City







Messi, Aguero will have to sweat, says Jesus

AFP, Belo Horizonte



Argentina forwards Lionel Messi and Sergio Aguero will have to sweat if they're going to break down Brazil's watertight defence in their Copa America semifinal, says Selecao striker Gabriel Jesus.

Hosts Brazil have yet to concede a goal in four matches at the Copa while Argentina have improved defensively and kept clean sheets in their last two matches.

Jesus expects a tight contest in Belo Horizonte on Tuesday and says Brazil's defence won't give Argentina's forward line an inch.

"It's tough to get behind a defence that doesn't concede goals," the Manchester City

forward said of Argentina's backline. "It's also a long time since we conceded a goal. It's very important to have a solid defence. "But it won't be easy for Argentina to get

behind us. Obviously they have Messi who is the best player in the world, and they have Aguero, one of the best Centre-forwards, but they're going to have to sweat to get in behind.'

Jesus said he was sure "Argentina will attack us" and he's looking forward to joking around with his City team-mates Aguero and Centre-back Nicolas Otamendi, but only after the match.

What's clear, though, is that this is the most keenly anticipated match on the continent, between the two regional giants.

Brazil are the most successful team in World Cup history with five titles to Argentina's two, but at a continental level, the roles are reversed as Argentina have won the Copa 14 times compared to eight for Brazil.

Should Argentina win again, they would match Uruguay's record of 15 titles.

"These are two giants, from countries with a lot of history," said Jesus.

"We're playing at home and we have more pressure to win, but it's a 'clasico' against Argentina." These two sides' defenses have been on

top so far but given the attacking talent that will be on show, a goalless draw would be unthinkable. Brazil will likely line up with Liverpool's

Roberto Firmino flanked by Jesus and the exciting Gremio forward Everton, a reported target for Manchester City.

Argentina are almost certainly sure to stick to the trio that played their last two matches --2-0 victories over Qatar and Venezuela -- with

Lautaro Martinez joining Messi and Aguero. But there is one name that most occupies the thoughts of Brazil Centre-back Thiago Silva, and that's Messi.

The Paris Saint-Germain defender has painful memories of a Messi in full flow. He and Marquinhos, hia Centre-back partner for club and country, were torn apart in Barcelona's famous 6-1 Champions League victory over PSG in 2017 that overturned a 4-0 first leg deficit.

Messi scored Barca's third goal that day. "Obviously no matter how much attention you pay it doesn't count for much against the best player in the world," said Silva. "Whenever we play against him for the

national team or in the Champions League, it's difficult. "No matter how much you study him, you'll

never be able to understand the difference he can make. "In the decisive moments, you think he'll

do one thing, and he pulls out of his hat something that you never expected. That's the difference.

"But now it's Brazil against Argentina and we'll try to defend our end and admire him some other day."

Everton making Brazilians cry with joy

AFP, Belo Horizonte



When Neymar was ruled out of the Copa America with an ankle injury just over a week before the big kick-off, there was reason for hosts Brazil to despair.

But one player more than any other has given rise to renewed optimism within the Selecao ranks, and that's Everton -- a player reportedly courted by both Manchester clubs, City and United, and Paris Saint-Germain.

The dynamic 23-year-old winger has been a revelation for Brazil since earning a starting berth in their final Copa America group game against Peru.

He had already scored the third goal in a 3-0 win over Bolivia in the tournament opener after coming on as a substitute. After the dire 0-0 draw with Venezuela,

Everton was one of two changes made by coach Tite to Brazil's attacking triumvirate -- Gabriel Jesus was also promoted to the starting XI -- and rewarded his coach with another goal and swashbuckling performance down the left flank.

And in his home stadium in Porto Alegre, where he plays for Gremio, Everton was the one player who lifted the crowd

nicknamed "Cebolinha" -- little onion, a reference not to him making defenders cry but to his likeness to a cartoon character of the same name due to the tuft of hair on his otherwise shaved scalp.

His popularity amongst Brazilian fans is evident and largely because he's one of just three of the 23-man tournament squad still plying his trade in his homeland.

The other two have yet to feature, meaning Everton is the only home player gracing the Copa America that local fans are able to watch at close quarters. Although that is almost certain to

change soon enough. "He's a player who's ready to play in

Europe," said Felipe Luis.

After Everton's scoring cameo against Bolivia, one of the most respected football journalists in Brazil, Juca Kfouri, wrote in the prestigious Folha de S. Paulo newspaper that "Everton must start for the Selecao."

"You have to have the courage to pick those that have the audacity to play football," he added.

Everton doesn't quite have the wing wizardry of one of Brazil's greats, Garrincha, but his bustling, powerful running and impressive close control are mightily effective, as is his ability to cut



The absence of Neymar, Brazil have found a new star in the form of winger Everton.

onto their feet every time he got the ball in an otherwise frustrating blank against Paraguay in the quarterfinals, before Brazil won on penalties.

"He's the one who opens up the marking, who faces up to it," said Atletico Madrid full-back Filipe Luis.

"Those who benefit are those players

playing close to him." That's a move that will likely materialize

once this tournament is over for the player

inside and shoot.

Like a right-footed Arjen Robben, who likewise operates on the opposite flank to the one he should naturally occupy, Everton has been particularly dangerous cutting in from the left onto his good peg.

Both his goals came from that move, firing an unstoppable shot into the top far corner against Bolivia, and catching out Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese with a drilled low effort to the near post.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic makes a return against Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber during their men's singles first round match of the Wimbledon at The All England Lawn Tennis Club yesterday. The defending champion had a comfortable 6-3, 7-5, 6-3 victory.

