



Brazil's Gabriel Jesus celebrates his opening goal with fellow forward Roberto Firmino and other teammates during their 2-0 win over archrivals Argentina in their Copa America semifinal at Belo Horizonte on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil romp into final

AFP, Belo Horizonte

Gabriel Jesus and Roberto Firmino scored the goals as Brazil beat arch-rivals Argentina 2-0 on Tuesday to qualify for the Copa America final.

Jesus and Firmino netted a goal apiece in each half to give Brazil a victory which ensured Lionel Messi's frustrating wait for a major international tournament title with Argentina continued.

Hosts Brazil will play the winners of Wednesday's second semifinal between champions Chile and Peru in Sunday's final.

It was the first time these age-old rivals had met in a major competition since Brazil beat Argentina 3-0 in the 2007 Copa final.

English-based Jesus and Firmino were the stars, each creating the other's goal, although captain Dani Alves had a major say in the opener.

"It was another step towards our objective. We're achieving all the goals that we're setting ourselves," said Alves.

In what was always expected to be a feisty affair there were some wild early tackles flying in, and Argentina's Nicolas Tagliafico was first to be booked for a lunge at Jesus.

The uneven pitch looked like it had been trampled by a herd of wildebeest before kick-off and both sides struggled to play flowing football.

Brazil's Casemiro was even jeered after sending a long crossfield ball straight out of play.

The first chance came when Argentina's Leandro Paredes let fly from 30 yards but the ball whistled just over the top of goalkeeper Alisson's goal.

Brazil took the lead on 19 minutes after a piece of individual brilliance from Alves.

He beat three players on a mazy run before sending Firmino clear down the right with a no-look pass, the Liverpool forward crossing for the unmarked Jesus to tap home.

Two-footed lunges were flying in as the match threatened to descend from niggly to dirty.

Argentina almost levelled on the half hour when Sergio Aguero headed Messi's free-kick onto the bar, the ball bouncing down just in front of the line before Brazil scrambled it clear.

Messi then burst into life, driving at heart of the Brazil defense and playing in Aguero, who took advantage of a Thiago Silva slip to make space for himself but Marquinhos was quickly across to block the Manchester City striker's shot.

Moments later, Messi beat two men on the right, won back the ball with a sliding tackle after overrunning it, but then wastefully shot high and wide.

At the other end, Arthur shot powerfully, but straight at goalkeeper Franco Armani.

Argentina pushed Brazil back at the start of the second half and Aguero picked out Lautaro Martinez in the box but he didn't catch his left-foot volley cleanly and Alisson gathered comfortably.

Another promising attacking move ended with Rodrigo de Paul blazing over from 20 yards.

But Jesus produced a beautiful piece of skill, including a pirouetting drag-back, before teeing up Philippe Coutinho who should have done better than shooting over.

Moments later, though, a blocked shot from Martinez looped over to Messi who lashed a shot from an angle against the post, with Alisson beaten.

Alisson was alert to clutch a Messi free-kick on 66 minutes that looked destined for the top corner.

By then, Scaloni had already gone for broke, bringing off midfielder Marcos Acuna and sending on speedy winger Angel Di Maria, with Messi dropping into a deeper role.

Just as Argentina looked capable of finding a way back into the match, Brazil stung them on the counter-attack with Manchester City's Jesus getting away from two defenders and teeing up the unmarked Liverpool striker Firmino for a tap in on 71 minutes.

Scaloni threw on another forward in Paulo Dybala but there was no way back for Argentina.

Messi vows to play on

AFP, Belo Horizonte



Lionel Messi vowed to extend his international career after yet another bid to win a major title with Argentina ended in failure at the Copa America on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old Barcelona star said he had no plans to hang up his boots after a 2-0 semifinal loss to Brazil.

"If I can still help in any way, I will continue to do so. I feel really good in this group," said the five-time Ballon d'Or winner.

"This is a good, talented generation who showed that they love the national

conditions and to be superior to our opponents.

"It doesn't matter because they're going to the final but if we're aware of what we did today then there's only positives."

He said the defeat was "unfair" claiming that "no other team has created as many goalscoring chances against Brazil as we did."

Messi's best chance came on 57 minutes when he volleyed against the post. Scaloni said the veteran was Argentina's "standard-bearer."

"Brazil were continuously trying to stop passes from reaching him and we kept looking for ways to get him the ball,"



Argentina talisman Lionel Messi contemplates on another failure following his side's defeat against Brazil.

PHOTO: REUTERS

team," he added.

"They have a future and great foundations, they just need to be given time."

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni meanwhile insisted his new-look squad had a bright future despite the defeat.

"Without a doubt, today we showed that this group of players feel the jersey like no-one else," he said.

"We showed an image for the future of this squad and these players and the great path they are on.

Scaloni said.

"It was thrilling to see him play. It didn't work out today but he'll have his rematch and the whole squad will have their rematch."

Scaloni was unhappy with some of Ecuadoran referee Roddy Zambrano's decisions, not least the fact that Argentina picked up six bookings to Brazil's two.

"I didn't like the referee, I don't usually make those comments," he said.

"I don't think he was qualified for a match of this level."



Russia's Maria Sharapova grimaces in pain during her first round match of Wimbledon against France's Pauline Parmentier on Tuesday. The 2004 champion retired with a right arm injury, losing by 4-6, 7-6, 5-0.

