

SPORTS  
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# Coutinho brace helps Brazil beat Bolivia

● Philippe Coutinho scored two goals and caused havoc with his corners as hosts Brazil opened the Copa America with a 3-0 win over Bolivia

AFP | Sao Paulo, Brazil

A brace from Philippe Coutinho handed hosts Brazil a winning start to the Copa America on Friday in a 3-0 victory over Bolivia as the absence of superstar Neymar was quickly forgotten.

Barcelona's Coutinho scored from the penalty spot early in the second half and added a close-range header three minutes later.

Substitute Everton netted a sensational third five minutes from time to clinch a Group A victory for coach Tite's tournament favorites in Sao Paulo.

The build-up to the competition had been dominated by Neymar's woes, firstly when he was accused of rape by a Brazilian model, and then when he damaged ankle ligaments in a friendly last week, forcing him out of the Copa.

If Brazil's first half performance was anything to go by, the Paris Saint-Germain star was sorely missed, but Coutinho's brace at least silenced the jeers that met the team at half-time.

"Whistles are part of the



Brazil's Philippe Coutinho (2-L) scores a header against Bolivia

game, the fans want us to win and play well, so that's why they jeer," said the match-winner, whose goals papered over the cracks of an at times disjointed performance.

"We always want their support but we're focused on the objective, which is the match," Coutinho told Brazil's SportTV. "Whistles or cheers, the important thing is to stay focused and get the win."

Brazil made a bright start and predictably dominated the early possession and chances.

But surprisingly their greatest threat came from set-pieces with Coutinho's corner delivery causing panic in the Bolivian backline.

Bolivia's goalkeeper Carlos Lampe made an instinctive



**Neymar was ruled out of the Copa America because of an ankle injury**

block from a Roberto Firmino flick that came straight at him.

And a few minutes later, towering center-half Thiago Silva was left unmarked eight yards out to meet another Coutinho delivery, but he inexplicably

headed well wide.

The pitch at the Morumbi stadium wasn't helping flowing football, with Bolivia in particular struggling to string passes together.

"We've got to be honest, Brazil beat us and beat us well," said Bolivia coach Eduardo Villegas.

Brazil, wearing white shirts and blue shorts, weaved almost geometric patterns around their unambitious visitors but struggled to test Lampe.

Their best chances came from Bolivian mistakes and Richarlison should have scored into an open goal when a woeful Lampe clearance went straight to him, but the Everton forward failed to lift the ball over defender Adrian Jusino, who headed clear from the edge of the 18-yard box.

## Barrage of jeers

With 10 men behind the ball, Bolivia were proving hard to break down but Casemiro went close with what appeared to be a shanked cross that drifted just beyond Lampe's far post with the goalkeeper scrambling to cover it.

Tite's team were treated to a barrage of jeers from the 67,000 crowd when the half-time whistle went.

Bolivia's best moment had perhaps been a cheeky nutmeg of Casemiro by Raul Castro on the edge of his own 18-yard box. It had been slim pickings.

Fans' spirits were quickly lifted after the restart, though, as Coutinho fired home from the spot on 50 minutes after a contentious penalty award.

Richarlison's attempted cross struck Jusino's arm, which was by his side and only slightly away from his body, but after consulting the video assistant referee, Argentine handler Nestor Pitana pointed to the spot.

Bolivia were stunned and just three minutes later their defence went missing as Firmino reached the bye line and chipped the ball to the back post for Coutinho to head home from barely two yards out.

Reluctant to push men forward, Bolivia never looked like getting back into the match.

"If you want to qualify (for the knock-out stages) you have to attack a little more," admitted Villegas.

## F1 to award superlicence points to Friday drivers

Reuters | London

Formula One hopefuls will be able to earn superlicence points through taking part in Friday free practice sessions at grands prix next season, the governing FIA announced on Friday.

All drivers require a superlicence to debut in Formula One and need to acquire 40 points through racing in other series across three seasons.

A free practice only superlicence requires at least 25 points.

