

Cristiano Ronaldo hits 75th international goal

# Portugal enter Confed semis

Saint Petersburg

**Cristiano Ronaldo** scored his 75th international goal as Portugal trounced New Zealand 4-0 in Saint Petersburg yesterday to advance to the semi-finals of the Confederations Cup.

The Real Madrid star struck from the penalty spot on 33 minutes to fire the European champions in front before Bernardo Silva turned in a second goal four minutes later.

Andre Silva added a third on 80

minutes before Nani completed the rout in stoppage time to ensure Portugal progressed to last four as winners of Group A, finishing above Mexico on goal difference.

Mexico eliminated hosts Russia with a 2-1 win in Kazan to join Portugal on seven points, with Fernando Santos' side to face the runners-up of Group B on Wednesday for a place in the July 2 final.

Copa America holders Chile lead Germany on goal difference ahead of the final round of matches in Group B, although Australia and Cameroon still harbour outside qualification hopes.

Santos fielded an attacking line-up packed with experience and resisted the temptation to rest Ronaldo with Portugal still requiring a point to qualify and vying with Mexico and Russia for top spot.

Ronaldo twice threatened the New Zealand goal in quick succession, nodding straight at goalkeeper Stefan Marinovic on 24 minutes and then clattering the crossbar shortly after with another header from a Ricardo Quaresma cross.

But the Portugal captain made no mistake after Danilo was wrestled to the ground in the area by a combination of Tom Doyle and Tommy Smith following a corner. Ronaldo buried the resultant penalty beyond Stefanovic to

draw level with former Hungary great Sandor Kocsis and within nine goals of the legendary Ferenc Puskas' European record of 84 at international level.

Portugal swiftly doubled their lead when Eliseu's dangerous low cross from the left was forced home by Silva, although there was brief concern for the new Manchester City signing as he landed awkwardly on his ankle.

New Zealand skipper Chris Wood nearly grabbed a lifeline for the All Whites on the hour, but his back-post

effort was scrambled off the line by a combination of Rui Patricio and Bruno Alves. Ronaldo could have added to his tally when he climbed to meet a Nelson Semedo delivery, his header scooped away by Stefanovic who then stood tall to superbly deny Andre Silva.

Santos withdrew Ronaldo on 67 minutes with the semi-finals in mind, and his replacement Nani struck within moments of his introduction only for Stefanovic to brilliantly tip behind his deflected shot. (AFP)



Portugal's forward Nani (R) celebrates with midfielder Pizzi

## Zarco claims maiden pole in Assen

Assen

**Yamaha Tech3's** French rider Johann Zarco edged four-time champion Marc Marquez in final qualifying to claim his maiden MotoGP pole yesterday for the Dutch Grand Prix in Assen.

Honda's Marquez and Ducati's Danilo Petrucci keep Zarco company on the front row with world championship leader Maverick Vinales only managing to make the fifth row.

Italian veteran Valentino Rossi sets off on the second row with Briton Scott Redding and Zarco's teammate Jonas Folger.

Reigning Moto2 champion Zarco, at only his eighth attempt, becomes the first Frenchman since Olivier Jacque in Germany 15 years ago to set off from pole in the world championship's top category.

The 26-year-old coped best with a wet circuit and windy conditions to

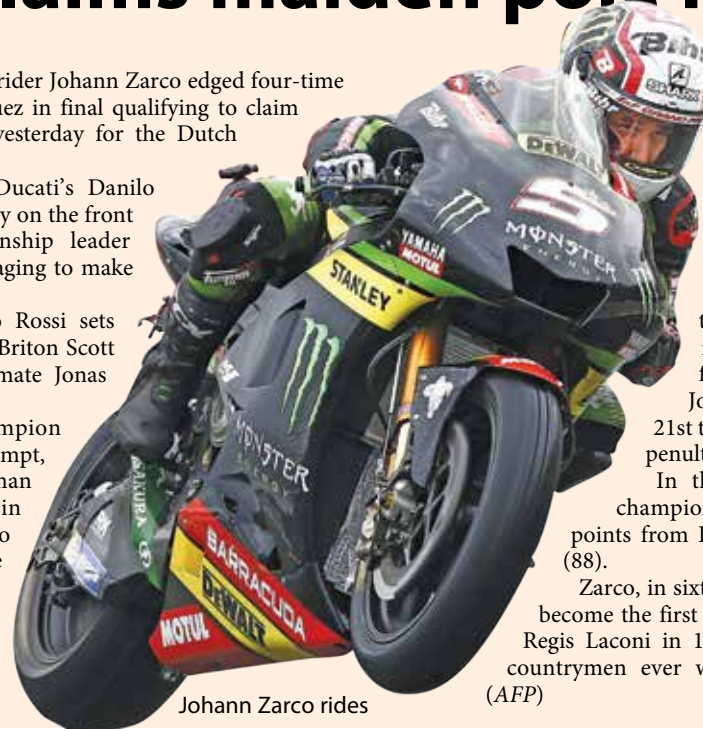
shade Marquez by .065sec and Petrucci by .385s as Vinales, who had posted the fastest time in practice, failed to make an impact.

Yamaha's Spanish rider trailed in 11th in the pole-deciding session, a full 2.125s adrift.

At least Vinales made it through to second qualifying, in contrast to three time former MotoGP titleholder Jorge Lorenzo who trailed in 21st to leave him languishing on the penultimate row on Sunday's grid.

In the race for the 2017 world championship Vinales leads on 111 points from Dovizioso (104) and Marquez (88).

Zarco, in sixth with 75 points, is seeking to become the first French MotoGP winner since Regis Laconi in 1999, with none of his fellow countrymen ever wearing the MotoGP crown. (AFP)



Johann Zarco rides