

# Five-star Belgium

● Two each for Hazard and Lukaku as Belgium thump Tunisia 5-2

● Lukaku's two see him level with Cristiano in Golden Boot race

● Tunisia need Panama to beat England to stay alive

Reuters | Moscow

Two goals each for Romelu Lukaku and Eden Hazard helped Belgium to a 5-2 thrashing of Tunisia yesterday that showcased their attacking verve and star quality and put them firmly on course for the World Cup knockout phase.

Michy Batshuayi came off the bench to add a late fifth but it was by no means all plain sailing for Roberto Martinez's side and they will be aware that they will need to tighten up at the back considerably if



Romelu Lukaku clips his second goal past Farouk Ben Mustapha of Tunisia to join Cristiano Ronaldo at the top of the goalscoring charts

they are to finally make a push to a major tournament summit after so many false dawns.

Despite topping Group G with six points and a goal difference of plus-six there is still the slimmest of chances Belgium might yet not qualify, though even a heavy defeat in their final game against England would be extremely unlikely to derail them.

An English victory over Panama today would send England and Belgium through while a draw would be enough to confirm Belgium's progress.

England have three points, with Panama and Tunisia on nought. Tunisia, also without a point after two matches having extended their 40-year World Cup winless run to 13 games, are also still in with a theoretical chance of making it on through three points - for a day at least.

"It's not easy to score that amount of goals in two games," said Martinez, as his team impressively followed up their 3-0 opening win over Panama and helped Russia 2018 set a World Cup record for 27 tournament games without a goalless draw.

**BELGIUM 5 2 TUNISIA**

6' (pen), 51' 16', 45+3' 90' Hazard Lukaku Batshuayi 18' 90+3' Bronn Khazri

Possession: Belgium 52%, Tunisia 48%

|    |           |    |
|----|-----------|----|
| 23 | Shots     | 15 |
| 12 | On target | 5  |
| 12 | Fouls     | 13 |

### Ragged Defending

In yesterday's clash, Belgium were much the better team from the off but they were seriously aided and abetted by some ragged defending and non-existing marking from their opponents, epitomised after six minutes when Syam Ben Youssef needlessly crashed into Hazard to concede a penalty, which the captain calmly converted.

Mertens seized on another error to set up Lukaku to plant the second goal into the corner 10 minutes later.

Tunisia hit back quickly with a Dylan Bronn header as Belgium's own sometimes shaky defending was exposed but another misplaced Tunisian pass enabled Thomas Meunier to feed Lukaku to make it 3-1 in stoppage time.

Following his double against Panama it took the him to four goals for the tournament, level with Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, and made him Belgium's highest scorer at a single World Cup - after one-and-a-half games.

An inch-perfect Kevin de Bruyne pass sent Hazard clear for a his brilliantly-finished second six minutes after restart.

Batshuayi then had a remarkable last 20 minutes as he managed to blow three great chances in a row before finally finding target in the 90th with a good finish.

There was still time for Tunisia to earn a reward for their positive approach as Wahbi Khazri scored in stoppage time.



This is the first time Belgium have registered five goals in a World Cup match

"We had to suffer in spells but when we were in full flow going forward, we look really sharp. On top you have the talent and the quality but since we came together it's been a joy to see a group of players working so hard."

Martinez said Lukaku and Hazard, who were withdrawn in the second half, and midfielder Dries Mertens, had slight injuries and could be among a series of changes for the England game.

