

Super Eagles bounce back

Gylfi Sigurdsson missed penalty, awarded after on-field VAR review

AFP | Volgograd, Russia

Ahmed Musa struck twice to become the first Nigerian to score at two World Cups yesterday as the Super Eagles secured a crucial 2-0 win over Iceland, who missed a penalty.

The African side will secure a spot in the knockout stage if they beat Argentina on Tuesday in Group D's final round of fixtures.

A draw would be enough to eliminate the Argentines but would leave Nigeria's fate hanging on the outcome of Iceland's game against Croatia.

Musa, who came into the starting line-up in place of Alex Iwobi, announced himself with two of the goals of the tournament so far.

Musa's sweetly struck half-volley fired Nigeria into the lead just after half-time before he added a second with 15 minutes to go to make Group D game safe.



Ahmed Musa celebrates scoring his first goal for Nigeria against Iceland in their World Cup Group D match at the Volgograd Arena

NIGERIA 2 0 ICELAND

49' 75' Musa

Iceland got a lifeline in the 82nd minute with a VAR-awarded penalty but Gylfi Sigurdsson blazed over the bar.

With Croatia heading the group on six points Nigeria knew a second defeat would mean elimination and Iceland started brightest after coach Heimur Hallgrímsson changed to a 4-4-2 from the 4-5-1 he had used in the 1-1 draw with Argentina.

Alfred Finnbogason, who scored the equaliser against Argentina as a lone striker, was joined up front by Jon Bodvarsson and the pair quickly made an impact.

Captain Aron Gunnarsson launched a long throw into the box and, after Bodvarsson had made a nuisance of himself, a push gave Iceland a free-kick just outside the area.



Iceland's Alfred Finnbogason misses a chance to score

Unstoppable half-volley

Gylfi Sigurdsson struck it smoothly round the wall but 19-year-old goalkeeper Francis Uzoho was able to make the save high to his right.

Nigeria, with captain John Obi Mikel sitting deeper in midfield than against Croatia, slowly worked their way into the game with Victor Moses a constant threat on the right flank.

The pace inevitably dropped with the temperature still a stifling 31 Celsius at the 6:00 pm (1500 GMT) local time kickoff.

The match became a stalemate until 10 minutes before half-time when Iceland came close to opening the scoring but Leon Balogun's glancing header just did enough to thwart Gylfi Sigurdsson and Birkir Bjarnason lurking at the back post.

Egypt to file complaint against referee

Reuters | Moscow, Russia

Egypt will formally protest to FIFA about the performance of Paraguay referee Enrique Caceres whose decisions they feel prejudiced the outcome of their World Cup game against hosts Russia in St Petersburg on Tuesday.

"We want an investigation into the performance of the whole refereeing team," Egyptian Football Association president Hany Abo Rida told Reuters yesterday.

'Blame me, not team': Sampaoli

Reuters | Nizhny Novgorod

Argentina's despondent coach Jorge Sampaoli took the blame for Thursday's shambolic 3-0 World Cup defeat by Croatia as he tried to deflect the criticism from a terrible goalkeeping mistake and a poor performance by Lionel Messi.

"It's not the boss's partial responsibility, it's his total responsibility," said Sampaoli, after presiding over Argentina's heaviest defeat in the World Cup group stage since 1958.

Shaqiri's late strike completes Swiss comeback

AFP | Kaliningrad, Russia

Last-minute Xherdan Shaqiri breakaway goal handed Switzerland victory yesterday as they came from behind to defeat Serbia 2-1 in Kaliningrad.

The win puts Switzerland in pole position to make it out of a tough Group E that contains five-times winners Brazil but they were pushed all the way by the Serbs.

It was a sweet victory for Shaqiri and fellow Swiss goalscorer Granit Xhaka, who along with team-mate Valon Belrami were booed relentlessly by Serbia's fans throughout.

Shaqiri, Xhaka and Belrami trace their roots to Kosovo, a former province of Serbia, a fact which had stoked tensions before the match. Both Shaqiri and Xhaka pointedly celebrated their goals by making an eagle gesture with their hands,

viewed as a symbol of defiance.

Serbia raced out of the blocks, funnelling possession to Southampton winger Dusan Tadic on the right flank, who troubled Switzerland with his crossing all match.

An Aleksandar Mitrovic header forced a smart save from Swiss keeper Yann Sommer after four



Switzerland's forward Xherdan Shaqiri (C) runs with the ball

SERBIA 1 2 SWITZERLAND

5' Mitrovic Xhaka 52' Shaqiri 90'

Switzerland, who came to Russia ranked ahead of the likes of France and Spain, felt their way into the game as the first-half progressed.

On the half-hour mark, Steven Zuber cleverly teed up Blerim Dzemali but the Hoffenheim man got his feet in a muddle and Vladimir Stojkovic was able to parry away. But it was Serbia, who beat Costa Rica 1-0 in their Group E opener, who nearly went in two up.

Nemanja Matic missed a glorious chance to double the lead just before the break when Tadic's in-swinging corner found him unmarked at the back post but the Manchester United midfielder couldn't sort his feet out.

minutes. Seconds later, Tadic took the ball past left-back Ricardo Rodriguez, cut back on his favoured left foot and delivered a majestic cross that Mitrovic duly buried with his head.

In a frenetic first half, Switzerland had more of the ball but were sloppy with it, giving away possession in advanced

positions and sending Serbia on the break.

Lazio's highly rated Sergej Milinkovic-Savic fizzed a right-footed shot narrowly wide of Sommer's right post on 15 minutes, and Mitrovic almost scored with a spectacular bicycle kick that went the same way minutes later.



Granit Xhaka is the only player whose surname begins with an X to score at a World Cup

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