

Lightning start sends Morocco past Scotland

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TDT | Manama

Morocco defeated Scotland 1-0 in Group C of the FIFA World Cup 2026 at Boston Stadium, with Ismael Saibari's early strike proving enough. The striker scored after just 71 seconds, a lead the North Africans held for the rest of the match to move closer to a place in the round of 32.

The breakthrough came almost immediately after kickoff. Saibari latched onto a pass from Brahim Díaz, slipped in behind the Scottish defence, and struck into the far top corner beyond goalkeeper Angus Gunn. His effort was not only the fastest goal of the tournament so far, but also his second of the campaign.

From there, Morocco took control of the first half, playing with confidence and fluency. Their quick combinations in tight spaces, built on one-touch passing, flicks, and backheels, made it difficult for Scotland to settle or disrupt their rhythm. The Atlas Lions looked sharper and more composed in possession throughout the opening period.

After the break, Steve Clarke's



Morocco coach Mohamed Ouahbi addresses his players after the final whistle

side raised their intensity and pushed higher up the pitch, but Morocco still carried a greater attacking threat. The closest they came to extending their

lead was shortly after halftime, when Saibari's effort was deflected onto the crossbar.

Ismael Saibari celebrates after netting the winner

Scotland appealed for a penalty in the 82nd minute after Scott McTominay went down under pressure from Neil El Aynaoui. There looked

to be contact on McTominay's lower leg inside the box, but referee Ilgiz Tantashev waved away the appeals, with VAR also deciding not to intervene.

Despite late pressure, Morocco remained organised and saw out the result to secure a valuable victory.

The win leaves Morocco on four points following their 1-1 draw with Brazil in their opening match, with a final group game against Haiti still to come. Scotland stay on three points after their 1-0 win over Haiti and will face Brazil in their last fixture, with qualification for the knockout stage still in play.

Morocco continue to look like serious contenders on the world stage, building on the momentum of their 2022 semi-final run under Regragui, when they became the first Arab and African nation to reach the last four. Now led by Mohamed Ouahbi, who guided Morocco's U-20 side to the 2025 FIFA U-20 World Cup title, expectations remain high that they can go even further this time.

Almirón Red Card as Paraguay Shock Turkey in World Cup Clash

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Paraguay boosted their hopes of reaching the knockout stage with a 1-0 win over Turkey in a fiery World Cup clash that ended in controversy and elimination for the Europeans. Paraguay struck just 64 seconds in when Matías Galarza fired home from outside the box, scoring the fastest goal of the tournament and what proved to be the winner.

The match turned dramatic in first-half stoppage time when Miguel Almirón was shown a red card after a VAR review for covering his mouth during an on-field confrontation with Turkey defender Mert Müldür.

Turkey are out of the World Cup after failing to score in two games

Referee Ivan Barton dismissed the former Newcastle United midfielder under a newly introduced tournament rule, forcing Paraguay to play the entire second half with

men.

Despite overwhelming control, Turkey could not break through Paraguay's defence. They created numerous chances, hit the woodwork once, and registered only one shot on target from 12 attempts in the match.

Substitute Deniz Gül and Can Uzun both came close late on, while Merih Demiral also tested the goalkeeper after the break, but the equaliser never arrived. Australia's earlier results combined with this defeat mean Turkey are eliminated after two group-stage losses without scoring a goal.

Paraguay, meanwhile, remain in contention and will qualify for the last 32 if they beat Australia in their final Group D match.



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Pogacar pips Van der Poel to Swiss Tour TT win

Aarburg, Switzerland

Tadej Pogacar extended his Tour of Switzerland lead after sensationally pipping his one-day classics rival Mathieu van der Poel by just three tenths of a second in Saturday's individual time-trial. Starting last as the race leader, world champion Pogacar drilled his effort over the 23.7km route around Aarburg as hard as he could, right to the line, and it proved enough to deny Van der Poel a morale-boosting

victory.

"I felt great. I didn't know I was fighting for the win. I knew it was close," said Pogacar, who has won two of the first four stages and is the overwhelming favourite for Sunday's finale in the high mountains.

"I was just trying to go all out to the finish and I'm really happy with the win."

"It's a great race and I'm happy to take a second win and I'll go out for another one tomorrow."

Pogacar now has 11 wins this season in just 15 race days.



Brazil cruise past Haiti to re-ignite World Cup campaign

AFP

Matheus Cunha scored twice as Brazil eased past Haiti 3-0 on Friday to breathe life into their World Cup campaign and close in on a spot in the last 32.

After a much-criticised display in their opening 1-1 draw with Morocco, the five-time world champions underlined the gulf in class with outsiders Haiti, who became the first country to exit this World Cup.

Cunha's scruffy goal in Philadelphia gave Brazil the lead midway through the first half, and he struck again as Carlo Ancelotti's side asserted their dominance. Vinicius Junior added a third before the break.

Brazil play Scotland in their final Group C

game in Miami on June 24.

Haiti's first World Cup appearance since 1974 will end after they play Morocco in Atlanta.

The Selecao currently have the edge over Morocco for top spot on goal difference. If they finish first, they would face

the Group F runners-up -- likely to be the Netherlands, Japan or Sweden -- in the next round.

Neymar did not travel with the squad as he continues his recovery from a calf injury, prompting Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva to joke he was "working remotely".

As promised Ancelotti made changes after the insipid showing against Morocco, bringing United forward Cunha in for Brentford's Igor Thiago and replacing Roger Ibanez with Danilo at right-back.

Despite a US government ban which has prevented fans travelling from Haiti, the Caribbean nation received loud support from the sizeable Haitian diaspora, which filled roughly half of the 68,324 crowd.

Aggrieved at not coming away with a point from their 1-0 loss to Scotland last week, Haiti coach Sebastien Migne urged his

players to embrace the opportunity to play Brazil at a World Cup.

With 77 places separating the nations in the FIFA rankings, Brazil quickly took control and thought they had scored when Raphinha fired home, only for the Barcelona winger to be flagged offside.

It was a sign of what was to come though and Brazil broke the deadlock on 23 minutes.

Cunha sparked the move by winning possession in midfield and, after Vinicius's shot was parried, he reacted quickest to block Hannes Delcroix's clearance to send the ball trickling into the net.

Vinicius and Cunha combined again to double the lead, the former slipping his team-mate in behind the Haiti defence to blast in a powerful left-footed shot as he fell to the ground.

Brazil lost Raphinha to in-

jury but scored a third before half-time as Vinicius ran onto Lucas Paqueta's floated pass and steered through the legs of Johny Placide.

Haiti almost bagged their first World Cup goal in 52 years when Ricardo Ade's glancing header at a corner forced Alisson Becker into a sharp stop, but it was a rare moment of hope.

The introduction of 19-year-old Endrick as Ancelotti turned to his bench triggered huge cheers from Brazil supporters, who nearly had another goal to celebrate when substitute Gabriel Martinelli rattled the crossbar.

Haiti refused to go down without a fight as Alisson made two late saves to preserve Brazil's first clean sheet in seven outings, turning the page on an underwhelming start to the competition.



Brazil's forward #09 Matheus Cunha (C) celebrates with Brazil's forward #07 Vinicius Junior (L) and Brazil's midfielder #20 Lucas Paqueta after scoring his team's second goal