The FIA said holders of such a limited superlicence would be granted an additional point per Formula One world championship event if they did at least 100km in a session without incurring any penalty points.

"A maximum total of 10 such additional points may be awarded per driver for free practice sessions over a three year period," it added.

The new all-female W Series, which started this year, will also be eligible for points from 2020. The FIA did not say how many would be awarded to the winner.

## Windies all-rounder Brathwaite reprimanded for showing dissent



West Indies' Carlos Brathwaite during nets

Reuters | London

West Indies all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite has received an official reprimand and one demerit point for showing dissent to an umpire's decision during the World Cup match against England, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said yesterday.

Brathwaite showed his displeasure after he was adjudged caught behind off England fast bowler Jofra Archer during the 44th over of the West Indies innings on Friday.

"Brathwaite admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by David Boon of the Emirates Elite Panel of ICC Match Referees and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing," the ICC said in a statement.

Four demerit points within a two-year period incurs a ban from one test or two one-dayers or two T20Is, whatever comes first for the player.



Junior players with their certificate confirming their official ranks during a ranking event conducted by Bahrain Tennis Academy (BTA). Invited players participated in matches against other academy players in a round-robin format in three age groups: 8-and-under, 10-and-under and 12-and-under at the Dilmun Club, Saar. At the end of proceedings players were presented with certificates. Keagan Fernandes (8-and-under), Abdulaziz Al Betairi (10-and-under) and Rohan Mukherjee (12-and-under) achieved the number one ranking in their respective age groups

## Root is England's glue, says Morgan

Reuters | Southampton

England captain Eoin Morgan heaped praise on batsman Joe Root whose polished century led the team to an emphatic eight-wicket Cricket World Cup victory over West Indies on Friday.

Root was pushed up the order to open after Jason Roy sustained a hamstring injury, and

he responded with his second century of the tournament as the hosts secured their third win in four matches.

"Exceptionally pleased, I think he is now the highest run scorer in the tournament," Morgan told a news conference.

"He's scored two hundreds. He's such an important player for us. He is the glue that holds everything together."

Root struck 11 fours and faced only 94 balls in his 100 not out as England strolled to a target of 213 with nearly 17 overs to spare, fuelling their hopes of winning the World Cup for the first time.

"It's probably a side of his batting that has got better over the last two or three years that people haven't seen a lot of, his expansive game," Morgan said.

## Barty looking forward to fresh start on grass

Reuters | London

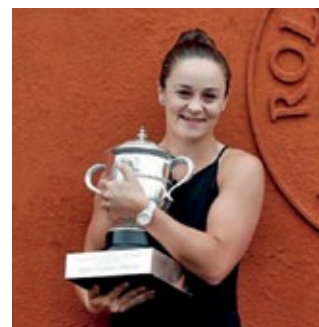
Newly-crowned French Open champion Ashleigh Barty is looking forward to a fresh start as she gets ready to begin her build-up to Wimbledon on Birmingham's grass-courts next week.

Against most people's predictions the 23-year-old Australian notched up her first Grand Slam title on Parisian clay rather than the lawns to which her all-court game is most suited.

All eyes will now be on the world number two as she attempts to do something only six women have ever achieved – win the French Open and Wimbledon back to back.

"In all honesty this is a fresh start, a clean slate and a new season, jumping on the grass," Barty told reporters on Friday at the Edgbaston club which again has attracted a high-class field ahead of next month's Wimbledon.

"I'm excited to be here in Birmingham. This is a time of year that I love playing ten-



Australia's Ashleigh Barty poses with the trophy at the Roland Garros

nis. It's one of the best times of the year. The bonus is I've been playing a lot of tennis and hitting a lot of balls. Now it's about adjusting to the surface.

"But I find it an easy adjustment to make. I feel fresh; I feel good."

Barty, a former junior Wimbledon champion who quit tennis in 2014 to play first-class cricket, said she was still enjoying the glow of her achievement in Paris where she beat Czech youngster Marketa Vondrousova to become the first Australian woman for 46 years to win the Roland Garros title.