

SPORTS
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Uruguay crush 10-man Ecuador

● Suarez, Cavani score as Uruguay cruise past 10-man Ecuador in Copa America opener

● Uruguay earn comfortable 4-0 win over rivals

AFP | Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani were on target as Uruguay thumped 10-man Ecuador 4-0 in their opening Group C match at the Copa America on Sunday.

Nicolas Lodeiro opened the scoring after just six minutes before Ecuador full-back Jose Quintero was dismissed for a flailing arm.

With a numerical advantage, Uruguay ran riot at the Mineirao stadium in Belo Horizonte as Cavani and Suarez netted before the break. The rout was completed 12 minutes from time with an Arturo Mina own goal.

"We had chances in the first half, we managed to take them and that gave us the tranquility to manage the game," said Cavani, who finally scored his first Copa America goal in his fourth participation.

"It was an important step."

It was the ideal beginning for Uruguay in a tough Group C alongside champions Chile and guests Japan, who meet on Monday in Sao Paulo.

"We're not as bad as that,"



Uruguay's Luis Suarez celebrates after scoring against Ecuador

lamented Ecuador's Colombian coach Hernan Dario Gomez.

"It was a match that got away from us, especially in the first half when it got away from us in every aspect."

Uruguay were off to a dream start.

Suarez crossed from the right and Lodeiro proved the coolest customer in the Mineirao stadium as he beat one defender with his chest control, flicked the ball over another and then hit a crisp, low volley into the bottom far corner.

"We knew they would be very tough opponents. The important thing was start the game with maximum concentration and we managed that," said Cavani.

Uruguay were rampant and had the ball in the net soon af-

terwards only for Cavani to be given offside in the build-up.

Ecuador brought a physicality to the contest that upset the Uruguayan players and Quintero was perhaps lucky to escape punishment when catching Diego Laxalt with an elbow in an aerial challenge.

But moments later, his arm made contact with Lodeiro's face when challenging for another header, this time drawing blood.

Brazilian referee Anderson Daronco -- whose bulging arm muscles put even Ecuador's strapping players to shame -- initially showed the full-back a yellow card but after consulting VAR he changed that to red.

That left Ecuador with a mountain to climb.

"We had chances in the first half, we managed to take them and that gave us the tranquility to manage the game. It was an important step

EDINSON CAVANI

On 27 minutes, Alexander Dominguez made a brilliant low save to turn behind Cavani's half-volley from 15 yards.

Paris Saint-Germain forward Cavani was denied again when Dominguez stunningly tipped his clever back-flick onto the

post one-handed.

But it was third time lucky on 33 minutes as Diego Godin headed the ball into the danger area and Cavani acrobatically rasped a bicycle kick from seven yards past a helpless Dominguez, his 47th international goal.

Patient Uruguay

Nahitan Nandez wasted a good chance, shooting straight at Dominguez but Suarez put the game to bed a minute before the break, stealing in at the back post to poke home a flick-on from Martin Caceres.

With the game all but over as a contest, the second half was a damp squib of an affair.

Uruguay had the ball in the net soon after the restart but Cavani was offside again.

Ecuador showed plenty of commitment, continuing to rough up Uruguay's more technical players, but never looked like they believed they would get anything out of the game.

Uruguay looked content to play a patient possession game without pushing for more goals.

Cavani did send Suarez scampering in on goal after a defensive mistake but Dominguez was quickly off his line to snatch the ball off the Barcelona forward's toes.

The fourth came in calamitous fashion as Gaston Pereiro tried to pick out Suarez from Cavani's cross even though he was only six yards from goal.

His header dropped to Ecuador center-half Mina, who inadvertently volleyed into his own goal.

Brave and Shaikh Khalid praised for 'stepping up' in MMA development

TDI | Manama

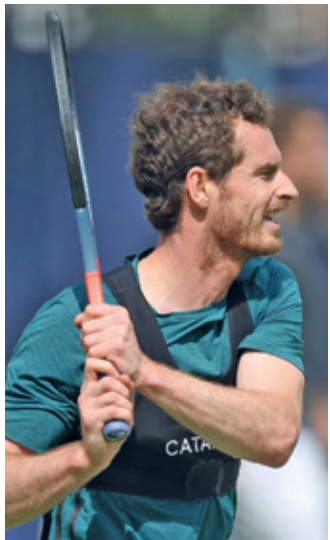
Brave Combat Federation and Kingdom of Bahrain have been praised for the roles they have played in development of mixed martial arts on a grass-roots level.

