



ARGENTINA get off the mark

AGENCIES



COPA AMERICA 2021

A first half goal from Guido Rodriguez, his first in 11 international appearances, gave Argentina a 1-0 win over Uruguay in a leaden Copa America clash on Friday.

The Real Betis midfielder started for his country for the first time since June 2019 and he justified that decision when he converted a cross from Lionel Messi after 10 minutes.

After the game, an elated Lionel Messi reacted and pointed out the importance of the win and the fact that there is finally some peace of mind, but he also cautioned his teammates of complacency and there is a long way to go.

"Come on!!! It was important to win

today. This will give us peace of mind for what is coming will continue to be hard," tweeted an elated Messi after their win.

"We've lacked a bit of luck to get victories (recently)," said Argentina's second half substitute Angel Di Maria. "Today we managed to do that against a direct rival who are always contenders for the Copa America."

"Brazil are the best team (so far)," he added. "We're taking it step by step and the dream is alive, I hope we can make it come true. Argentina are always a candidate (for the title) but Brazil are at home and are doing things very well."

Argentina's next game is against Paraguay on Tuesday 6am (Bangladesh Time) while Brazil will meet Colombia in their next match on Thursday at 6am (Bangladesh Time).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The result extended Argentina's unbeaten run to 15 games since they lost in the semi-final of the last Copa America in 2019.
- Argentina are now undefeated in 5 games against Uruguay in the Copa America (4 wins, 1 draw). Uruguay's last win was 2-0 in the 1989 edition.
- With this important win Argentina move on to 4 points to sit joint top with Chile in Group A. Brazil are leading Group B with maximum six points and Colombia are in second position with four points. The top four teams of each group will advance to the knockout stages of the 10-team competition.



KOHLI HELPS INDIA REBUILD

Skipper Virat Kohli led India's revival and steered his team to 146-3 against New Zealand before bad light stopped play in the weather-marred World Test Championship (WTC) final on Saturday. Kohli had raised 58 runs with Ajinkya Rahane when the players were forced off amid fading light at the Ageas Bowl with only 9.1 overs played in the final session. The India captain, like several of his team mates, stood outside the crease to try to negate any swing and played the moving ball quite late for his unbeaten 44. Rahane, batting on 29, looked cagey initially but gamely hung on to feature in India's second 50-plus partnership. After persistent rain washed out the entire opening day on Friday, New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson unsurprisingly elected to field after winning the toss. Only 64.4 overs have been played in the first two days of the weather-hit contest which has a reserve day to make up for lost time.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Hungary ready to surprise Germany, says Rossi

REUTERS, Budapest

Hungary coach Marco Rossi was not sure his team would achieve much against world champions France in their Euro 2020 Group F match on Saturday but after they came away with a 1-1 draw he wants them to spring a surprise against Germany as well.

After a heartbreaking late meltdown in Hungary's first game on Tuesday which they lost 3-0 to defending champions Portugal, a team Rossi thought would be easier to face than France, the coach said he was happy for them to be the protagonists now.

"This is incredible, it is exceptional," a joyful Rossi told a news conference, stressing that besides the result against France the effort was laudable as well. "We have to be happy about the

performance. It should make our guys proud."

Attila Fiola put the hosts ahead just before halftime but Antoine Griezmann equalised in the 66th minute to move France on to four points after two games and on track for the last 16.

Hungary's unexpected point kept alive their slim hopes and they must now beat another heavyweight, Germany, on Wednesday to have a chance of advancing to the knockout stage.

"We need to keep our feet on the ground. I'm not arrogant and saying we'll win in Munich, but we will do our best to make it a match," said Rossi, who took a swipe at critics who said he should have called up different players for the finals.



Attila Fiola

PHOTO: TWITTER

EURO 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



PHOTO: REUTERS

Germany sink Portugal in six-goal thriller

REUTERS, Munich

Three-times European champions Germany shrugged off their opening game loss and announced their arrival as serious contenders at Euro 2020 with an emphatic 4-2 win over highly-rated Portugal in their Group F match on Saturday.

Cristiano Ronaldo had given the defending champions a 15th minute lead but Germany went in at the break 2-1 up thanks to own goals from Ruben Dias and Raphael Guerreiro.

The Germans turned on the style in the second half with goals from Kai Havertz and the impressive Robin Gosens making it 4-1 before Diogo Jota pulled a goal back for Portugal.

The win moves Germany, who face Hungary in their final game, into second place in the group on three points, a point behind leaders France and level on points with the

Portuguese. Hungary drew 1-1 with France earlier on Saturday.

Germany coach Joachim Loew punched the air when Robin Gosens headed in their fourth goal at the far post in their Euro 2020 Group F 4-2 win over Portugal on Saturday, knowing his attacking gamble with his in-form left back had paid off in spades.

Gosens played a sensational game on the biggest stage, intimidating the Portuguese defence with his speed and power down the left wing as he charged through again and again to set up two goals and score another.

"I don't know if it was the game of a lifetime for him, maybe he still has to play that," Loew said.

"But an amazing performance from him. He worked very hard and on top of that he was a constant threat up front as well. That is exactly what we needed today."



THE FLYING SIKH NO MORE

Indian athletics trailblazer Milkha Singh, the man dubbed "The Flying Sikh" for his Olympic and Asian Games exploits, died Friday at the age of 91 after contracting Covid-19. Singh won gold medals at the 1958 and 1962 Asian Games. However, he shot to fame at the 1960 Olympics in Rome when he finished fourth in the 400m after a photo-finish was required to decide the winner.



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Rain ruins BDPL games



The Super League stage of the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier Division T20 League (BDPL) was scheduled to kick off yesterday but unfortunately all three Super League matches at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and one match of the relegation league in Savar were abandoned due to incessant rain. Only Prime Doleshwar and Gazi Group shared points but the other matches were abandoned without a ball being bowled and are set to be rescheduled soon.

BPL to resume sans spectators



Following the suspension after May 11 due to Eid ul Fitr and the national football team's international engagement, the second phase of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) will resume from June 25 at four different venues (Dhaka, Tongi, Munshiganj and Cumilla) but will be held without spectators maintaining Covid-19 protocols- as decided in an emergency meeting of the league committee chaired by BFF's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday.