

Late Larin goal rescues Canada point

Hussain Almaskati

Co-hosts Canada were held to a 1-1 draw by Bosnia and Herzegovina in their Group B opener at Toronto Stadium yesterday, after a match in which both sides created major chances but neither could find a winner.

Bosnia, making only their second World Cup appearance after Brazil 2014, struck first in the 21st minute through Jovo Lukic, who headed home from close range after Sead Kolašinac flicked on a corner. The well-worked set piece punished Canada's early territorial dominance and handed the visitors a surprise lead.

Despite controlling possession and territory for long spells, Jesse Marsch's side struggled to convert their pressure into goals in the first half. Their clearest opportunity came in the 33rd minute when Tani Oluweseji broke into space inside the box but leaned back and volleyed over.

Bosnia went into half-time leading 1-0, having offered little from open play but proving clinical from their only real attacking routine.

Canada pushed forward immediately after the break and came close again early in the second half when Oluweseji turned sharply in the box and forced a strong save from Nikola Vasilj. Moments later, Bosnia had a golden opportunity of their own, with Ermedin Demirovi released one-on-one, only for Maxime Crépeau to make a crucial save with his foot.

The game continued to swing end-to-end. In the 54th minute,



Cyle Larin reacts after levelling for Canada against Bosnia

Canada struck the woodwork when Richie Laryea's low effort was deflected onto the crossbar following slick build-up play. Moments later, Bosnia survived another scare as Hadzi-ahmetovi cleared Oluweseji's header off the line from a dangerous Shaffelburg cross.

The breakthrough finally came in the 78th minute when Jonathan David combined with Ismael Kone before finding substitute Cyle Larin. Larin held off his defender and fired low into the bottom corner as the stadium erupted.

Canada pushed for a late winner, but Bosnia held firm through added pressure to secure a point from a tightly contested Group B opener.

The result leaves Canada still searching for a first World Cup win on home soil, while Bosnia will take encouragement from a disciplined defensive display and a well-taken set-piece goal.

Canada will next face Qatar on home soil on July 19 at 1:00 AM, while Bosnia will take on Switzerland a day earlier at 10:00 PM. Both times are shown in Bahrain time.

Bahrain to host FIA WEC for next ten years



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The FIA World Endurance Championship will continue to visit Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) until at least 2036, following a long-term extension of the Middle Eastern venue's agreement with the series.

One of the events that constituted the calendar in FIA WEC's inaugural campaign back in 2012, BIC has hosted 14 races to-date - with only Le Mans' legendary Circuit de la Sarthe and Belgium's Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps having welcomed the championship more often. It has been a regular venue for the final race of the season, crowning countless champions over the years.

Initially taking place over six hours, in recent seasons, the duration of the race has increased to eight hours - putting drivers and cars firmly to the test as they battle from day into night against the backdrop of the Sakhir desert.

With up to 54 gear changes per lap and top speeds approaching 300km/h, the de-

manding 5.412km layout is a real test of driver skill, with its wide nature encouraging audacious overtaking manoeuvres and generating countless captivating battles over the years.

Beyond the race weekend, BIC has frequently staged the annual Rookie Test and end-of-season Prizegiving ceremony, with the 2027 edition of the Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain announced to take place on 4-6 November next year. The 2026 race weekend is scheduled for 5-7 November.

Frédéric Lequien, CEO, FIA World Endurance Championship, said:

"We are delighted to have renewed our contract with Bahrain International Circuit. Since first featuring on the FIA World Endurance Championship calendar 14 years ago, it has firmly established itself as a popular stop on the schedule, with a tremendously warm welcome from the enthusiastic local team and superb organisation from start-to-finish. We look forward to many more exciting

showdowns in Sakhir!"

Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, Chief Executive of Bahrain International Circuit, said:

"Our new contract with FIA WEC continues Bahrain's long-term commitment to elite motorsport, and we are proud of our shared history with the pinnacle of endurance racing. Since our partnership began in the inaugural season of 2012, FIA WEC has developed to become an integral part of the global motorsport calendar, with participation and fan attendance continuing to grow at an impressive rate. In Bahrain, the event remains a major highlight of our racing season and we continue to see record crowds every year.

"We are therefore delighted that the spirit of Le Mans will continue in Bahrain through the 20th anniversary of the series and well beyond. We thank the whole FIA WEC community for placing their trust in us as we embark upon the next phase of our partnership with shared optimism and excitement for the future."

South Korea fight back to defeat Czech Republic 2-1

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South Korea came from behind to secure a 2-1 victory over the Czech Republic in their opening Group A match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup at Guadalajara Stadium yesterday, overturning a second-half deficit to join Mexico at the top of the group.

South Korea looked the more threatening side for much of the first half and controlled large spells of possession, but they

were unable to find a breakthrough before the interval. The Czech Republic, meanwhile, relied largely on set pieces and counter-attacking opportunities as both sides went into the break level.

Despite South Korea's dominance, it was the Czech Republic who opened the scoring against the run of play in the 59th minute through captain Ladislav Krejci. The goal came from a familiar source, with Vladimir Coufal - who registered eight assists for Hoffenheim during the Bundesliga season - launching a long throw into the penalty area. The delivery reached the edge of the six-yard box, where an unmarked Krejci timed his leap perfectly before guiding his header beyond goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu.

South Korea responded positively and found an equaliser just eight minutes later through Hwang In-



Supporters create a lively atmosphere ahead of kick-off

beom. Lee Kang-in received a pass from Lee Gi-hyuk deep in midfield and turned sharply before threading an incisive ball through the Czech defensive lines and into the penalty area.

Hwang controlled the pass superbly, drawing goalkeeper Matej Kovar off his line before cutting back onto his right foot with impressive balance. The midfielder left defender Robin Hranac sliding desperately across the turf before delicately

chipping a finish that trickled into the far corner.

The Czech Republic thought they had restored their advantage in the 78th minute through another set-piece routine. Michal Sadilek delivered a freekick into the danger area and the ball was headed home by West Ham United midfielder Tomas Soucek. Celebrations, however, were cut short as the offside flag was raised, ensuring the scores remained level.



Empty seats were visible despite the official attendance of 45,664

ing stages. A well-worked move saw Adam Hložek drive into the penalty area before shifting the ball to Mojmir Chytil, whose first-time pass back towards the penalty spot found an unmarked Sadilek.

With only Kim Seung-gyu to beat, the midfielder appeared destined to score, but the South Korean goalkeeper reacted brilliantly, scrambling off his line to make a crucial save and preserve his side's lead.

Just two minutes later, South Korea completed the turnaround. The dramatic swing in momentum inside Guadalajara Stadium continued as Seung-ho Paik produced a sweeping first-time pass over the Czech defence into the path of Hwang In-beom.

The midfielder continued his run down the flank before delivering a low cross into the penalty area, where substitute Oh Hyun-gyu arrived to finish first time beyond Kovar. The goal came only 11 minutes after the forward had entered the match.

The Czech Republic pushed for a late equaliser and came agonisingly close in the clos-

South Korea held on through the remaining minutes to secure all three points and complete an impressive comeback victory, while the Czech Republic were left to rue missed opportunities after seeing a second-half lead slip away.

Looking ahead, South Korea will face co-hosts Mexico on June 19 at 4am at Guadalajara Stadium, with both sides seeking to build on opening-day victories.

The Czech Republic will take on South Africa on June 18 at 7pm as both teams look to recover from defeats in their first group-stage matches. Both times are in Bahrain time.