PHOTO: REUTERS

surprise decision to bring Ivanisevic into

Djokovic said that he and Ivanisevic

"I have always looked up to Goran.

When he won here in 2001, I feel I was

"I feel as if I contributed to his

Fourth seed Kevin Anderson, runner-

Anderson will now play Serbia's Janko

Tipsarevic who registered his first win at

the tournament in seven years when he

defeated Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-4,

In the women's event, third seed

beating China's Zhu Lin 6-2, 7-6 (7/4).

Karolina Pliskova made it through,

up to Djokovic in 2018, eased into the

second round beating Pierre-Hugues

Herbert of France 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 5-7, 6-2.

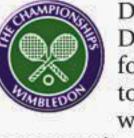
have been long-time friends.

14," said Djokovic.

victory," he joked.

Djokovic off to a flier

AFP, London



his inner sanctum over the weekend. Defending champion Novak Djokovic got his campaign for a fifth Wimbledon title off to a winning start on Monday with newly-hired coaching part of that as he had trained in Germany at the same base as me when I was 13-

team recruit, and 2001 winner, Goran Ivanisevic helping steer the ship. Djokovic, chasing a fifth title at the

All England Club, saw off 35-year-old Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany 6-3, 7-5, 6-3.

But he had to recover from early breaks in both of the first two sets against a player who beat him at Indian Wells this year, as well as a nasty fall on the

Centre Court grass. Djokovic, chasing a 16th career major, will face Denis Kudla of the United States

for a place in the last 32. If his victory was routine, there was nothing predictable about the Serb's

Afghanistan A team arrive SPORTS REPORTER

The Afghanistan A team arrived in Dhaka yesterday to take part in a month long tour with the Bangladesh A team. The visitors will play a twomatch four-day series and a five-match one-day series against the second-string Bangladesh side.

The first four-dayer is scheduled to take place at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna from July 5 to 9. The two teams will then travel to Chattogram, where they will play the second fourday match from July 12 to 15 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

The Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury stadium will also host the first three one-day matches on July 21, 23 and 24 while the fourth and fifth one-dayers will be held at the BKSP on July 27 and 29 respectively. The Afghans are scheduled to depart on July 30.

Experienced openers Anamul Haque Bijoy and Imrul Kayes have been called up to the side with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) all set to announce the Bangladesh A team for the series against the Afghanistan A team. Simon Helmot will be the head coach for Bangladesh A team.

Most of the players who have been a part of national team in different phases of their career are expected to be called up along with a few uncapped cricketers in the side.

Abahani beat Team BJMC

SPORTS REPORTER



Holders Abahani came from a goal down to beat bottom-placed Team BJMC

2-1 to extend their winning

run in the Bangladesh Premier League at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali yesterday. Abahani, who last week qualified for

the inter-zonal semifinals of AFC Cup with a hard-fought 1-0 win over I-League champions Minerva Punjab, had to toil hard against hosts BJMC, a side they beat 1-0 in the first leg, to notch up their 14th victory in 17 matches. The win helped the Dhanmondi giants

close the gap with leaders Bashundhara Kings with 42 points, four behind the leaders who however played a match less. Team BJMC, with 11 defeats in 17 matches, remained at the bottom of the 13-team table with only eight points.

Visitors Abahani came into the match with high motivation following their historic win over Minerva Punjab as well as a massive 5-2 win over Rahmantganj MFS in the previous league match but Team BJMC, who stunned Sheikh Jamal DC 2-1 in their previous match, took the lead in the 16th minute, with Samson Iliasu finding the back of the net with a curling corner-kick.

Jewel Rana equalised for Abahani five minutes before the break after Kervens Belfort released a well-judged lob from the right after availing a throw-in while Masih Saighani, who scored the all-important goal against Minerva Punjab, ensured Abahani's victory after nodding home a long throw-in from Raihan Hasan in the 60th minute.

Spain win Euro U-21 title

REUTERS, Udine

A slick Spain side took their revenge on Germany as they lifted the European Under-21 Championship title with a 2-1 win thanks to goals from Fabian Ruiz and Dani Olmo on Sunday.

The Spaniards had suffered a 1-0 defeat by the Germans in the 2017 final but dominated this year's showpiece at the Stadio Friuli until a late Nadiem Amiri consolation for the Germans.

Ruiz scored after eight minutes with a low shot into the corner and Olmo got the second in the 69th by dinking the ball over keeper Alexander Nuebel who failed to hold Ruiz's drive.

Spain's Carlos Soler hit the bar in the 81st before Amiri's fine late strike but the Spaniards held on to celebrate a fifth Euro under-21 title to match the record of hosts Italy.

WHAT TO WATCH

BTV, GTV & MAASRANGA ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP BANGLADESH V INDIA LIVE FROM 3:30PM

DAY'S EVENTS

BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE SHEIKH JAMAL V BROTHERS UNION TIME: 4:00PM CTG ABAHANI V SHEIKH RUSSEL TIME: 7:00PM VENUE: BANGABANDHU NATIONAL STADIUM, DHAKA SAIF SC V MOHAMMEDAN

TIME: 4:00PM VENUE: ROFIGE UDDIN BHUIYAN STADIUM, MYMENSINGH

Spain players celebrate with the UEFA U21 Euro Championships trophy after beating Germany in the final at the Friuli Stadium in Udine on Sunday. PHOTO: REUTERS