

Late Casemiro strike sends Brazil into last 16

Casemiro's late goal was enough to see off the Swiss and send Brazil through to the knockout stage

● Casemiro scored in the final 10 minutes

AFP

A Brazil side lacking spark without the injured Neymar needed a late strike from Casemiro to edge out Switzerland 1-0 yesterday as the five-time winners secured their place in the World Cup last 16 with one game to spare.

The Brazilians had been frustrated by an obdurate Swiss side and it looked as if they would have to settle for a point after a Vinicius Junior strike in the second half was disallowed for offside following a VAR check.

But then, with seven minutes remaining, Bruno Guimaraes flicked the ball on to Casemiro just inside the box and the Manchester United midfielder's volley flew into the net with the help of a slight but significant deflection off Manuel Akanji.

Tite's side are just the second team to qualify for the last 16 after France and the only side apart from the holders to have won both group matches so far.

With six points they will be tempted to rest players for their final Group G game against Cameroon on Friday, when a



Brazil's Casemiro scores their first goal

FIFA World Cup results

Cameroon	3 - 3	Serbia
South Korea	2 - 3	Ghana
Brazil	1 - 0	Switzerland
Portugal	2 - 0	Uruguay

Today's matches

Ecuador v Senegal	4PM
Iran v USA	7PM
Wales v England	10PM

draw will secure them top spot.

Switzerland, meanwhile, failed to muster a shot on target but remain on course to qualify too, with the 3-3 draw between

Serbia and Cameroon earlier meaning a win against the Serbians will take Murat Yakin's side through and a draw may also suffice.

They have made a habit of making at least the first knockout round at major tournaments, while Brazil are playing to win a sixth World Cup and nothing less will do.

The Selecao were always going to miss Neymar, although coach Tite has said he is confident the Paris Saint-Germain superstar will recover from his ankle injury to play a part again at the finals.



The result extended Brazil's unbeaten run in the group stage to 17 matches, with 14 wins and three draws. It has lost only one of its last 29 group games, with the last defeat coming against Norway in 1998 in France

After the class of Richarlison made the difference in their opening win over Serbia, this was a reminder for the Brazilians of the strength in depth in the European game.

Four years ago, before being dumped out by Belgium in the quarter-finals, they were also held by Switzerland in the group stage.

Yakin's side therefore had no reason to fear Brazil, who introduced Manchester United midfielder Fred into their lineup in place of Neymar.

Fernandes double sends Portugal into knock-outs



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo scores the opening goal

AFP

Bruno Fernandes scored twice to give Portugal a 2-0 victory over Uruguay yesterday and send them into the knock-out stages of the World Cup alongside France and Brazil.

The Manchester United midfielder scored a cross-cum-shot nine minutes into the second half and then added an injury-time penalty following a handball by Jose Maria Gimenez.

The match also featured the first pitch invader of the tournament -- the man carried messages of support for Ukraine and Iranian women and had a rainbow flag.

With Portugal already through, Uruguay must now beat Ghana in their final Group H match to stand any chance of also progressing.

Both sides made three changes from their opening matches, with Portugal bringing in veteran Pepe for the injured Danilo Pereira, who suffered cracked ribs in training. Pepe became the third-oldest outfield player in World Cup history.

As the ball nestled in the goal, Ronaldo wheeled away in celebration but FIFA decided he had not touched the ball, thus denying him a ninth World Cup goal, which would have put him level with Portuguese great Eusebio

Portugal dominated the first half, hogging the ball and creating several chances, but without ever testing Uruguay goalkeeper Sergio Rochet.

Uruguay's forwards, Edinson Cavani and Darwin Nunez were starved of the ball but the South Americans still had the best opportunity of the first period.

Rodrigo Bentancur picked the ball up in his own half and surged forwards, slipping between two defenders to find himself one-on-one with goalkeeper Diogo Costa, who spread himself well to save the midfielder's shot.

Kudus double for Ghana sinks South Korea



Ghana's Mohammed Kudus in action with South Korea's Jeong Woo-yeong and Jung Woo-young

AFP

Mohammed Kudus scored twice as Ghana beat South Korea 3-2 in a pulsating World Cup encounter yesterday to keep their World Cup hopes alive and leave Paulo Bento's side facing an early exit.

Mohammed Salisu opened the scoring against the run of play midway through the first half and Ajax midfielder Kudus doubled the Black Stars' lead.

But the Asian side, who looked toothless in the first half, roared back after the break, pulling level through a quickfire double from forward Cho Gue-sung either side of the hour mark.

Ghana became the third African nation to make it to the World Cup quarter-finals at the 2010 tournament. Black Stars captain Andre Ayew was also on that squad. No African team has reached the World Cup semifinals

Ghana looked shell-shocked as the Korean fans celebrated wildly but they were back in front in the 68th minute when Kudus finished calmly at the back post after Inaki Williams failed to connect with a cross from the left.

Cameroon fight back to draw thriller with Serbia

AFP

Cameroon kept their hopes of making the last 16 of the World Cup alive yesterday after fighting back from two goals down to draw a thrilling Group G encounter with Serbia 3-3.

Rigobert Song's team looked almost dead and buried after goals from Strahinja Pavlovic, Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Aleksandar Mitrovic gave Serbia a 3-1 lead early in the second half.

But substitute Vincent Aboubakar and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting snatched a draw with two quick-fire strikes just after the hour mark to leave both Cameroon and Serbia on a single point, two behind group leaders Brazil and Switzerland.

Had they lost, Cameroon would have been relying on the Swiss beating Brazil in order to not be eliminated with a game to spare, but instead the west Africans still have a chance of getting out of the group stage for the first time since 1990.



Cameroon's Vincent Aboubakar scores their second goal

Cameroon have a tough task ahead as they play Brazil in their final match, which according to reports they will play without first-choice goalkeeper Andre Onana who was dropped from the matchday squad just hours before kick-off following an unspecified disciplinary issue.

Media reports suggest that Onana has been sent home

from the World Cup after a disagreement with Song, but that pre-match turmoil didn't stop Cameroon putting in a fighting display against a Serbia team who probably deserved to win on the balance of play.

Mitrovic was almost invisible in Serbia's defeat to Brazil but here he was involved from kick-off, the Fulham forward



The thrilling draw was the first game at the World Cup in which both teams gave up a lead

unlucky not to give Serbia the lead in the 11th minute when he crashed a shot off the post from a tight angle following a neat exchange of passes with Dusan Tadic.

But Mitrovic only had himself to blame for not opening the scoring six minutes later, shanking an awful first-time finish wide when, after a mix up in the Cameroon defence, the ball dropped at his feet with only Onana's replacement Devis Epassy to beat.

FIFA charges Germany for no player at news conference

AP

Germany was charged in a disciplinary case by FIFA yesterday, though not for its players' "hands covering mouths" protest before playing a World Cup game last week.

FIFA said it opened a case against the German soccer fed-



Germany's head coach Hansi Flick attends a news conference

eration for not bringing players to its mandatory news conferences one day before each game.

Coach Hansi Flick appeared alone Saturday to meet international media ahead of the team playing Spain. He said he did not want to burden players ahead of such an important game, which

Germany drew 1-1.

Germany chose a training camp furthest away from the host city, were most of the 32 teams are staying. The squad's camp is located in a resort hotel on the northern tip of the peninsula about 110 kilometres (70 miles) from the capital.