IMMAF-WMMMAA president Kerrith Brown was recently in Bahrain for the announcement of the third edition of the International Combat Week, which will take place in the second week of November, alongside the IMMAF-WMMMAA World Championships, and having the biggest BRAVE event in the year as its crowning moment.

Brown spoke of his excitement at, once again, joining forces with BRAVE, Bahrain, and the Bahraini MMA Federation, and hailed their involvement in the vision of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, as well as their help in the growth of MMA in the most basic level.

"HH Shaikh Khalid has worked very hard to help us deliver an amazing event, by giving the athletes all the conditions possible so they can be able to put on world-class performances when it matters. Our relationships with BRAVE and His Highness are the best possible. We have the same visions and goals for the sport. They have stepped up to the plate in terms of understanding our vision and putting the sport at the highest level and I'm thankful to be partners with them", said Brown.

'Life-changing' operation rekindles returning Murray's love of tennis



Andy Murray looks sharp during a practice session at Queens

Reuters | London

Andy Murray has said that surgery helped him rediscover his passion for tennis as he prepares to make his comeback at Queen's Club this week.

The 32-year-old will feature in the men's doubles alongside Spaniard Feliciano Lopez on Wednesday, five months after undergoing a hip resurfacing operation.

"There have been a number of times over the past 18 months where I did want to stop," he said.

"I didn't want to play anymore. I was getting no enjoyment out of tennis at all, whether that be training, practice, matches.

"I wasn't bothered about winning matches either because it wasn't fun. Now I like playing tennis, getting out on the court and hitting balls. I want to keep playing if I can because I enjoy it."

Murray said at the Australian Open in January that he intended to retire after Wimbledon due to crippling pain that stopped him from doing everyday tasks like pulling on socks.

The three-time Grand Slam winner admitted that the progress he has made since then has been better than anticipated.

"I didn't expect to be in this position," said the former world number one.

"I didn't know how it would feel if I went and had the operation. But it has been brilliant, completely life-changing for me from where I was.



Salah in action with Guinea's Aly Keita

Salah helps Egypt to another warm-up victory

AFP | Johannesburg, South Africa

Egypt superstar Mohamed Salah came off the bench but did not score as the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations hosts defeated fellow qualifiers Guinea 3-1 Sunday in a warm-up match.

Marwan Mohsen gave the Pharaohs an early lead in Alexandria that was cancelled by Sory Kaba midway through the second half.

Ahmed Ali, recalled for the Cup of Nations after a lengthy

absence from the national squad, put Egypt ahead again and Omar Gaber scored a late goal to ensure victory.

It was the second warm-up victory for Egypt, who defeated qualifiers Tanzania 1-0 three days ago at the same stadium.

Egypt are in Group A with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Zimbabwe for the June 21-July 19 tournament as they seek a record-extending eighth African title.

While Egypt are on a winning streak, serious title contend-

ers Morocco suffered a second home loss in a row as they fell 3-2 to non-qualifiers Zambia.

Ajax Amsterdam star Hakim Ziyech equalised twice for a team considered one of the biggest threats to title favourites Egypt only for Enock Mwepu to snatch a 75th-minute winner.

Morocco, who lost to the Gambia last Wednesday, are guided by Frenchman Herve Renard, the only coach to win the Cup of Nations with different countries.

Sarfraz refuses to blame senior men for Pakistan's troubles

Reuters | Manchester

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed refused to put the blame for his team's defeat to India and poor World Cup on the senior players, saying all his squad needed to step up their game.

India's comprehensive victory at Old Trafford left Pakistan in ninth place after just one win from five matches and needing a huge turnaround in form to have any chance of making the semi-finals.

Pakistan were outclassed with India making 336 for five and apart from a 104-run second-wicket partnership between Fakhar Zaman and Babar Azam, Pakistan never looked like mounting a real challenge.

"It definitely is very disappointing. It is hard. We were going really well, especially if you talk about our batting. I thought, when we lost the first wicket, Imam and Fakhar, they made a good partnership," Sarfraz said.