

SPORTS  
sports

# Martinez, Agüero guide Argentina into last eight

Lautaro Martinez and Sergio Agüero's goals send Argentina past Qatar to reach Copa America quarter-finals

AFP | Porto Alegre, Brazil

An early goal by Lautaro Martinez and Sergio Agüero's late second gave Argentina a 2-0 win over Qatar on Sunday that qualified them for the Copa America quarter-finals.

Already-qualified Colombia beat Paraguay 1-0 in the other Group B match to secure a place in the last eight for both Peru, who finished third in Group A, and Uruguay, currently second in Group C.

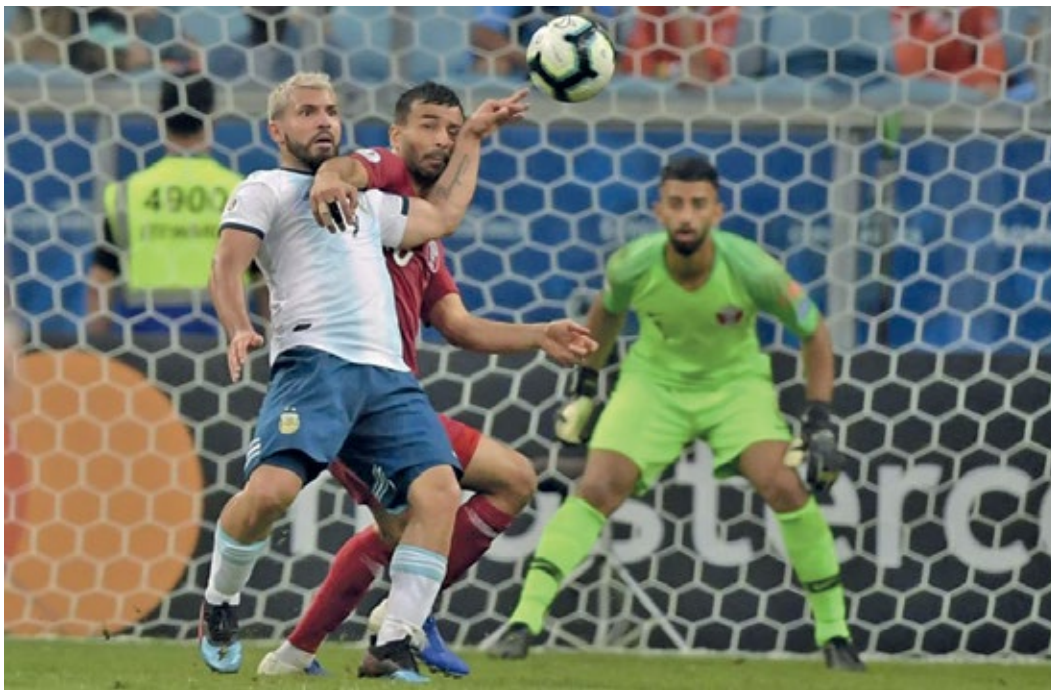
Argentina, who finish second in Group B behind Colombia, will play Venezuela at Rio de Janeiro's iconic Maracana stadium in the quarter-finals, while tournament debutants and guests Qatar are out.

Paraguay, on two points, must wait and see what happens in Group C clash between Japan and Ecuador before finding out if they qualify as one of the two best third-place finishers.

Peru, with four points, are sure of that while only a draw between Japan and Ecuador would see Paraguay progress.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni recalled Manchester City forward Agüero for the crunch tie while Martinez kept his place at the expense of Angel Di Maria.

Asian champions Qatar made a calamitous start when a weak headed clearance from Tarek Salman fell to Martinez 12 yards out, but the Inter Milan forward sent his volley over the top.



Argentina's Sergio Agüero (L) and Qatar's Boualem Khoukhi vie for the ball

He didn't have to wait long for another chance though as Bas-sam Hisham played a ball across his box and straight to the feet of the Argentina forward, who scuffed a shot into the bottom corner after just four minutes.

"The goal came early and that allowed us to approach the game with greater calmness," said Martinez.

"There was pressure, we had to win to progress and we're happy. Now we have to work hard."

With the weight was lifted from Argentina's shoulders, they played with a freedom expected of a side boasting talents such

as Agüero and five-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi.