PHOTO: AFP

Wawrinka falls

AFP, London

Three-time major winner Stan Wawrinka was knocked out of Wimbledon on Wednesday, falling in five sets to 6ft 11in (2.1m) Reilly Opelka as defending champion Novak Djokovic waited to push his bid for a fifth title.

Two-time quarterfinalist Wawrinka, 34, was beaten 7-5, 3-6, 4-6, 6-4, 8-6 by his American opponent, the tallest man in the sport and 13 years his junior.

Opelka fired 23 aces and 59 winners and goes on to face either 2016 runner-up Milos Raonic of Canada or Robin Haase of the Netherlands.

Wawrinka won warm applause for giving a line judge a warm embrace after accidentally colliding with her as he sprinted to hit a backhand.

"I was a bit too far to return a serve. I think I went against her, so I was sure she had some pain and was not happy, so I gave her a little hug," said the genial Swiss.

Also feeling the pain was Russia's Margarita Gasparyan who was forced to retire when just two points from victory against Ukraine eighth seed Elina Svitolina.

World number 62 Gasparyan was 7-5, 5-4 ahead when she collapsed to the ground on Court Three, suffering with cramping.

Although she bravely tried to continue, the Russian, who has undergone three knee surgeries in her career, was forced to quit.

"I was a little bit shocked, it's never nice to get this when someone is injured like that," said Svitolina who goes on to face Greece's Maria Sakkari for a place in the last 16.

"It's really unfortunate for her."

Czech third seed Karolina Pliskova reached the last 32 with a 6-0, 6-4 win over Puerto Rico's Olympic champion Monica Puig.

Cider brings Indian b'ball coach

SPORTS REPORTER

CIDER International School has invited Dr. Ajay Morolia -- a national level basketball player and coach from India -- to conduct a 10-day basketball training programme for its students. The training camp, which started on June 24, will end on July 2. The players belonging to the Cambridge and the National Curriculum sections of CIDER are taking part in the exclusive training camp. CIDER's current basketball coach Debabrata Chakraborty is assisting Dr. Morolia.

Bashundhara Kings extend winning run

SPORTS REPORTER



Leaders Bashundhara Kings extended their winning run to 11 matches in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 3-2 win against Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With 16 wins in 17 matches, the newcomers consolidated their lead with 49 points, seven ahead of second-placed Abahani. Rahmatganj remained in ninth position with 15 points from 18 matches.

Bashundhara were given a run for their money, especially in the first half by Rahmatganj, however, it was Bashundhara, who took the lead in the 10th minute when Brazilian striker Marcos Vinicius put a defence-splitting through-pass for Costa Rican forward Daniel Colindres, who raced past two defenders to flick the ball over onrushing goalkeeper Hamidur Rahman Rimon.

Bashundhara survived a wave of attacks from Rahmatganj, with Landing Darboe and Rakibul mustering powerful shots from distance but goalkeeper Anisur

Rahman Zico thwarted all of those efforts.

The league leaders doubled the lead in the 25th minute, thanks to a brilliant finish by Matin Mia, who received a through-pass from Colindres inside the box and danced past two defenders before firing home.

Matin again came close to extending the lead 10 minutes later but his shot at near post went narrowly wide before Enamul Islam frustrated Rahmatganj by floating the ball over the crosspiece in the 39th minute.

Rahmatganj finally found the back of the net in the 42nd minute when Rakibul, capitalising on a forward-pass from Landing, drove an angular shot.

The Old Dhaka outfit were unable to shrug off the pressure and were stopping Bashundhara, who saw Matin Mia and Vinicius squander two chances before substitute Towhidul Alam Sabuz made it 3-1 in the stoppage time by tapping in on a free-kick from Colindres.

Rahmatganj pulled back another goal in the final minute of stoppage time after Landing, who was fouled by Nayeem Uddin inside the box, converted a penalty.

Ruman into third round

SPORTS REPORTER

Archer Ruman Sana moved into the third round of men's individual recurve event in Archery World Cup (Stage 4) after winning the first two games in Berlin yesterday.

Ruman, bronze medallist of World Archery Championships last month, beat 86th-ranked Rajan Kalapurayil of Switzerland by 6-2 set points before handing 75th-ranked Nomura Tsubasa of Japan a 6-2 set points defeat in the second round.

The 24-year-old will now face USA's Brady Ellison, the gold medallist of 2019 World Archery Championships' and bronze medallist of 2016 Rio Olympic Games, in the third round today.

In women's individual recurve event, Beauty Roy beat 73rd-ranked Mehak Sangani of Sri Lanka by 6-2 set points in the first round before suffering a straight 0-6 set points defeat against Alexandra Mirca of Moldova to be eliminated from the competition.

Bangladesh mixed recurve team, comprising of Sana and Beauty, also failed to cross the first-round hurdle as they suffered a 1-5 set points defeat to Croatia.

WHAT TO WATCH

GTV, BTV & MAASRANGA
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
AFGHANISTAN v WEST INDIES
LIVE FROM 3:30PM

DAY'S EVENTS

BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE
TEAM BJMC v NoFEL SC
TIME: 4:00PM
VENUE: SHAHID BULU STADIUM, NOAKHALI



Indian basketball coach Dr. Ajay Morolia was greeted by the principal (2nd from left) and a student of Cider International School recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED