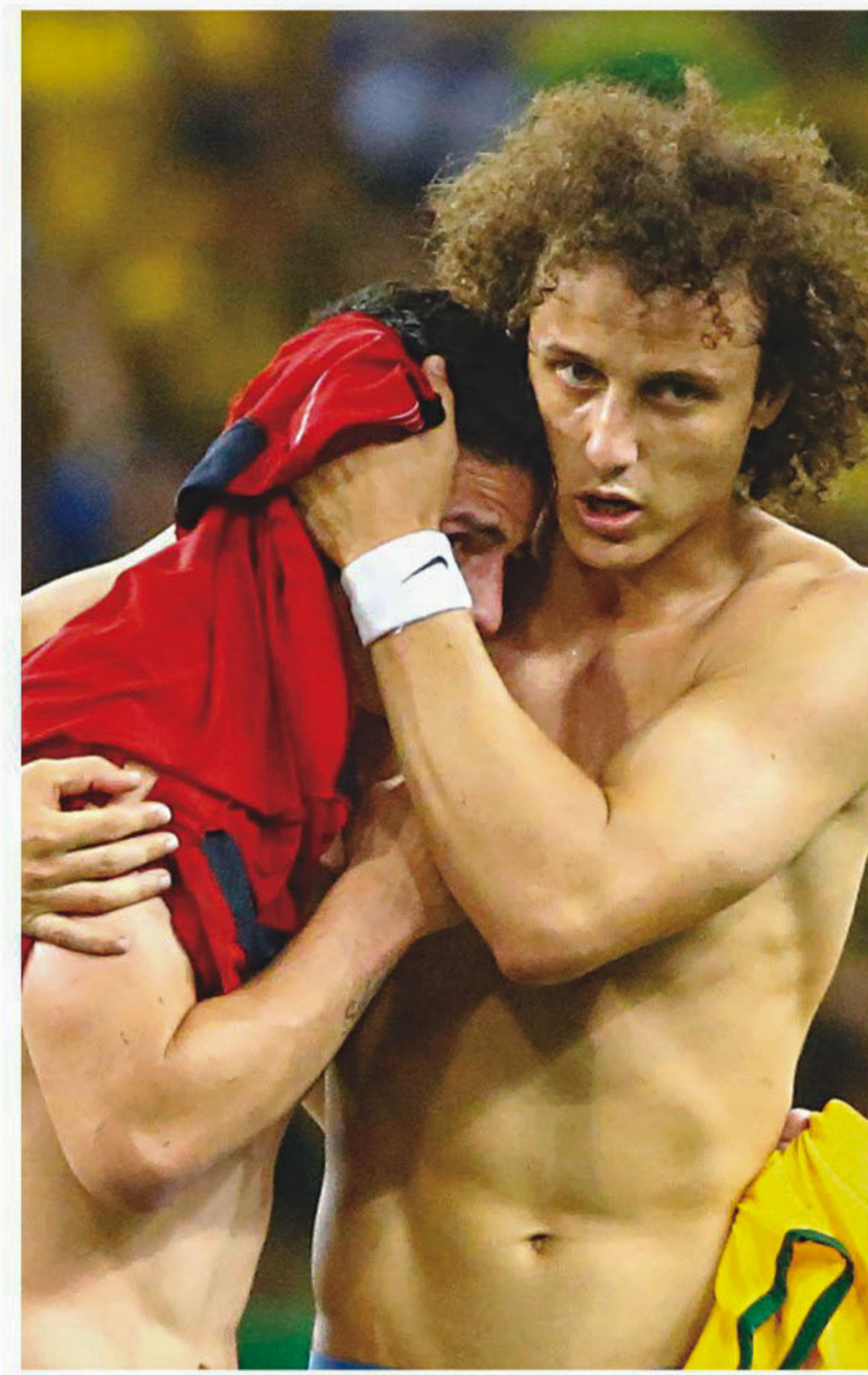
"For the next match, remember to call the referee, who today didn't show up," he tweeted.

Colombia boss Jose Pekerman spoke out after the match, saying that the high level of intensity disrupted the flow of the game and limited both sides' top players from performing at their best ability.

"The media in Brazil were equally outraged by Carballo's officiating, with Band TV's firebrand sports presenter, Milton Neves, raging: "This Spanish referee was like the Spanish team at this World Cup: a joke."

Carballo made his name in La Liga for being a strict disciplinarian, while his 108 yellow cards -- including 12 in one game -- handed out last season was one of the highest in the league.

That the Spaniard chose to mainly keep his cards in his pocket on Friday, then, seems surprising, but he is not the first official to face accusations of leniency towards the hosts at this tournament. Yuichi Nishimura came under fire for giving the World Cup hosts a soft penalty in the opening game of the tournament against Croatia.



Crying Colombian ... playmaker James Rodriguez is being consoled by Brazil's David Luiz (R) at the end of their World Cup quarterfinal in Fortaleza on Friday. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Zuniga gets death threats, racist abuse

AFP, Sao Paulo

Colombia's Juan Zuniga received a flood of death threats and racist abuse on social media Saturday as Brazilians reacted angrily to his tournament-ending foul on star forward Neymar.

"Zuniga" was trending on Twitter and messages included a torrent of abusive comment aimed at the Napoli defender after he kneed Neymar in the back, fracturing a vertebrae.

Among the less offensive posts, contributors called the 28-year-old a "monster" and the "biggest villain in the history of football."

The abuse was tempered by other posts which called for calm and said racist abuse was unacceptable.

Zuniga earlier said he did not mean to hurt Neymar in the challenge.

5 potential Neymar replacements

AFP, Fortaleza

Brazil's hopes of winning the World Cup for a sixth time have been rocked by the news that star striker Neymar will miss the remainder of the tournament through injury.

The 22-year-old suffered a fracture in the third vertebrae of his back two minutes from the end of his side's 2-1 win over Colombia in Fortaleza on Friday.

Here, AFP sports looks at who might replace the Barcelona striker for Brazil's first World Cup semifinal in 12 years against Germany on Tuesday.

WILLIAN

The Chelsea winger is one of relatively few new faces in the squad from the side that won the Confederations Cup last year after an impressive first season in England.

His versatility to play on either wing or through the middle offers coach Luiz Felipe Scolari flexibility, but his ability to cope with the pressure that Neymar was under is questionable given he failed to even hit the target with his penalty in the agonising shootout win over Chile in the last 16.

BERNARD

The tiny Shakhtar Donetsk man -- he replaced Willian after he left for Chelsea -- stands at just over 5ft 7inches tall and is just 21, but does have the pace and ability to go past defenders that Brazil will need in the absence of Neymar.

However, his participation in the tournament so far has been restricted to just two substitute appearances and he may be more adequately used as an impact player from the bench as legs tire later in the game.

LUIS GUSTAVO

Neymar's loss could mean a complete tactical reshuffle for Scolari with Wolfsburg's Gustavo almost certain to return to the side following his suspension against Colombia.

Scolari was quick to praise the work done by Fernandinho and Paulinho in Fortaleza and could line up all three in central midfield in an attempt to spoil Germany's rhythm in midfield.

RAMIRES

Another option with the intention of destroying rather than creating would be to use the energy of Chelsea's Ramires on the wing to keep German captain Philipp Lahm's forays forward in check.

It is a role the 27-year-old has carried out to decent effect in the latter stages of the Champions League in recent years, most notably when sparking a remarkable Chelsea comeback with a goal against Barcelona on their way to winning the trophy in 2012.

AN EXTRA CENTRE-BACK

Brazil will not only be without Neymar, but also captain Thiago Silva through suspension against Germany.

Scolari had already flirted with the idea of switching to a 3-5-2 and doing so now may help stabilise the defence in Silva's absence, whilst also giving left-back Marcelo even more licence to exploit his attacking instincts down the left side.

Both Scolari and match-winner against Colombia David Luiz were quick to talk up the capabilities of Dante and Henrique after the game with both in contention to make their first start of the competition.

Messi wishes Neymar well

AFP, Sao Paulo

Four-time world footballer of the year Lionel Messi wished his Barcelona teammate Neymar a quick recovery after the Brazil star Brazil suffered a fractured vertebrae ruling him out of the remainder of the World Cup.

"Neymar, I hope that you recover very quickly," wrote the Argentine on his Facebook page alongside a photograph of the two stars in their Barcelona shirts.

Neymar was carried off grimacing in agony after an aerial collision with Colombia defender Juan Camilo Zuniga towards the end of the contest.

"The exam showed he suffered a fracture of the third vertebrae" in his back, Brazil team doctor Rodrigo Lamas said.

Scolari in a quandary

AFP, Fortaleza

Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari faces a potentially make or break decision as to who replaces injured star Neymar in his starting line-up for the World Cup semifinal with Germany on Tuesday.

The moment two minutes from the end of normal time in the quarterfinal that Colombian Juan Camilo Zuniga kneed Neymar in the back fracturing a vertebrae could come to be seen as the action that cost the hosts their sixth World Cup.

However, Scolari -- who guided Brazil to the 2002 trophy -- cannot dwell on the loss but move on and decide who he can replace the 22-year-old with and that is no easy task.

For Neymar had all but single-handedly got the team this far with four goals, two well weighted corners that resulted in goals and a nervous fifth penalty in the last 16 shootout with Chile which turned the pressure onto Chilean defender Gonzalo Jara who missed his and allowed Brazil to progress.

While Oscar and David Luiz -- who scored a superb goal with a long range freekick against Colombia -- can take care of the dead ball kicks, the two names that are mentioned as favourites to replace Neymar in the starting XI are Bernard and Willian.

"Overall Willian and Bernard have the same characteristics as Neymar," commented Brazil captain Thiago Silva, who has also complicated Scolari's plans for the semifinal as he is suspended after picking up a booking against Colombia.

Bernard replaced Willian when he left for Chelsea last year, in Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk costing them 25 million euros but the 21-year-old is light of frame and prone to run all over the place whereas Willian remains in position and is a specialist at delivering the killer final pass.

If Scolari balks at handing either Jara the responsibility of the position which he had created specifically for the team's best player -- and neither would fit that bill even in Neymar's absence -- then the coach could toughen up his midfield at the expense of creativity.

There he would be helped with the return of Luiz Gustavo, who was suspended for the Colombia game, alongside fellow enforcers Fernandinho, who gave Neymar Rodriguez a hard time of it in the quarterfinal, and Paulinho.

Fred, who had yet another poor match, would be asked to drop back a little with the muscle-bound Hulk and the more dainty Oscar supplying him from the wings.

The man himself Scolari had not yet given it much thought as he absorbed the shock of losing the man around whom he has effectively built his dreams of delivering the World Cup at home.

"I need time to think about it, that I see how the others recover and after that I will make my decision."

Pele's heart aches for Neymar

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Pele said Sunday his heart ached for Neymar after Brazil's star player was ruled out of the rest of the World Cup but noted that the team lifted the 1962 trophy despite his own injury.

The football legend, recalling that Neymar had played at Santos like him, wrote on Twitter that "it hurts our hearts to know that he can no longer defend Brazil in the World Cup."

"I was also injured during the 1962 World Cup in Chile, and I was out for the rest of the tournament," he wrote in English and Portuguese.

"But God helped Brazil continue on to win the Championship."

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