Qatar played with limited ambition but their talented forwards looked dangerous when they did venture into the final third.

Hasan Khalid Al Haydos got in behind the Argentina backline and tried to chip Franco Armani but the goalkeeper got a touch to divert the ball behind, although the linesman's flag was up and it wouldn't have counted.

"We paid for inexperience, we started two matches by conceding goals from unnecessary actions," said Qatar's Spanish coach Felix Sanchez, alluding

to their opening tie against Paraguay when they also conceded in the fourth minute.

"We played a great team that knew they had to win, they took their first chance really well. It was our mistake."

Messi burst into life with an acceleration towards Qatar's area before slipping a pass to Agüero, who dragged his left-footed shot wide under pressure.

Qatar were sporadically dangerous on the break and Portuguese-born Ro-Ro stole in at the back post to meet a Karim Boudiaf cross but couldn't direct his volley on target.



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa's horse, Daahyeh, during the race

## Shaikh Khalid hails Royal Ascot victory

TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee congratulated HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Charity Works and Youth Affairs and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports on the occasion of the historic win of the first place in the Royal Ascot by Daahyeh, the horse owned by HH Shaikh Nasser.

Ridden by jockey David Egan and trained by Roger Varian,

Daahyeh clinched the first place in a 1200-metre race held today at the prestigious Royal Ascot Racecourse in the UK, in which 25 jockeys participated.

HH Shaikh Khalid stated that what has been achieved reflects the concern and care of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to equestrian sports, and the remarkable strides of HH Shaikh Nasser to fulfill HM the King's vision to improve the sport, adding that the historic victory adds to the landmark achievements attained by the equestrian sport in Bahrain thanks to HM King Hamad's unwavering interest and support.

## 'Don't blame me for boring races,' says Hamilton

AFP | Le Castellet, France

Triumphant Lewis Hamilton told his and F1's critics Sunday not to blame the drivers for "boring" professional races, but instead to turn their focus on the rule-makers.

The defending five-time world champion produced a flawless demonstration of racing to triumph from pole position for the second year in succession Sunday's French

Grand Prix.

In a largely uneventful race on a sweltering afternoon at the Le Castellet circuit, he led his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas home as they extended the Silver Arrows winning run to 10 races.

It was hardly entertaining stuff for the fans at the track or the global television audience and Hamilton warned that the sport needed to consider making "serious changes".

Speaking after his 79th career victory, he told reporters they should consider who should be blamed before drawing any conclusions.

"Don't point fingers at the drivers because we don't write the rules," said Hamilton.

"We have nothing to do with the money and all that kind of stuff.

"You should put the pressure on the people at the head who should be doing their job. I think they are trying to, but for many, many years they have made bad decisions."



Lewis Hamilton



TISCA stars with the CBA Division D 25 overs trophy after defeating NDC Bahrain in the final.

## Murray mulls over US Open singles return after Queen's doubles triumph

AFP | London

Former world number one Andy Murray says he could resurrect his singles career at this year's US Open following a remarkable return to tennis with victory in the men's doubles at the Queen's Club tournament on Sunday.

The 32-year-old Scotsman teamed up with Spanish partner Feliciano Lopez

to take a 7-6 (8/6), 5-7, 10-5 win over Britain's Joe Salisbury and Rajeev Ram of the United States.

The three-time Grand Slam champion's triumph comes after what he described as "life-changing" hip surgery earlier this year.

Murray said that while he had not made up his mind about a return to singles, the US Open would be the tournament where it could happen.



Andy Murray celebrates after winning Queen's doubles title alongside partner Feliciano Lopez

If so, it would be a remarkable turnaround for a man who was tearfully pondering retirement in January and has seen his singles ranking tumble to 215 in the world.

"I mean, potentially, yeah," he said when pressed as to whether the US Open -- where he won his first Grand Slam title in 2012 -- could be the place to resume his singles career.

"But I don't care, really, either way.

Like, it would be nice to play at the US Open, but if I don't -- look, I got so much enjoyment and happiness after winning a first round doubles match here that, you know, that's enough.

Murray, also a two-time Olympic singles champion, said he had to be mindful about his hip, although he came through the week at Queen's pain free.