**Today's match**

**Group G**  
England vs Panama (3:00 PM)

**Group H**  
Japan vs Senegal (6:00 PM)  
Poland vs Colombia (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   | 2  | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3  | 1  | 6   |
| Germany  | 2  | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2  | 2  | 3   |
| Sweden   | 2  | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2  | 2  | 3   |
| S. Korea | 2  | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1  | 3  | 0   |

  

| GROUP G | MP | W | D | L | GF | GA | PTS |
|---------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Belgium | 2  | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8  | 2  | 6   |
| England | 1  | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2  | 1  | 3   |
| Panama  | 1  | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0  | 3  | 0   |
| Tunisia | 2  | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3  | 7  | 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   |

**“We had to suffer in spells but when we were in full flow going forward, we look really sharp. On top you have the talent and the quality but since we came together it's been a joy to see a group of players working so hard”**

BELGIUM COACH ROBERTO MARTINEZ

# Marvellous Mexico close in on last 16

Vela and Hernandez goals lead Mexico to consecutive wins, Hernandez first Mexican to score 50 goals

AFF | Rostov-on-Don, Russia

Mexico laid one foot in the World Cup's last 16 and left South Korea on the brink of elimination after goals from Javier Hernandez and Carlos Vela clinched a 2-1 victory in Rostov yesterday.

Hernandez became the first Mexican player to score 50 goals for his country, after 104 appearances, with Vela earlier opening the scoring through yet another penalty kick.

Son Heung-min's stunning long-range effort in stoppage time gave South Korea a glimmer of hope but it was too little too late.

Mexico lead Group F on six points after two games, having backed up their shock victory against Germany with another display to suggest they can go deep in this tournament.

South Korea, beaten by a Sweden penalty in their first match, had their chances but again lacked cutting edge up front.

Yet to register a single point in Russia, they are left needing a miracle to progress.

After 28 games at the World Cup, there have now been 14 spot-kicks, 11 of them converted, and there could be little complaint about this one, coming after a blatant handball by Jang Hyun-soo, Vela stepping up to convert.

**S.KOREA 1 2 MEXICO**

90+3' Son 26' (pen) Vela 66' J. Hernandez

Possession: Mexico 42%, S. Korea 58%

|    |           |    |
|----|-----------|----|
| 17 | Shots     | 13 |
| 6  | On target | 5  |
| 24 | Fouls     | 7  |



Carlos Vela of Mexico battles for possession with Heungmin Son of Korea Republic during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia group F match between Korea Republic and Mexico at Rostov Arena

In temperatures around 35 degrees Celsius, Mexico were rewarded for another controlled performance that combined possession in midfield with pace and penetration in attack. Hirving Lozano, the match-winner against Germany, was excellent again in particular.

Before their opening goal, however, it was South Korea that created the better chances.

Only a brilliant saving tackle from Lozano denied Lee Yong tapping in at the back post before Son saw three quick-fire shots come to nothing, the first two blocked, the last skewed wide.

But Mexico's penalty in the 27th minute was clear. Jang tried to block Andres Guardado's cross but inexplicably slid with his arm outstretched above him and the ball struck the defender's hand.

Vela was made to wait by goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo, who played for time by swigging his water and chatting to his team-mates, but there was no mistake. Vela slid home.

The game became more open in the

second half as South Korea perhaps pushed too hard too soon, and it was little surprise when Mexico doubled their lead.

They were fortunate not to concede a foul for a clear trip by Hector Herrera in the build-up but Lozano found Hernandez and the striker did the rest. The former Manchester United striker's dummy-shot fooled the lunging Jang before a scuffed finish rolled past Jo.

## Mexico coach angry after team suffers 24 fouls against South Korea

Reuters | Rostov-On-Don, Russia

Mexico coach Juan Carlos Osorio urged action against repetitive fouling after his team was on the receiving end of 24 fouls in their win over South Korea at the World Cup yesterday.

"Usually, I don't like to talk about referees but there was something I didn't like and that was that there were 24 fouls against us," said Osorio, whose own team committed seven fouls in the Group F match.

"It's very easy to analyse who committed them. For the good of football, I hope they take the necessary precautions and measures."

South Korea received four yellow cards.

Mexico, who have six points from two games and are on the brink of a last-16 place, began their campaign with a stunning 1-0 win over Germany but Osorio said it was important for his side not to get carried away by the euphoria.