

SWEDEN, UKRAINE THROUGH Ibra steals the show

AFP, Paris



Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored a brace as Sweden beat their Scandinavian neighbours 4-3 on aggregate after a 2-2 draw in Copenhagen.

Ukraine held on after conceding an early goal to veteran centre-back Bostjan Cesar before an equaliser deep into injury time by Andriy Yarmolenko saw them complete a 3-1 aggregate victory.

After Republic of Ireland beat Bosnia and Herzegovina on Monday and Hungary ousted Norway the day before, all 24 teams for next year's finals in France are now known.

Ibrahimovic was the star as Sweden completed a victory over Denmark that was more comfortable than the final scoreline suggested.

"It was great to do this here in Denmark," said Ibrahimovic, who had been rumoured to be on the brink of retiring from the international game had his side failed to progress.

"They said they were going to send me into retirement. I sent their whole nation into retirement."

"If I have to finish with a Euros, then that's my destiny. Thanks for all the support and see you in France. There's still a few months (before it begins) but we'll be there."

He opened the scoring on 19 minutes with a delicate finish from Kim Kallstrom's corner.

It was a second vital contribution from Kallstrom in the early stages having diverted a goalbound effort from Denmark onto the bar as early as the eighth minute.

Ibrahimovic settled the affair 14 minutes

from time with a stunning free-kick from distance that meant Denmark would now need to score an improbable four times to reach the Euros.

The hosts, who had eliminated Sweden from the 2010 World Cup play-offs six years ago, didn't give up and pulled back late goals from Yussuf Poulsen and Jannik Vestergaard, but they nonetheless came up well short.

That was a second successive failure to qualify for a major finals and Denmark's veteran coach Morten Olsen subsequently decided to call it a day after 15 years at the national team's helm.

Ukraine were aiming to avoid an unprecedented sixth straight play-off elimination across the World Cup and Euros together in their match in Maribor.

And there was a daunting portent when Cesar opened the scoring for the hosts on 11 minutes.

Ukraine still led 2-1 on aggregate having won the first leg 2-0 in Kiev and after Slovenia's Miso Brecko was sent off a minute into time added on, Yarmolenko sealed Ukraine's progress with an equaliser seven minutes into injury time.

PLAY-OFF RESULTS	
Slovenia 1 (Cesar 11) Ukraine 1 (Yarmolenko 90+7)	Ukraine win 3-1 on aggregate
Denmark 2 (Y. Poulsen 81, Vestergaard 90+1) Sweden 2 (Ibrahimovic 19, 76)	Sweden win 4-3 on aggregate
PLAYED MONDAY	
Republic of Ireland 2 (Walters 24-pen, 70) Bosnia-Herzegovina 0	Ireland win 3-1 on aggregate
PLAYED SUNDAY	
Hungary 2 (Priskin 14, Henriksen 83-og) Norway 1 (Henriksen 87)	Hungary win 3-1 on aggregate

Spanish league chief vows safe Clásico

AFP, Madrid

Head of the Spanish league, Javier Tebas, is confident that Saturday's huge clash between Real Madrid and Barcelona will pass off safely after two high-profile international friendlies were postponed in the wake of Friday's deadly attacks in Paris.

Germany's meeting with the Netherlands was called off just hours before kick-off on Tuesday due to a bomb threat in Hanover.

"Spain has been the target of jihadi terrorism in the past, but this is obviously a police matter," Tebas said in an exclusive interview with AFP.

"Evidently, when something of the magnitude that took place in Paris happens anywhere in Europe, all countries take extra measures."

"Obviously, this week we have to take measures to give greater security to everyone, but there are measures which the police know how to handle."

Blatter, Platini appeals rejected

AFP, Zurich



A FIFA appeal committee on Wednesday rejected a bid by long-time president Sepp Blatter and UEFA chief Michel Platini to overturn their 90-day suspensions while Swiss police pursue a criminal investigation.

The committee said it had "rejected in full" the appeals made by Blatter and Platini.

Both were suspended for 90 days on October 7 after Swiss prosecutors launched a "criminal mismanagement" inquiry against Blatter who made a 2million dollar payment to Platini in 2011 for work carried out a decade earlier.

The suspension has been a severe blow to Platini's hopes of winning a FIFA presidential election in Zurich on February 26 when Blatter stands down after 17 years in the post.

The sanction, banning him from all football-related activity, means that he is unable to campaign in the FIFA presidential race against the five confirmed candidates, who have already passed the required integrity tests.

