

SPORTS

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Martinez hat-trick fires Argentina over Mexico



Argentina forward Lautaro Martinez shoots to score

AFP | San Antonio

Lautaro Martinez fired a 22-minute hat-trick as Argentina thrashed Mexico 4-0 in a friendly international in San Antonio on Tuesday.

Inter Milan striker Martinez scored in the 17th, 22nd and 39th minutes at the Alamodome to give Argentina a deserved win over a lacklustre Mexico team.

Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Leandro Paredes scored Argentina's other goal from the penalty spot after 33 minutes as the South American giants romped into a 4-0 lead at halftime.

But it was the 22-year-old Martinez who grabbed the headlines with a clinical exhibition of finishing which took his international goals tally to nine in 13 appearances.

Martinez opened the scor-

ing in the 17th minute, picking the ball up deep in Mexican territory before twisting and turning past several defenders and firing low past Guillermo Ochoa.

Martinez bagged his second five minutes later, with River Plate's Exequiel Palacios punishing sloppy play in the Mexican defence to send the Inter Milan striker through on goal to finish for 2-0.

A disastrous start for Mexico got worse shortly after the half-hour mark when Carlos Salcedo was adjudged to have handled in the area to concede a penalty. Paredes duly stepped up to convert to give Argentina a 3-0 lead.

Martinez completed his hat-trick six minutes from half-time, again capitalising on lackadaisical Mexican defending to dart in and shoot past Ochoa.

Abram strikes late as Peru down Brazil



Peru defender Luis Abram (2) battles for the header against Brazil

AFP | Los Angeles

Peru grabbed a slice of revenge for their loss to Brazil in the Copa America final on Tuesday, defeating the five-time World Cup winners 1-0 in a friendly in Los Angeles.

A headed goal from Argentina-based defender Luis Abram was enough to give Peru a hard-fought win over the Brazilians.

Brazil, who defeated Peru 3-1 in the final of the Copa America in Rio de Janeiro in July, never got going to the disappointment of a 32,287 crowd at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

The defeat brought an end to Brazil's 17-game winning streak, a run which started

with a victory over the United States just over a year ago.

Brazil coach Tite meanwhile opted against starting Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar, four days after he had made a successful return from injury with a goal and an assist in a 2-2 draw with Colombia on Friday.

Tite, who had been reluctant to start Neymar in back-to-back games as the striker regains fitness, brought on the PSG forward after 63 minutes in place of Liverpool's Roberto Firmino.

Neymar attempted to up the tempo in attack, but was unable to break the deadlock, with Brazil, who were also missing Dani Alves and Thiago Silva, struggling to find their usual attacking rhythm.

England edge spirited Kosovo

Sancho doubles sees England triumph in the eight-goal thriller and take total control of Euro 2020 qualifying group

● Kosovo netted after just 35 seconds following Michael Keane error

● Raheem Sterling, Harry Kane and an own goal soon saw England into 3-1 lead

● Jadon Sancho netted twice before the break to give hosts comfortable victory

Reuters | Southampton

England's march towards the Euro 2020 finals continued but not quite in the manner they might have expected as they beat a brave and enterprising Kosovo side 5-3 in an extraordinary Group A qualifier at St Mary's Stadium on Tuesday.

Valon Berisha gave 120th-ranked Kosovo the lead after 35 seconds but England hit back seven minutes later through Raheem Sterling's header and the rampant hosts led 5-1 at the interval with a double for teenager Jadon Sancho.

Kosovo, surprisingly second in the group just a point behind England at kickoff, were not about to depart the biggest night in their short footballing history quietly though and exposed worrying weaknesses in England's defence.

Within 10 minutes of the restart they had scored twice through Berisha and a penalty by Vedat Muriqi, rattling England and leaving manager Gareth Southgate frowning.

"Whether it was the intensity of the game, whether it was the pressure, I don't know," Southgate said.



Jadon Sancho of England scores his sides fourth goal



England were poor at the back but sensational up front in a match that was wildly entertaining from the very first kick

"In many ways it was a better experience than strolling through the game at five, six (goals) or whatever, even though we probably all could have done without it."

Harry Kane, who scored Eng-

land's second goal, had a penalty saved by Arijanet Muric and Sterling then hit the post but Kosovo were still going forward until the final whistle and Bersant Celina went close to making it 5-4.

England, who conceded three at home for the first time since 2012, lead the group with a maximum 12 points having scored 19 goals in the process. Kosovo dropped to third with eight points, one behind the Czech Republic who beat Montenegro 3-0 away.

"We've seen the high level and we lost some unnecessary balls and were immediately in danger," said Kosovo manager Bernard Challandes, who was upbeat despite the defeat.

"We've seen in such situations

how we can do better. But if we see the second half we can be proud of this team, they showed good football and they don't give up — they play as a team."

Kosovo, who had been on a 15-match unbeaten run coming into the England game, will still believe they can qualify for their first tournament finals, just four years after gaining international status from world soccer's governing body FIFA.

England can clinch qualification for the finals with a win away to the Czech Republic in their next game on Oct. 11.

Southgate had warned beforehand of Kosovo's threat and it took only 35 seconds to materialise, albeit from a dreadful mistake by England defender Michael Keane.

USA thwart Uruguay in friendly draw

AFP | Los Angeles

The United States halted their two-game losing streak after Jordan Morris's second-half goal was enough to secure a 1-1 draw with Uruguay in a friendly international in St. Louis on Tuesday.

Gregg Berhalter's side had been looking to bounce back after being comprehensively outplayed in a 3-0 loss to Mexico in New Jersey last Friday.

However the USA struggled to make much an impression against an under-strength Uruguay in humid conditions at Busch Stadium, better known as the home of baseball's St. Louis Cardinals.

Uruguay, missing star strikers Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani, were barely troubled by the USA in the first half.

The South Americans should have taken the lead after only six minutes when Mexi-



Uruguay midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur battles with the United States' Tyler Boyd

co-based striker Jonathan Rodriguez burst into the area only to scuff his attempted finish.

Cristian Roldan missed a chance to equalise for the USA on 10 minutes, but his downward header was well saved by Uruguay goalkeeper Fernando Muslera.

Tyler Boyd then squandered an even better chance for the hosts, somehow scooping over

from point blank range after Morris had beaten Martin Caceres down the left before delivering a perfect cross into the area.

The Americans had a let off moments later when goalkeeper Brad Guzan spilled a routine cross and needed a desperate block from Fulham's Tim Ream to deny Matias Vecino's effort.

Van der Poel leads Tour of Britain

Reuters | London

Dutchman Mathieu van der Poel claimed victory on the fourth stage of the Tour of Britain with an audacious attack 300 metres from the line in Kendal on Tuesday.

After a challenging day in the Pennines and Lake District featuring three categorised climbs the Correndon-Circus rider sprinted clear of a reduced peloton to take the stage win, making up for his near miss on Monday.

Van der Poel's win saw him replace Matteo Trentin as the overall leader by one second.

"It's really nice to win this stage; it was a really hard stage, a lot of climbing and I think my team rode it perfectly," he said at the finish.