



# ARGENTINA IN QUARTERFINALS

## Leicester

**D**iego Maradona's infamous 'hand of god' repeatedly punched the air as Argentina moved closer to the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals yesterday with a decisive 45-16 win over Tonga.

The portly football icon became chief cheerleader for the Pumas at Leicester's Walkers Stadium as they again showed why they have become a force to reckon with.

Tries by Joaquin Tuculet, Juan Imhoff, Nicolas Sanchez, Julian Montoya and Santiago Cordero -- often with brilliant darting runs -- sealed the result to Maradona's joy.

The football star leaped to his feet with each score, arms flailing and embracing other spectators as the points mounted and Argentina sealed a bonus-point win.

The Pumas are now second in Pool C, four points behind leaders and reigning world champions New Zealand, who have already qualified.



Argentina's scrum half Martin Landajo (centre) runs

Only an unlikely Tonga four-try win over the All Blacks next weekend can stop Argentina

going into the last eight. Kurt Morath's sixth-minute try put Tonga ahead with a move he

started and ended. But his conversion attempt came off the posts at the start of

a frustrating afternoon of kicking. He missed five kicks that could have changed the

game and Tonga were soon behind and chasing the game.

The more accurate Sanchez kicked a penalty after 19 minutes and Tuculet got Argentina's first try soon after, exposing the Pacific islanders' defensive frailty.

Cordero picked up the ball in his own half for a powerful run and the ball reached Imhoff, who dummied one Tongan and darted between the posts. Maradona was in raptures as Sanchez converted.

Sanchez and Morath got more penalties to keep the scoreboard ticking over.

But Tonga threatened a fightback when Telusa Veainu staged his own breakthrough on the wing and got the ball to Soane Tonga'uiha for their second try. Morath pulled the conversion wide to the annoyance of coach Manakaetau 'Otai.

Just after the hour, Sanchez got the ball 15 metres out, handed-off one opponent and burst through for Argentina's third try.

## Ireland reach last eight

### London

**K**eith Earls became Ireland's World Cup try record holder as his side struggled to 16-9 win over Italy yesterday that secured their place in the World Cup quarter-finals.

The result also saw France into the last eight and next week's final Pool D match between the two will decide who will play defending champions New Zealand in the next round.

Centre Earls broke Brian O'Driscoll's Irish World Cup record with his eighth touchdown in two tournaments. But Ireland badly needed Jonny Sexton's 11 points from the boot for the win.

"I apologise to all the Irish fans. It was a very disappointing performance," said Irish captain Paul O'Connell.

"We couldn't get going at all and dropped too many balls. We just hope we can discover our form from the two previous games for next week's game (against France)."

Italy did not have the greatest of starts.

Captain Sergio Parisse looked to shake the cobwebs off on his return from injury but dropped a simple pass

offered to him and the Italians were further hit when centre Gonzalo Garcia limped off in the fourth minute.

Sexton put the Irish into the lead with a penalty in the ninth minute after his darting run had created the opportunity.

The Italians, though, camped in Irish territory for five minutes and won a penalty which Tommaso Allan slotted over to level affairs.

The Irish responded

brilliantly with a superb try, winning a lineout close to the Italian line and passing it down the line. Sexton offloaded brilliantly to Robbie Henshaw who passed to Earls and he was not going to be stopped on his way to the line.

Sexton converted to put the Irish in a good position to take control at 10-3 but Allan again punished the Irish with a penalty in the 19th minute as the Italy pack put their opponents under pressure.



Ireland's number 8 Jamie Heaslip (2nd left) is tackled by Italy's centre Michele Campagnaro (centre)

## Foley ends England's dream

### Twickenham

**B**ernard Foley shattered England's World Cup dream on Saturday as Australia triumphed 33-13 to make England the first tournament hosts to drop out in the first round.

Foley scored two brilliant tries and kicked 18 points on a historic night when Australia outclassed their rivals before a packed Twickenham crowd of 81,080.

Australia and Wales are now guaranteed the top two places in Pool A, and tickets to the quarter-finals. They play next Saturday to decide the top dogs in the pool.

Australia coach Michael Cheika punched the air with delight as the final whistle went. His England counterpart Stuart Lancaster cast a forlorn figure, his future now in doubt after losses to Wales and now the Wallabies.

Lancaster and England captain Chris Robshaw quickly apologised to the expectant nation.

"We feel we let the country down today. As players we didn't quite get there. We apologise to them. Australia played very well - but we're gutted," Robshaw told ITV.



Australia's fly half Bernard Foley (centre) breaks through England's defence

"Credit to Australia, we knew across the board that they would put us under pressure and they were good today."

"We're gutted. And gutted for all the fans and everyone at home. Everyone put so much effort in but we're sorry we let everyone down," added Lancaster.

England were all but out of the World Cup by half-time.

### Australia masterclass

Foley scored a try after 20 minutes and Australia, the southern hemisphere Rugby

Championship holders, led 17-3 at half time as they imposed their class.

England fought back after the break but left themselves too much to do.

Australia may have lost their last two Tests against England but Cheika chose his strongest side and they pushed forward from the start in the hunt for territory and points.

Within minutes of the whistle, England's Mike Brown had to launch himself at Australia's star full back Israel Folau to stop him scoring a try.