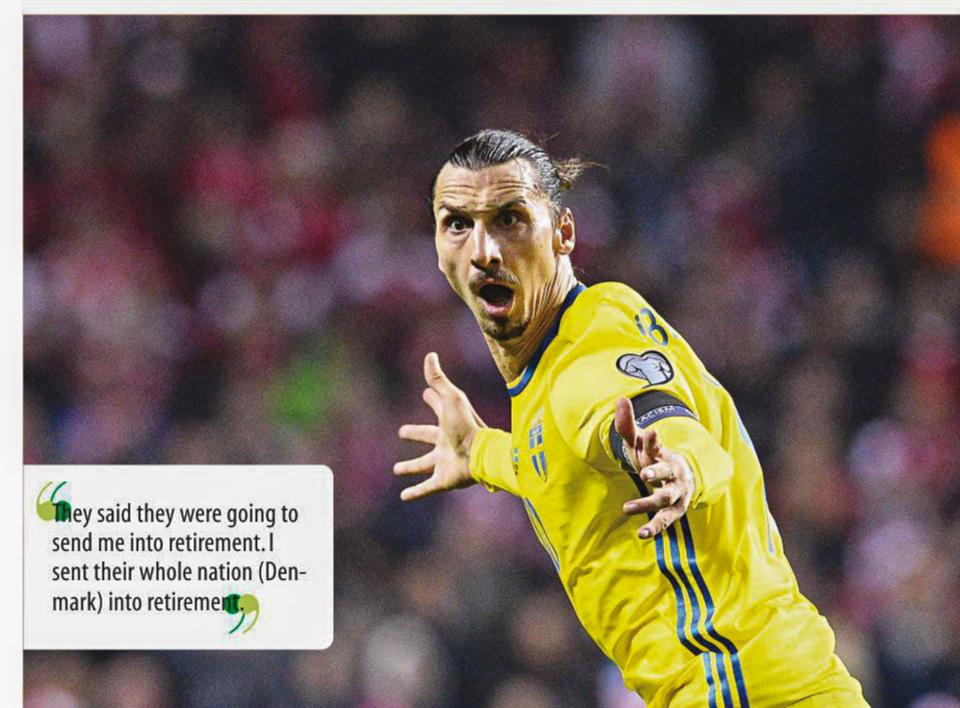
Both Blatter and Platini have the possibility of next taking their appeals before the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport for a final ruling.

Platini's lawyers had already said that their client was "astounded" at how slow the process was for FIFA to decide on his appeal against the suspension.

The appeal was lodged with FIFA by the lawyers on October 10.

But the rejection of the appeal means that, barring a successful approach to the CAS, everyone involved will have to wait until January 5 when the 90-day suspension ends.

The sanctions against Platini and Blatter come amid twin Swiss and US investigations into alleged widespread fraud and corruption at the heart of world football's



Sweden superstar Zlatan Ibrahimovic celebrates his second goal against Denmark during their Euro 2016 qualifier second leg play-off in Copenhagen on Tuesday.

Euro 2016 draw on Dec 12

AFP, Paris

UEFA on Wednesday revealed its coefficient seeds for Euro 2016, determining which nations go into which of the four pots for the December 12 draw.

France as hosts, Spain as champions, Germany, England, Portugal and Belgium all go into pot one as top seeds for the first-round draw that will establish six groups of four nations.

Performances at Euro 2012 (20 percent), the 2014 World Cup (40) and results during the Euro 2016 qualifiers (40) were taken into account to settle upon the seeds and therefore which team went into which pot.

One team from each pot will be drawn to go into each of the six groups.

The 2016 tournament (June 10 - July 10) is the first to feature 24 nations. From the initial six round-robin groups from which the top two teams and the four best third placed teams then go into a last-16 direct knock-out format.

SEEDS	
POT 1: France, Spain, Germany, England, Portugal, Belgium	POT 2: Italy, Russia, Switzerland, Austria, Croatia, Ukraine
POT 3: Czech Republic, Sweden, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary	POT 4: Turkey, Republic of Ireland, Iceland, Wales, Albania, Northern

'NEYMAR COULD BE FORCED OUT'

Barcelona star Neymar's father has revealed the ongoing tax fraud case could force the forward to leave the treble winners. The 23-year-old has been facing problems with the Brazilian tax authorities for reportedly evading paying taxes between 2011 and 2013. The investigation is ongoing and the Brazilian judge has frozen his assets. Manchester United were interested in signing him in the summer transfer window and the player confirmed he had held talks with the Red Devils. The Brazil international's father, Neymar senior earlier admitted his son will not sign a new deal at Barcelona until the ongoing problems in his



USA held by Trinidad

AFP, Port of Spain

The United States ground out a lacklustre 0-0 draw against Trinidad & Tobago to keep their 2018 World Cup qualification campaign on track here Tuesday.

Jurgen Klinsmann's side neutralised a physical Trinidad team in hot and humid conditions at the 27,000-seat Hasely Crawford Stadium but despite dominating possession for much of the second half were unable to find a decisive goal.

The Americans hit the woodwork twice in the second half, with Gyasi Zardes crashing a header against the woodwork in the 46th minute and Jermaine Jones seeing a fierce long-range strike tipped onto the bar in the 78th minute by Jan Michael Williams.

The result left the Americans with four points from two games in the CONCACAF region's preliminary Group B.

Brazil back on track Argentina win, Chile crash

AFP, Montevideo



Argentina and Brazil reignited their 2018 World Cup qualifying campaigns with important victories on Tuesday as Copa America champions Chile crashed to defeat in their grudge match with Uruguay.

Two-time World Cup winners Argentina -- who had taken just two points from their first three matches -- claimed their first win, downing Colombia 1-0 in Barranquilla thanks to a first half goal from Lucas Biglia.

Brazil meanwhile produced their best performance of the qualifying campaign to date with a 3-0 defeat of Peru in Salvador.

Bayern Munich star Douglas Costa scored one goal and created two others as Brazil swept aside the challenge of the Copa America semi-finalists.

In Montevideo, Uruguay gained revenge for their stormy Copa America quarterfinal defeat to Chile earlier this year with a 3-0 win.

The victory pushed Uruguay up to second place in the standings with nine points from four games, three points adrift of surprise early pacesetters Ecuador, who made it four wins out of four on Tuesday with a 3-1 win over Venezuela.

Brazil's victory over Peru left them in third place with seven points, ahead of Paraguay and Chile on goal difference.

Argentina's win in Colombia lifted them to sixth, just outside the top five qualifying spots.

The pressure on coach Gerardo Martino was eased by Biglia's 19th-minute goal, the Lazio midfielder tapping in after Cristian Zapata failed to deal with Ezequiel Lavezzi's low cross.

Five-time champions Brazil had a virtuoso performance from Costa to thank for their win.

The Bayern star opened the scoring with a tap-in on 22 minutes from Willian's low cross and then turned provider with a jinking run and pass for Renato Augusto for Brazil's second on 57 minutes.

Brazil's third came when Costa's fierce strike was parried away by Peru keeper Diego Penny, leaving a simple finish for

RESULTS	
Colombia 0 - 1 Argentina (Biglia 19)	Venezuela 1 - 3 Ecuador (Martinez 14, Montero 22, Calcedo 60)
Uruguay 3 - 0 Chile (Godin 23, Pereira 61, Caceres 65)	Paraguay 2 - 1 Bolivia (Duk 59)
Brazil 3 - 0 Peru (Costa 22, Augusto 57)	

Filipe Luis on the rebound.

In Montevideo, all eyes were on Chile defender Gonzalo Jara and Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani as the two men lined up against each other for the first time since their infamous clash in the Copa America in June.

On that occasion Cavani was sent off after lashing out at Jara when the Chilean defender attempted to poke a finger into the Uruguayan striker's backside.

Jara was later banned for three matches over the incident.

The lingering tension from that encounter was evident in an ill-tempered game at the Centenario and threatened to boil over around the 20-minute mark.

Amid jawing and gesturing between the teams Uruguay



Brazil midfielder Renato Augusto celebrates after scoring the second goal against Peru in Salvador de Bahia on Tuesday.

were awarded a free kick and captain Diego Godin slotted home the opener from the set-piece in the 23rd minute.

Things settled down in the second half. But Chile's efforts to find an equalizer were thwarted and two quick goals from Alvaro Pereira in the 61st and Martin Caceres in the 65th saw Uruguay hand Chile their first defeat of the campaign.

To compound Chile's misery, midfielder Jorge Valdivia was shown a red card after the final whistle, apparently for remarks to referee Wilmar Roldan of Colombia, who also issued seven yellow cards.



England and France players observe a minute's silence to pay tribute to the victims of the Paris terror attacks before the start of their international friendly at the Wembley Stadium on Tuesday. England won the subdued match 2-0 courtesy of goals from Dele Alli and captain Wayne Rooney.

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