What to WATCH

TEN SPORTS
US Open
Fourth Round
Live from 9:00pm

SONY KIX
UEFA Euro Qualifiers
Turkey v Netherlands
Live from 10:00pm
Italy v Bulgaria
Live from 12:45am (Monday)

DAY'S EVENT

ICRC Int'l T20 Cricket Tournament
Afghanistan v India, Venue: BKSP-3

England v Pakistan
Venue: BKSP-4, Time: 11:00am

7-star Argentina

AFP, *Houston*

Lionel Messi and Sergio Aguero stole the show as Argentina warmed up for the start of World Cup qualifying next month with a 7-0 thrashing of Bolivia on Friday.

Aguero scored twice and set up two more for Ezequiel Lavezzi in a one-sided victory at Houston's BBVA Compass Stadium as Messi grabbed a quickfire double after coming on as a second half substitute. Angel Correa added the seventh.

It was Argentina's first match since their agonizing Copa America final defeat to Chile in July, when Gerardo Martino's men failed to end their 22-year wait for a major title.

With Barcelona star Messi left on the bench in the first half, it was left to Manchester City striker Aguero to stamp his authority on proceedings.

Aguero created the first goal for Paris Saint-Germain's Lavezzi after only six minutes, lofting a superb pass into the path of the midfielder who controlled well and rifled home.

Better was to follow just after the half hour mark, when Aguero opened his account for the evening with a sublime angled chip over Bolivia goalkeeper Daniel Vaca to make it 2-0.

The in-form Lavezzi then grabbed Argentina's third in the 41st when a quickly taken free-kick caught Bolivia's defenders napping. Aguero weaved his way to the edge of the area and then slipped in Lavezzi, who finished for 3-0.

The onslaught continued early in the second half, Aguero latching onto a perfectly weighted pass from Lavezzi to dink in his second of the evening over the hapless Vaca for 4-0.

Martino waited until the 65th minute to give Messi a chance to get in on the goalscoring action, and the diminutive superstar did not have long to wait, heading home just two minutes after coming on as a substitute.

The goal saw Messi complete a goalscoring full house against South American opposition; previously Bolivia were the only country from the region the superstar had failed to score against.

Messi grabbed his second 15 minutes from time, pouncing on another wonderful pass by Aguero and rounding Vaca to make it 6-0. With Bolivia's defence being pierced at will by Argentina, few would have bet against Messi completing a hat-trick.

However it was Correa who scored next, finishing off an assist from Matias Kranevitter.

Argentina, who face Mexico in Tuesday in a further friendly in Texas, open their World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador next month.

Argentina superstar Lionel Messi (C) heads in the fifth goal against Bolivia during their international friendly in Houston on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Germany striker Mario Goetze celebrates one of his two goals against Poland during their Euro 2016 qualifier in Frankfurt on Friday.

PHOTO AFP

Rooney equals Charlton

AFP, *Serraval*

Wayne Rooney equalled Bobby Charlton's 45-year-old England scoring record on Saturday when he netted his 49th international goal in a 2016 European Championship qualifier away to San Marino.

The England captain converted a 13th-minute penalty to give England a 1-0 lead in Serravalle after Cypriot referee Leontios Trattou spotted a foul in the box.

Rooney's goal gave the 29-year-old Manchester United striker an identical international record to Charlton, a member of England's fabled 1966 World Cup-winning team, with his 49th goal coming in his 106th appearance.

He will have to wait to take possession of the record outright, however, having been substituted by manager Roy Hodgson in the second half with England 3-0 up. England went on to win 6-0.

Rooney is also closing in on Charlton's United scoring record and requires 17 goals to surpass the former midfielder's tally of 249.

Germany go top

AFP, *Paris*

Striker Mario Goetze scored twice in a 3-1 win over Poland which put Germany top in their group as Northern Ireland moved closer to the Euro 2016 finals by beating the Faroe Islands 3-1 on Friday.

It was Poland's first defeat in seven Euro 2016 qualifiers with the world champions gaining revenge for losing 2-0 in Warsaw last October to knock Adam Nawalka's side from top of Group D.

Georgia's 1-0 home win over Scotland, who Germany play in Glasgow on Monday, and the Republic of Ireland's 4-0 thumping of Gibraltar means Germany are top with 16 points with Poland second on 14 while Ireland go third with 12, one ahead of the Scots.

All four goals came from Bayern Munich players as Thomas Mueller gave Germany an early lead, then Goetze made it 2-0 before Poland captain Robert Lewandowski pulled one back with a diving header for 2-1 at the break. Mueller and Goetze then combined for Germany's third on 82 minutes.

A double from captain Robbie Keane, which took his international tally to 67, and goals from Cyrus Christie and Shane Long saw the Republic of Ireland past Gibraltar in Faro. Martin O'Neill's side next play Georgia in Dublin on Monday.

In Group F, Northern Ireland are just one victory away from their first European championship final as they sit top with 16 points, one point ahead of Romania who were held to a goalless draw in Hungary.

Two goals from Gareth McAuley and a third from Kyle Lafferty sealed the victory with the Faroe Islands hit by Joan Edmundsson's sending off of after 64 minutes for a second bookable offence.

The Northern Irish will qualify if they beat Hungary on Monday night at Windsor Park.

Finland came away with a 1-0 win from Greece in a match between two teams struggling in Group F.

Meanwhile Euro 2016 hosts France ended their run of defeats with a 1-0 friendly win over Portugal in Lisbon thanks to a late Mathieu Valbuena freekick.

Substitute Valbuena's curling effort five minutes from time got Les Bleus back to winning ways after three loses in four matches, but striker Nabil Fekir was stretchered off after 13 minutes with an injury which was later confirmed as a ruptured cruciate ligament in his right knee which will rule him out for six months.

In Group I, Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal were the big winners despite not playing a qualifier after group rivals Denmark and Albania played 0-0 in Copenhagen.

RESULTS

Georgia 1 (Kazaishvili 38) Scotland 0
Germany 3 (Mueller 12, Goetze 19, 82) Poland 1 (Lewandowski 36)
Gibraltar 0 **Ireland 4** (Christie 27, Keane 49, 51-pen, Long 79)
Faroe Islands 1 (Johan Símun Edmundsson 36) **Northern Ireland 3** (McAuley 12, 71, Lafferty 75)
Greece 0 **Finland 1** (Pohjanpalo 75)
Hungary 0 Romania 0
Denmark 0 Albania 0
Serbia 2 (Hayrapetyan 22-og, Ljajic 53) Armenia 0

INT'L FRIENDLY RESULTS

Uruguay 1 (Stuani 81) Panama 0
Mexico 3 (Esquivel 40, Herrera 85, Cyrus 56-OG) Trinidad and Tobago 3 (Glenn 7, Cummings 38, Jones 69)
Argentina 7 (Lavezzi 6, 41, Aguero 34, 59, Messi 67, 75, Correa 84) Bolivia 0
USA 2 (Altidore 59, 68) Peru 1 (Chavez 20)
Venezuela 0 **Honduras 3** (Andino 55, Castillo 73, Izaguirre 85-pen)
Portugal 0 **France 1** (Valbuena 85)

Malaysia coach steps down

AFP, *Kuala Lumpur*

The coach of Malaysia's national football team announced his resignation on Saturday just days after his squad was thrashed 10-0 by the United Arab Emirates during a World Cup qualifying match.

Dollah Salleh's tenure as head coach comes to a premature end after he signed a two-and-a-half year contract in July last year, in a bid to lift the team out of the doldrums.

"Who can accept a 10-0 defeat? That is why I quit," Salleh, who was one of the top footballers from the region in the 1980s and 1990s, told AFP.

"Historically, it is the worst ever defeat for the national team."

Real donate to refugees

AGENCIES, *Madrid*

Real Madrid are to pledge 1m euro to aid refugees taken in by Spain during the current crisis.

Los Blancos have followed in the footsteps of Bayern Munich and Celtic in donating money to help those that are fleeing from war.

In a statement on the club's website, Real Madrid write: "Faithful to its commitment to charity, the club has taken this decision with the aim of supporting men, women and children who have been forced to leave their homes in order to flee from war and death."

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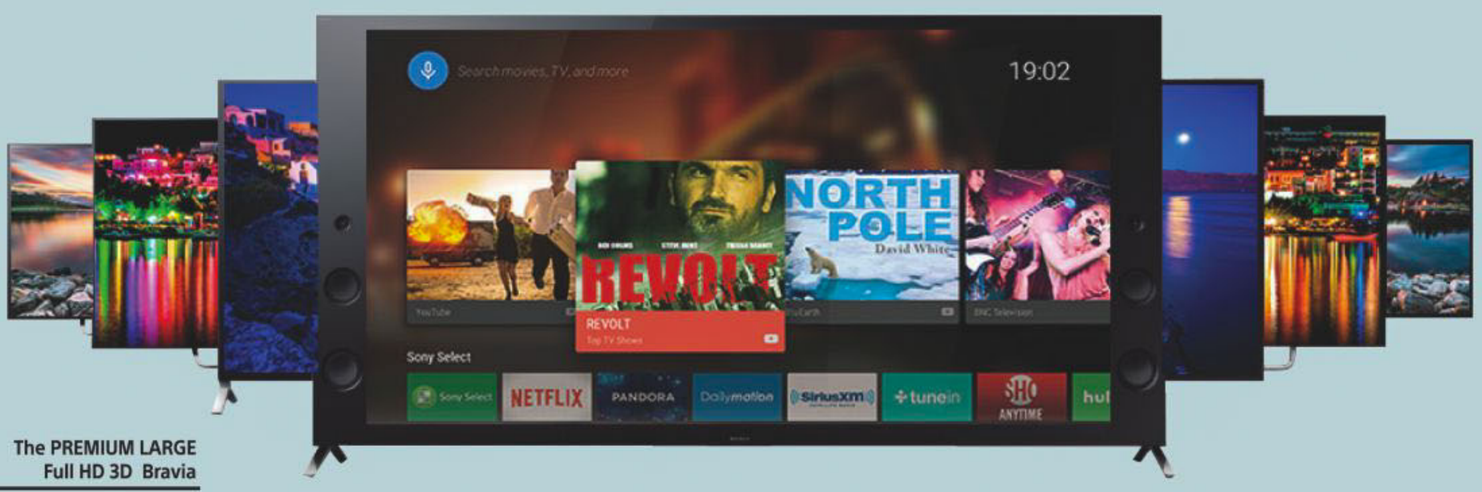

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