

TEN ACTION

Sri Lanka v West Indies
First Test, Day 2
Live from 10:15am

TEN CRICKET

Pakistan v England
First Test, Day 3
Live from 12:00pm

TEN SPORTS

Shanghai Masters
Round of 16
Live from 11:30am

Booters in sync with Fabio's tactics

SPORTS REPORTER



Despite suffering a 2-0 defeat against Kyrgyzstan in their away fixture of the World Cup and Asia Cup Qualifiers, Bangladesh coach Fabio Lopez thought his charges played a good tactical game in Bishkek on Wednesday night.

"I kept my promise of giving the home side a hard time. Our players played really well and the tactical aspects were also fine. Until 88 minutes, we were trailing by one goal but unfortunately conceded the second goal at the last moment," said the Italian after the match.

The recently-appointed coach carried a few experiments during a practice match at home by bringing a few positional changes, including those of skipper Mamunul Islam, striker Shakhawat Hossain Rony and winger Abdul Baten Komal. The Italian tinkered yet again in Bishkek, which seemingly did not have any adverse impact.

Mamunul played in an attacking position in the right side as per Lopez's original plan, but surprisingly Komal, who had played as an inside midfielder in the practice match, played as a left-back while striker-turned-midfielder Rony was deployed to the left side of holding midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan

instead of his practice match's position, which was to the right of Jamal.

Assistant coach Masud Parvez Kaiser explained the positional changes over phone on Wednesday night.

"The coach wanted to use the speed of Komal to thwart Kyrgyzstan's right-winger (Anton Zemlianukhin), who had created havoc in Bangladesh's home match. The tactic worked well as Komal kept the Kyrgyzstan winger well in check," said Kaiser, adding that all the four defenders -- Nasirul Islam, Raihan Hassan, Tapu Barman and Komal -- played very well.

"Mamunul did not play as a traditional winger rather he frequently came inside to provide the final ball. Most of the times, he was provided with an aerial ball, but it could have been better had he been fed with the ball along the ground.

"The tactical ploy could have paid off had Mamunul's side-volley not been brilliantly saved by the Kyrgyzstan goalkeeper. I think Mamunul needs a bit more time to get used to his new position," explained Kaiser.

The head coach was reportedly happy too with the performance of debutant forward Nabib Newaj Jibon, who kept the opposition's holding midfielder (Edgar Bernhardt) inactive in the first half.

"Everyone told me that I have done my job well of keeping that player inactive in the first half," said the 24-year-old striker.



Netherlands players are dejected, for their failure to qualify to the Euro 2016 tournament, at the end of their match against Czech Republic in Amsterdam on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

C'Ron targets Euro glory

AFP, Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo is targeting Euro 2016 glory with Portugal to crown his glittering career, Spanish sports daily Marca reported on Wednesday.

"At club level and on a personal level I've already won everything," said Ronaldo.

"But I haven't won a title with the national team," lamented Ronaldo, a beaten Euro 2004 finalist and a World Cup 2006 and Euro 2012 semifinalist.

"It would be the pinnacle of a great career (winning the European championship) and this is what I'm hoping for. My hope is that 2016 will be the year."

Kyrgios not worried about ban

AFP, Shanghai

Nick Kyrgios insisted he had no concerns about being suspended from tennis after he picked up his second code violation in 2 matches during his Shanghai Masters defeat to Kei Nishikori on Wednesday.

The outspoken Australian snapped profanities as he was warned for smashing away a loose ball which nearly hit a line judge -- an indiscretion that could trigger a four-week ban.

Brazil rebound Argentina held to a draw

AFP, Montevideo



Brazil kick-started their South American World Cup qualifying campaign with a 3-1 victory over Venezuela on Tuesday as Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay posted their second wins and Argentina gained their first point.

Willian scored twice -- in the 37th second and again the 42nd minute as Brazil rebounded from a humbling loss to Chile last Thursday as qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia got underway.

Venezuela responded through Christian Santos in the 64th, but 35-year-old striker Ricardo Oliveira sealed the win for Brazil in the 73rd.

While Brazil were celebrating their first three points of the young campaign, Copa America champions Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay all notched their second victories in as many matches to stand tied on six points apiece.

Chile defeated 10-man Peru 4-3 in Lima, Ecuador followed up their shock defeat of Argentina last week with a 2-0 victory over Bolivia in Quito and Uruguay d o w n e d Colombia 3-0 in Montevideo.

Argentina, still struggling to shake off the disappointment of losing the Copa America final in July -- their second defeat in a major final in 12 months -- were held to a scoreless draw by Paraguay in Asuncion.

Argentina coach Gerardo Martino praised the fortitude of his team -- again without injured captain Lionel Messi as well as injured forward Sergio Aguero.

Argentina face Brazil next, when qualifying resumes in November.

It's not clear if Messi will be back from a serious knee injury by then, while Brazil will be able to welcome back the suspended Neymar.

RESULTS	
Ecuador (Bolanos 81, Caicedo 90-pen)	2 - 0 Bolivia
Uruguay (Godin 35, Rolan 51, Hernandez 88)	3 - 0 Colombia
Paraguay	0 - 0 Argentina
Brazil (Willian 1, 42, Oliveira 73)	3 - 1 Venezuela (Santos 64)
Peru (Farfan 10, 36-pen, Guerrero 90)	3 - 4 Chile (Sanchez 7, 44, Vargas 41, 49)

Disaster for the Dutch

Croatia, Turkey celebrate

AFP, Paris



Croatia and Turkey took the final automatic qualifying spots for Euro 2016 on Tuesday as the Netherlands, semi-finalists at last year's World Cup, were eliminated.

The Dutch needed to beat the already-qualified Czech Republic in Amsterdam and hope Turkey lost at home to already-qualified Iceland in Konya to salvage third place in Group A and a spot in next month's play-offs.

But in the end neither happened, with the 1988 European champions going down 3-2 to the Czechs, their third loss in four qualifiers under Danny Blind, while Turkey beat Iceland 1-0.

Pavel Kaderabek of Hoffenheim put the Czechs ahead and Josef Sural doubled their lead, before the away side had Marek Suchy sent off for chopping down Memphis Depay as he raced through on goal two minutes prior to half-time.

However, Robin van Persie, who had come off the bench in the first half to win his 101st cap, inexplicably headed into his own net in the 66th minute to make it 3-0.

Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Van Persie scored at the other end to reduce the deficit but by that point the damage had been done and the Dutch will miss a major tournament finals for the first time since the 2002 World Cup.

They have not failed to qualify for a European Championship since 1984, when the finals were also played in France.

"I have no intention to step down.

RESULTS	
Latvia	0 - 1 Kazakhstan (Kuat 65)
Netherlands (Huntelaar 70, Van Persie 83)	2 - 3 Czech Republic (Kaderabek 24, Sural 35, Van Persie 66-og)
Turkey (Selcuk Inan 89)	1 - 0 Iceland
Belgium (Mertens 64, De Bruyne 78, Hazard 84)	3 - 1 Israel (Hemed 88)
Cyprus (Charalambides 32, Myrdis 41)	2 - 3 Bosnia (Medunjanin 13, 44, Djuric 67)
Wales (Ramsey 50, Bale 86)	2 - 0 Andorra
Bulgaria (Alexandrov 20, Rangelov 56)	2 - 0 Azerbaijan
Italy (Florenzi 73, Pelle 82)	2 - 1 Norway (Tettey 23)
Malta	0 - 1 Croatia (Perisic 25)

I'm going to carry on with my work because I'm under contract until 2018 and I believe in this team," Blind, who replaced Guus Hiddink in July, said afterwards.

"Am I the one to blame? I now have to analyse that," he continued. "The results weren't good. I won only one match (out of four since taking over)."

Turkey, meanwhile, had Gokhan Tore sent off 12 minutes from time against Iceland but had third place in the bag thanks to events in Amsterdam.

They went one better, though, as Selcuk Inan's brilliant free-kick on 89 minutes saw them win their game. And that, coupled with a 1-0 win for Kazakhstan in Latvia -- secured by an Islambek Kuat goal -- allowed Fatih Terim's side to progress automatically as the best third-placed side.

It made for agonising viewing for

Hungary, who had been poised to progress as the best third-placed side. Now they must come through the play-offs -- the draw is on Sunday -- next month if they are to reach a first major finals since the 1986 World Cup.

Elsewhere, Croatia clinched qualification from Group H as a 1-0 win in Malta allowed them to snatch second place in the section behind Italy at the expense of Norway.

Norway had started the day two points clear of Croatia but were beaten 2-1 by already-qualified Italy in Rome, despite Alexander Tettey of Norwich City putting the visitors ahead.

Alessandro Florenzi equalised for Italy before Southampton's Graziano Pelle struck the late winner, while Croatia beat Malta thanks to a solitary Ivan Perisic goal, leaving Norway to settle for a play-off place.

The other game in Group H saw Bulgaria end a disappointing campaign with a 2-0 win over Azerbaijan in Sofia, with Mihail Alexandrov and Dimitar Rangelov on target.

Meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina secured third place and a play-off spot in Group B with a dramatic 3-2 victory in Cyprus.

Haris Medunjanin had put the Bosnians ahead but captain Constantinos Charalambides equalised for the hosts in Nicosia and Nestor Myrdis put them ahead.

Nevertheless, Medunjanin made it 2-2 just before the break and Milan Djuric got the winner for the Bosnians midway through the second half.

Belgium secured top spot in the group, and with it move to the top of the FIFA world rankings, after beating Israel 3-1 in Brussels.

Oranje ripped to shreds

AGENCIES, Amsterdam

Holland's exit from European Championship in France next year was major news on the websites of almost all major European and other international sports newspapers yesterday. Marca called it "historically ridiculous". ESPN spoke of an "implosion of a superpower". All that The Latest News had to say was "poor Oranje".

This is the first time since 1984 that Oranje will be missing a European Championship.

British newspaper Daily Mail was especially harsh. "From World Cup Flyer to humiliation", the headline of one of the many Oranje-related articles yesterday read on the website. "Total Football? It looks more like total failure".

The German Bild led with an old classic: "No orange wigs and shirts in the stadium. No columns of caravans to France: without Holland we're going to the European Championships."

French L'Equipe: "Oranje is the main absentee at the European Championships. Coincidentally, the last time the Netherlands was missing, the European Championship were also in France."

Spanish media also stopped to consider Oranje's disgrace: "Even with the new format with 24 countries represented Oranje could not prevent catastrophe", Marca writes under the headline "historically ridiculous".

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