

DR Congo Hold Portugal as Ronaldo Misfires

Hussain Almaskati

Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal were held to a surprising 1-1 draw by DR Congo in their opening Group K match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup on Wednesday.

The result earned DR Congo their first-ever World Cup point in a performance that matched, and at times unsettled, one of the tournament favourites.

Portugal made the perfect start, taking the lead after just five minutes at Houston Stadium. João Neves continued his impressive rise with a well-placed header from Pedro Neto's inviting cross.

Despite dominating possession and finishing the first half with 80 percent of the ball, Roberto Martinez's side struggled to convert that control into meaningful attacking opportunities. DR Congo, meanwhile, posed a genuine threat on the counter-attack and registered six shots before the break — three times as many as Portugal.

The Leopards were rewarded moments before halftime when Yoane Wissa guided a header beyond Diogo Costa to level the score at 1-1, netting DR Congo's first-ever World Cup goal.

Portugal thought they had restored their lead nine minutes into the second half when João Cancelo acrobatically found the net with a bicycle kick. However, the effort was correctly ruled out for offside in the build-up.

Much of the pre-match attention centred on Ronaldo's sixth



Axel Tuanzebe challenges former Manchester United teammate Cristiano Ronaldo

World Cup appearance. The 41-year-old entered the match under the spotlight after Lionel Messi, his long-time rival, scored a stunning hat-trick in Argentina's 3-0 victory over Algeria the previous night. Kylian Mbappé and Erling Haaland had also opened their tournaments with braces, adding intrigue to the early Golden Boot race.

Ronaldo had a golden opportunity to put Portugal back in front with 20 minutes remaining. A pass arriving slightly be-

hind him disrupted his control, and the ball ricocheted awkwardly off his leg before rolling wide of the post.

Minutes later, a superb through ball from Bruno Fernandes split the DR Congo defence and created another opening for Ronaldo, but the veteran forward was quickly closed down and could only send a tame effort wide.

Neither side created a clear-cut chance in the closing stages. Portugal pushed for a winner, but DR Congo's discipline en-

ured the scores remained level. Portugal will still be expected to top Group K, but there are clear areas for improvement. Despite controlling possession, they lacked cutting edge in the final third and will need to be more clinical as the tournament progresses.

DR Congo, meanwhile, have already made history. Having secured both their first World Cup goal and point, the Leopards will believe they have a genuine chance of reaching the Round of 32.

Everything to play for as Switzerland meet Bosnia in LA

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Switzerland meet Bosnia-Herzegovina in a key World Cup Group B fixture at Los Angeles Stadium, with both sides still searching for a first win after opening draws. Kick-off is set for 10pm Bahrain time.

The group remains wide open after all four teams began with 1-1 results, meaning any victory here could significantly shape qualification hopes heading into the final round of matches.

Switzerland were seconds away from beating Qatar in their opener before a stoppage-time own goal denied them victory. It was a frustrating finish for Murat Yakin's side, who had controlled long periods of the match but failed to see it out.

Bosnia also dropped points after taking the lead against Canada in Toronto. Jov Lovric put them ahead in the first half, but they were pegged back

after the break in a 1-1 draw. Switzerland have lost just once in their last eight World Cup group matches and have scored in nine of their last 10 finals group games, underlining their consistency at this stage of tournaments.

Bosnia, meanwhile, are unbeaten in nine internationals under Sergej Barbarez, although six consecutive draws highlight a lack of cutting edge in attack.

The only previous meeting between the sides came in a friendly in 2016, when Bosnia won 2-0 in Zurich.



Swiss captain Granit Khaka

Bahrain boxing teams begin Sarajevo campaign



Bahrain's young boxing talent with coaches and officials

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's youth and junior national boxing teams begin competition today at the International Olympic Hopes Boxing Tournament in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which runs from 18 to 21 June.

The tournament follows the squad's completion of a 20-day training camp in Bosnia, where preparations focused on technical development, physical conditioning, and international sparring ahead of competition.

The Olympic Hopes event is a key developmental platform for U15, U17, and U19 boxers and forms part of the World Boxing pathway recognised by the International Olympic

Committee for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic cycle.

Bahrain's squad includes Saif Ahmed, Hassan Jamsheer, Ibrahim Amin, James Ingham, Yousif Moosa, Mohammed Moamen, Ali Aman, Jayden Price, and Mohammed Attiya.

The team is led by head coach John Conlan, with assistant coach Mohammed Naseem also part of the delegation. Maryam Khamis also joins the group as part of her development programme; she will take part in the training camp but will not compete in the tournament.

Bahrain will now aim to convert their preparation into competitive performances against a strong international field in Sarajevo.

Haaland double fires Norway past Iraq

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Norway opened their 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign with a 4-1 victory over Iraq at Boston Stadium, with Erling Haaland once again the decisive figure. The result sends them top of Group I alongside France, with Senegal also in the group.

Both sides returned to the global stage for the first time this century, but it was Norway's star striker who made the difference. Haaland struck twice in the first half to set the tone for a dominant opening win, with Leo Østigård also on the score-sheet and an own goal completing the scoring late on.

The breakthrough arrived in the 29th minute after a patient move involving 14 passes ended with David Møller Wolfe delivering from the left, allowing



Erling Haaland celebrates after giving Norway the lead

elled

10 minutes later when Aymen Hussein rose highest to meet

Amir Al-Ammari's chipped cross, becoming just the second Iraqi player to ever score at a World Cup finals.

However, parity lasted only until just before half-time. A mistake in possession allowed Haaland to pounce on a loose ball between Zaid Tahseen and Jalal Hassan; the striker's pressure forced the goalkeeper into a costly error that restored Norway's lead.

Iraq still had chances to equalise before the break, but Ibrahim Bayesh, Ali Al-Hamadi and Akam Hashim all failed to convert promising opportunities.

The second half produced fewer clear chances, but Norway extended their lead in the 76th minute when substitute Leo Østigård powered home a header from a corner.

Deep into stoppage time, Iraq's misery was compounded when Aymen Hussein inadvertently turned the ball into his own net under pressure from Kristian Thorstvedt, sealing a comprehensive 4-1 defeat.