

Late show saves Brazil

● **Stoppage-time strikes from Coutinho and Neymar seal victory**

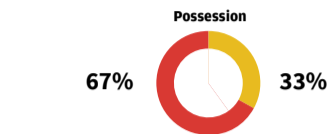
● **Costa Rica go crashing out after brave defensive performance**

Reuters | St Petersburg

Late strikes by Philippe Coutinho and Neymar gave Brazil their first win of the World Cup in thrilling fashion against Costa Rica in St Petersburg yesterday and sent the Central Americans crashing out of the tournament.

BRAZIL 2 0 COSTA RICA

90+1' Philippe Coutinho
90+7' Neymar



23	Shots	4
9	On target	0
11	Fouls	11

The clock had ticked past 90 minutes, and the five-times champions looked to be edging to a second disappointing draw, when Marcelo floated the ball in from the left and substitute Roberto Firmino headed across to Gabriel Jesus.

Jesus's first touch took the ball away from the defender and into the path of Coutinho who raced in to poke past goalkeeper Keylor Navas from six metres out for his second goal of the tournament.

The result leaves Brazil with four points from two games after they drew 1-1 with Switzerland in their opening match, and they provisionally rise above Serbia to top Group E.

Serbia play the Swiss later yesterday, while Costa Rica are out of the tournament with defeats in both games so far.

Neymar added the second with



Brazil's forward Philippe Coutinho (2nd-R) shoots to score during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group E football match between Brazil and Costa Rica at the Saint Petersburg Stadium in Saint Petersburg

practically the last kick of the match, volleying home following a quick counter-attack as Costa Rica pushed for an equaliser.

Time and again they hurled themselves at the Costa Rican goal only to be repelled until their opponent's resistance finally broke.

Neymar, overcome by emotion on the whistle, covered his face with his hands as tears streamed down his cheeks.

That was an apt reflection of how tense the match had been, with Costa Rica's flat-back five keeping Neymar on the periphery, as Johan Venegas and Cristian Gamboa man-marked him out of the game.

"We had a plan, strategy, idea to control the opponent with and without ball," Costa Rica coach Oscar Ramirez said.

"The first half was difficult. But in the second half, we couldn't have done any more. If we have suffered in these first two games, it is simply because this is a World Cup"



BRAZIL COACH TITE

"We deserved the win. The ball came free and Gabriel shielded it well and I managed to score. The most important thing was winning"



PHILIPPE COUTINHO

Brazil's forward Neymar prays at the end of the match



Neymar can't take sole responsibility: coach

Reuters | St Petersburg

Brazil coach Tite warned his country not to heap too much responsibility on Neymar's slight shoulders after the forward was seen crying after their 2-0 World Cup win over Costa Rica yesterday.

Brazil scored twice in stoppage time to move top of Group E but Neymar, who got involved in discussions with the referee and was awarded a penalty that was rescinded by the VAR, looked emotionally frail throughout, often gesticulating and falling down when tackled.

Tite said his tears could be down to the huge pressure of leading the five-times world champions.

"The joy, the satisfaction,

and the pride of representing the Brazilian national team is a lot," Tite told reporters after the match.

"He has the responsibility, the joy, the pressure and the courage to show it. We each show it in our own way."

"He was three-and-a-half months out (with injury) and he played the full match," Tite added, referring to the foot injury that kept the Paris St Germain player on the sidelines between February and June.

"He is a human being, he needs time to reach his high standards again but before that there is a team that needs to be strong and not dependent on him. Is he going to be back to his best? Yes, he is going to be back to his best."

VAR denies Neymar penalty

Independent | St Petersburg

There was more VAR drama at the World Cup as the Video Assistant Referee system (VAR) denied Brazil a penalty in their match against Costa Rica.

With the scores level and 13

minutes left, Neymar dribbled into the box before checking back on to his right foot in an effort to get a shot away. As he turned, his marker Giancarlo Gonzalez seemed to place his hand on Neymar's stomach, briefly, before the Paris

Saint-Germain forward tumbled back to the floor.

The Dutch referee Bjorn Kuipers initially awarded a penalty but was alerted to check the replay by VAR, and after reviewing the incident on a screen, overturned his decision.



Neymar claims for a penalty as he goes down after the slightest of touches from Giancarlo Gonzalez

Today's match

Group G
Belgium vs Tunisia
(3:00 PM)

Group F
S. Korea vs Mexico
(6:00 PM)
Germany vs Sweden
(9:00 PM)

Point Table

GROUP A

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Russia	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Uruguay	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Egypt	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
Saudi	2	0	0	1	0	6	0

GROUP B

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Portugal	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Spain	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Iran	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Morocco	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

GROUP C

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
France	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Denmark	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Australia	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Peru	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

GROUP D

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Croatia	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Nigeria	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Iceland	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Argentina	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

GROUP E

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Brazil	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Switzerland	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Serbia	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Costa Rica	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

GROUP F

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Mexico	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Sweden	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Germany	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
S. Korea	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

GROUP G

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Belgium	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
England	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Tunisia	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Panama	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

GROUP H

	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Japan	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Senegal	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Colombia	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Poland	1	0	0	1	1	2	0