

Colombia eliminates Poland

3-0 win at the Kazan Arena knocks Poland out of World Cup in Group H

Reuters | Kazan, Russia

Colombia's World Cup campaign roared back into life with a 3-0 win over Poland in Group H on a sweltering evening at the Kazan Arena which sent the Poles tumbling out of the tournament yesterday.

Defender Yerry Mina opened the scoring in the 40th minute with captain Radamel Falcao and winger Juan Cuadrado sealing a deserved victory with two goals in just about five minutes as the desperate Poles chased the game in the last quarter.

Midfielder James Rodriguez, winner of the Golden Boot at the last World Cup, returned to the starting lineup after injury and played a part in two of the goals as Colombia got back on track after their opening loss to Japan.

The victory puts Colombia in third place in the group on three points behind the Japanese and Senegal, who shared a 2-2 draw earlier yesterday to move to four points apiece.

A victory over the Africans in their final first-round match in Samara on Thursday would secure Colombia a spot in the last 16 as they target at least matching their charge to the quarter-finals in Brazil four years ago.



Yerry Mina of Colombia scores his team's first goal during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia group H match between Poland and Colombia

POLAND	0	3	COLOMBIA
	40'		Mina
	70'		Falcao
	75'		Cuadrado

The respite was brief and on the next Colombia attack Juan Quintero found Rodriguez lurking inside the box and the midfielder chipped a delightful cross into the danger area for Mina to head the ball into the net from point-blank range.

The Poles came out firing at the start of the second half but their limitations remained and Cuadrado was soon causing them more problems down the right.

Lewandowski finally got a chance to score his first World Cup goal in the 58th minute but his first touch on the long ball was not his best and goalkeeper David Ospina smothered his shot.

Juan Quintero played creator in the 70th minute and Falcao turned the last defender before stroking the ball past Szczesny with the outside of his boot for his first World Cup strike.

Poland pushed forward to try and get back into the game and five minutes later were caught on the break by the Colombians with Rodriguez rasping a pass across the field to allow Cuadrado fitting reward for a fine performance.

“I’m very sorry and very sad about the result, but tomorrow’s another day and we have to come to terms with things. Our players did their best until the end of the game I extend my congratulations to Colombia”

POLAND COACH ADAM NAWALKA

For Poland, the optimism fostered by their quarter-final spot at Euro 2016 and a strong qualifying campaign proved to be misplaced as they slumped to a second successive defeat.

The match started to a barrage of noise from the yellow-shirted Colombian fans and the early exchanges were frenetic with Poland putting in some physical challenges and Robert Lewandowski getting close attention from the Colombian defence.

Offensive Tactics

Poland's offensive tactics were limited to launching long balls towards their prolific striker and although Colombia were trying to play the ball on the floor they could not get their passes to stick.

Cuadrado was causing some problems down Poland's right flank, however, and a piece of mazy dribbling in the 37th minute saw the winger forge the first genuine opening, which goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny blocked behind.

It might be my last World Cup: Pogba

Reuters | Istra, Russia

France midfielder Paul Pogba said the finals in Russia might be his last World Cup but he hopes he will be fit for more.

“It might be my last World Cup,” the Manchester United player, 25, told a news conference ahead of Tuesday's Group C final game against Denmark.

France have already qualified for the last 16 and will secure top spot if they avoid defeat.

“I'm realistic, we don't know if I'll be called up, maybe other players will be better than me,” added Pogba.

FIFA investigates Shaqiri and Khaka celebrations

Reuters | Moscow

FIFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against Switzerland players Xherdan Shaqiri and Granit Khaka, looking into their goal celebrations during Friday's win over Serbia at the World Cup.

Both players, who are ethnic Albanians and of Kosovar heritage, celebrated with a gesture which appeared to imitate the eagle displayed on Albania's flag.

South Korea defence shaken

Reuters | Moscow

South Korea coach Shin Tae-yong admitted his defence had been shaken during their 2-1 World Cup Group F loss to Mexico on Saturday which left the Asian side on the brink of elimination after two games.

The Koreans, beaten 1-0 by Sweden in their opening match, have conceded penalties in both defeats and on Saturday defender Jang Hyun-soo blocked Andres Guardado's cross with his arm before Carlos Vela converted the resulting spot kick.

Cuper says his time as coach is ending

Volgograd, Russia

Egypt coach Hector Cuper said it was possible that his team's farewell match at the 2018 World Cup against Saudi Arabia today would also be his last in charge after an unsuccessful campaign in Russia.

Egypt lost their first two games against Uruguay and hosts Russia, crushing the hopes of fans that prolific striker Mohamed Salah, despite his recent shoulder injury, would lead the Africans into the knockout stages.

Instead, their campaign will



Egypt coach Hector Cuper during training

peter out against Saudi Arabia, who also head home after today's match in Volgograd having lost both their opening games too.

“I have never excluded any-

thing. It might be my last game and it might not. It will depend on a number of factors,” Cuper, who was named Egypt coach in 2015, said when asked by reporters about his future.

“Of course I would like to make everybody happy, to come up with something that everybody would agree with. But it's impossible,” the Argentine said.

While saying there had been “small disagreements” within the Egypt camp, Cuper added that he would not respond to questions about whether captain Essam El-Hadary had fallen out with the rest of the team.

No regrets for Saudi coach after bruising World Cup

Reuters | Volgograd, Russia

Saudi Arabia coach Juan Antonio Pizzi said yesterday he had no regrets about his team's unsuccessful World Cup campaign which started with a 5-0 hammering by hosts Russia and will end today against Egypt, who are also heading home early.

Pizzi said he would not change anything in the Saudis' approach to the tournament if had the chance.

“It's very easy with hindsight, after the results that



Saudi Arabia coach Juan Antonio Pizzi during training

we have had, to come up with situations that you'd like to change,” he told reporters. “But unfortunately we coaches have to take most of our decisions before things pan out.”

WORLD CUP PREDICT AND WIN

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