

# Portugal advance in World Cup thanks to last-gasp Ramos winner

Ronaldo score his first knockout-phase World Cup goal in a 1-1 classic before Ramos struck late

- Portugal beat Croatia late
- Ronaldo converted penalty
- Gvardiol goal ruled offside
- Portugal face Spain next

AFP | Toronto

Substitute Goncalo Ramos's headed goal edged Portugal into the last 16 of the World Cup after Croatia were dramatically denied an equalizer by VAR.

Ramos settled a classic World Cup game when he connected with a superb pass from Rafael Leao in the fourth minute of stoppage time to snuff out a Croatia team which had created the lion's share of the chances in sapping heat in Toronto.

Croatia thought they had snatched a goal in the dying seconds of extra time, but Josko Gvardiol's goal was chalked off for offside.

The Croatians were left stunned by the decision, and their fans began hurling rubbish on the pitch.



Portugal's forward #07 Cristiano Ronaldo scores his team's first goal

In the seconds before Gvardiol's disallowed goal, the Portuguese bench and coach Roberto Martinez were growing increasingly livid, begging match officials for the final whistle.

Cristiano Ronaldo played his role in the victory, stroking home a penalty that cancelled out Ivan Perisic's opener.

It was Ronaldo's first ever goal in the knockout phase of the World Cup, and it made him the

oldest scorer in that phase in the tournament's history.

His remarkable international career will now have another chapter when Portugal face Spain in Dallas on Monday.

After the match, Ronaldo shared a long exchange with Croatian legend Luka Modric, one of football's all-time greats, whose World Cup career has almost certainly ended with the defeat.

The match marked the first time that two outfield players aged over 40 took to the same pitch in a World Cup.

At the end, the Portugal players also paid tribute to late teammate Diogo Jota, who was killed in a car crash a year ago, by holding up his number 21 shirt.

## Ronaldo penalty

After a lacklustre first half, Croatian veteran Perisic stunned



**Cristiano Ronaldo and Luka Modric became the first two outfield players aged over 40 to share the pitch in a World Cup match**

the Portuguese by slotting the ball under the advancing Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa in the 53rd minute.

Within minutes, Ronaldo had the ball in the net after controlling a long pass, but his effort was disallowed for offside.

But Portugal got level when Renato Veiga was grabbed by Croatia's Nikola Vlasic in the penalty area and after a VAR check, the referee pointed to the spot.

Ronaldo stepped up to convert the penalty with ease, hitting the ball straight down the middle of the goal and pumping his fists with joy afterwards, triggering deafening cheers in the Toronto stadium.

In a pulsating game, Manchester City forward Mateo Kovacic's

low shot was pushed onto a post by 'keeper Costa's fingertips.

Still Croatia pushed and Peta Susic had the ball in the net but the assistant referee's flag was up for a clear offside.

Ronaldo was withdrawn in the 81st minute to allow Ruben Neves to come on.

The sellout crowd of 43,000 erupted with appreciation as Ronaldo went off -- unsure in the moment if he would appear again at in World Cup.

Croatia continued to create more chances than their opponents and Mario Pasalic came so close to winning the game with a header at the far post, but it bounced just wide.

But when Ramos connected, the net bulged and Portugal were through.

While the crowd tilted towards Portugal, the sizeable and vocal Croatian contingent smothered the stadium with booes every time Ronaldo touched the ball.

Tens of thousands of people with Portuguese lineage live in and around Toronto and Ronaldo's presence in the city also sparked waves of enthusiasm -- and chaos on a major highway a day before the match.

A multi-lane expressway was forced to close earlier when hundreds of fans lined the shoulder hoping to get a glimpse of the passing Portuguese team bus.

## 'I was just missing a goal,' says Spain's Yamal

AFP | Los Angeles

Spain star Lamine Yamal said he was delighted with his team's performance in their 3-0 win in the World Cup last 32 against Austria -- but admitted he would have liked to score.

"I was just missing a goal or an assist," said the 18-year-old Barcelona sensation, who was named man of the match.

"But as long as we win and advance to the next round, that's what matters," he told journalists in Los Angeles.

Pressed by one reporter on why he seemed glum after a World Cup knockout win, Yamal insisted he was happy inside, even if he didn't show it outwardly.

"I really am happy. That match is over, and now we have to think about the next one," he said.

"I'm very grateful for the affection shown to me in every stadium. It helps me step onto the pitch more motivated," he added.

Yamal, who will turn 19 on July 13, reiterated that his dream is to be a World Cup winner at the final in New Jersey on July 19.

"There's nothing better than the World Cup," he said.

"When a kid dreams about football, they dream of playing in the World Cup. I want to advance through the rounds and win with Spain."



Spain's forward #19 Lamine Yamal kicks the ball

He added: "We aren't afraid of any team. We are Spain. We have to prove it on the pitch."

Yamal did briefly break into a smile when one journalist showed him a video of his three-year-old brother celebrating the victory in the Los Angeles stands.

"It moves me to see my brother, my mother and my friends happy... My brother is like a son to me. I adore him," he said

The comfortable win Thursday was also a fourth straight clean sheet for Spain, who are yet to concede a goal at this World Cup.

"Today we came close to perfection from the 20th minute

**When a kid dreams about football, they dream of playing in the World Cup. I want to advance through the rounds and win with Spain. We aren't afraid of any team. We are Spain. We have to prove it on the pitch**

LAMINE YAMAL

until the end of the match," said goalkeeper Unai Simon.

"We have to keep maintain-

ing that level to keep advancing through the stages," he said.

Asked whether he would prefer to face Portugal or Croatia in the round of 16 in Dallas on Monday, Simon declined to pick.

"Whenever we've played against either Portugal or Spain, they've made things incredibly difficult for us -- in general play, in pressing and in set pieces," he said.

"Both teams have players with spectacular set-piece delivery -- I wouldn't want to face either of them," he admitted.

Portugal and Croatia were meeting in the round of 32 later on Thursday.

## Switzerland beat Algeria 2-0 to move into last 16



Johan Manzambi of Switzerland is challenged by Aissa Mandi of Algeria

AFP | Vancouver

Switzerland moved into the last 16 of the World Cup with a controlled 2-0 win against Algeria.

The effervescent Johan Manzambi created the first goal in Vancouver, surging down the left wing before crossing for Brel Embolo to tap in.

Dan Ndoye slotted in the second within a minute of the restart after half-time, controlling Rafik Belghali's weak clearance and shooting through a crowd of players.

Algeria 'keeper Luca Zidane was unable to get a strong enough hand to the ball on a

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African teams including Algeria have been eliminated at the last-32 stage

bitterly disappointing night for the north Africans.

Algeria join Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and South Africa as African teams to be knocked out so far at the last-32 stage. Only Morocco have progressed.