

# Joao Pedro fires Chelsea to final

Chelsea’s new signing nets both goals to defeat Fluminense and secure Club World Cup final spot

● Joao Pedro scores debut brace

● VAR denies Fluminense penalty

● All-European final guaranteed

AFP | East Rutherford

New signing Joao Pedro scored twice on his first start as Chelsea eased to a 2-0 win over Fluminense on Tuesday to seal a spot in the final of the Club World Cup.

The Brazilian striker opened the scoring in lethal fashion in the 18th minute of the last-four clash at the MetLife Stadium and struck again shortly before the hour mark as Chelsea set up a showdown with either Real Madrid or Paris Saint-Germain in Sunday’s final.

Signed from Brighton and Hove Albion last week for a reported £60 million (\$79 million), the 23-year-old cut short a holiday and made his debut off the bench in the quarter-final win over Palmeiras.

He was then given his first Chelsea start up front here in place of the suspended Liam Delap.

Joao Pedro refused to celebrate after either goal against the club with whom he started his career and made 36 top-team appearances before moving to England with Watford in 2020.

The result ends Fluminense’s impressive run at the tournament after the 2023 Copa Libertadores winners held Borussia Dortmund in the group stage, beat Inter Milan in the last 16 and knocked out Manchester City’s conquerors Al-Hilal in the quarter-finals.

With their exit go the prospects of a South American winner of the first 32-team Club World Cup, with Chelsea claiming back-to-back victories



Chelsea’s Brazilian forward #20 Joao Pedro scores his team’s second goal

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CHELSEA COACH ENZO MARESCA

against Brazilian opposition to reach the final.

As always seemed most likely, the trophy will be claimed by one of Europe’s superpowers, with the final now guaranteed to be between two of the last five winners of the UEFA Champions League.

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has been a fantastic season -- top four in the league, (winning) the Conference League and now in the final in this competition. We are so, so happy,” Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca told broadcaster DAZN.

“Now finally it is the last game of the season, we can say that, and hopefully we can win the tournament.”

Fluminense coach Renato Portaluppi had described his team as the “ugly duckling” of the tournament due to the enormous difference between their budget and those of the other three remaining sides.

This game ultimately proved to be a step too far for their team, captained by 40-year-old former Chelsea centre-back Thiago Silva.

“This was a wonderful Club World Cup,” said Portaluppi.

“There is no crying over spilled milk now. We wanted to get to the final for our fans but we leave with our heads held high, and go back to our reali-

ty stronger now than we were before.”

**Caicedo back**

Chelsea were without the suspended Levi Colwill and Delap but Moises Caicedo returned after a ban.

The Premier League side were simply too strong for their opponents in a game watched by

70,556 fans on a hot afternoon just outside New York City.

They went ahead thanks to a wonderful strike by their new forward, who controlled the ball on the edge of the box after Silva had cleared a Pedro Neto cross.

Joao Pedro took a touch and curled a shot beyond veteran goalkeeper Fabio into the far corner, before holding up his hands apologetically towards the Fluminense fans behind the goal.

The team from Rio de Janeiro were an intermittent threat, and Hercules -- match-winner against Al-Hilal in the last eight -- almost equalised in the 25th minute.

He played a one-two with German Cano and lifted the ball over goalkeeper Robert Sanchez, but Marc Cucurella cleared off the line.

Fluminense were then awarded a penalty 10 minutes before the interval when a set-piece delivery by Rene struck the arm of Trevoh Chalobah in the box.

However, French referee Francois Letexier overturned the decision following a VAR check.

“Had we been awarded the penalty we would have scored and it would have been a different story,” said Portaluppi.

Chelsea got their second on 56 minutes, just after Fluminense had sacrificed one of their three centre-backs to send on an extra attacker.

Enzo Fernandez released Joao Pedro on the break, and the forward produced another clinical finish in off the bar.

There were chances for Chelsea to score further goals after that, but the new boy’s double strike sufficed with the only potential black mark on the day the knock which forced Caicedo to limp off before full-time.

Joao Pedro reacts after scoring first goal



## Bahrain Paralympic Committee to compete at World Para Taekwondo Championships in Korea

TDT | Manama

A delegation from the Bahrain Paralympic Committee is currently in Chuncheon, South Korea, to participate in the prestigious 4-star World Open Para-Taekwondo Championship.

The event, sanctioned by the World Taekwondo Federation and running from July 8 to 12, 2025, has drawn approximately 200 athletes from across the globe.

The Bahraini contingent includes team administrator and coach Fajer Al-Banali, coach Tawfiq Nuwaiser, and athlete Ibrahim Radhwan. This marks Radhwan’s second international appearance and his debut in the Under 63kg category.

Bahrain’s participation aims to accumulate crucial international ranking points and gain invaluable experience by competing against top-tier opponents. Radhwan is set to compete in a highly contested cate-



Bahrain Paralympic Committee delegation ahead of their departure

gory featuring 24 athletes, 16 of whom hail from Asian nations. This makes the championship a vital strategic platform for assessing potential rivals ahead

of the upcoming Asian Championships.

Following the championship, the Bahraini team will remain in South Korea for an intensive

training camp from July 13 to 19. These preparations are designed to refine the athletes’ skills and enhance their readiness for the Asian Championships, scheduled to take place in Malaysia later this month.

## 3x3 basketball returns, Bahrain’s summer quest

● 19 teams compete in Bahrain’s open 3x3

● Six preliminary rounds lead to August final

TDT | Manama

Bahrain’s open 3x3 basketball tournament resumes with round four, featuring 19 teams and a path to international qualification.

The Bahrain Summer Open 3x3 restarts Friday at Khalifa Sports City Hall after a one-week break. Nineteen teams are competing in the first edition, with prize money over \$6,000.

This is the fourth of six preliminary rounds leading to the final “Quest” on August 1. The winner qualifies for a FIBA 3x3 Masters event.

This tournament is Bahrain’s first open 3x3 event offering over \$6,000 in prizes and a direct route to FIBA Masters qualification

Teams include clubs, companies, universities, and independent groups. The tournament has increased awareness and participation in 3x3 basketball in Bahrain.

The Bahrain Basketball Federation aims for high standards in organization and competition to support local talent’s entry into regional and international events.