

Chelsea survive marathon Benfica clash, set up Palmeiras quarter-final

Chelsea beats Benfica 4-1 in a near five-hour Club World Cup match disrupted by weather delay

● Chelsea beat Benfica 4-1 after extra time

● Nkunku, Neto, Dewsbury-Hall score in added period

● Palmeiras beat Botafogo 1-0 via Paulinho

AFP | Philadelphia

Chelsea beat Benfica in a game which went on for close to five hours at the Club World Cup on Saturday to set up a quarter-final showdown with Brazilian side Palmeiras at the tournament in the United States.

The London club were grateful to extra-time goals by Christopher Nkunku, Pedro Neto and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall to give them a 4-1 victory over Benfica.

Their late burst of scoring settled a last-16 tie which took four hours, 39 minutes to complete at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium in North Carolina after a near two-hour weather delay.

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca was left satisfied with his team's victory but slammed the delay that turned the tie into a near five-hour marathon.

"I think it's a joke, it's not football," Maresca said.

"For 85 minutes we were in control of the game. We created



Chelsea's French striker #18 Christopher Nkunku shoots and scores his team's second goal

enough chances to win the game. Then after the break, the game changed -- for me personally, it's not football."

Earlier, Chelsea had been seemingly poised for victory after Reece James' opportunistic second-half free-kick had left them 1-0 up with four minutes of regulation time remaining.

But just as Chelsea began to think about their quarter-final assignment, the arrival of a storm over Charlotte triggered local safety protocols which required the game to be halted.

It marked the sixth occasion during the Club World Cup that a game has been disrupted by a weather warning.

When play resumed just under two hours later, a revitalised Benfica grabbed an injury-time equaliser after Chelsea substitute Malo Gusto was adjudged to have handled in the penalty area following an intervention by the Video Assistant Referee.

Benfica's Argentine veteran Angel Di Maria stepped up to roll in an ice-cold penalty, sending the game into extra time.

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CHELSEA MANAGER ENZO MARESCA

An end-to-end first half of extra time saw Benfica, reduced to 10 men following Gianluca Prestianni's second yellow card at the end of regulation, threaten to take the lead as they chased an improbable victory.

But instead it was Nkunku who fired Chelsea back in front, the French international bundling in from close range after Moises Caicedo's low shot

squirted underneath Benfica goalkeeper Antoliy Trubin.

As the game opened up, Benfica were increasingly vulnerable on the counter-attack and Chelsea pounced.

Neto made it 3-1 with a nerveless finish after going clean through on goal in the 114th minute, and three minutes later Dewsbury-Hall completed the rout to send Chelsea through to the last eight.

They will now return to Philadelphia, where they played two games in the group stage, to play Palmeiras in the quarter-finals on Friday.

Paulinho settles Brazilian derby

The Brazilian club were grateful to an extra-time winner by substitute Paulinho as they edged domestic rivals Botafogo 1-0 in a battle of attrition



The match became the longest in Club World Cup history (4h39m active time), featuring the tournament's sixth weather delay and Chelsea's first-ever extra-time victory in the competition

earlier Saturday at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

The winger came on at the same time in the second half as Palmeiras coach Abel Ferreira withdrew teenage sensation Estevao Willian, a move that appeared baffling in the moment but ultimately proved inspired.

The tie had reached the 100th minute without a goal when Paulinho collected a pass by Richard Rios on the right flank and was afforded the time and

space to come inside into the box before slotting a low shot into the far corner.

That sparked wild celebrations among the Palmeiras fans who made up the vast majority of the 33,657 crowd, and the side from Sao Paulo held on to win the tie despite having captain Gustavo Gomez sent off late on.

"That is why he came, so he could play for long enough to decide a game. He is going to have to stop again after the tournament," Ferreira said of Paulinho, who has struggled with injury since signing for Palmeiras at the start of the year.

Winners of the Copa Libertadores in 2020 and 2021, Palmeiras will now hope to match the feat of their Brazilian rivals Flamengo, who defeated Chelsea during the group stage.



Palmeiras' Paulinho celebrates scoring

Joy and agony for Marquez brothers at Dutch MotoGP

Marc levels with Agostini on 68 elite wins as brother Alex suffers left hand fracture in crash

● Marc wins sixth double of season

● Bezzecchi finishes second, Bagnaia third

AFP | Assen

Marc Marquez extended his lead in the world championship standings winning the Dutch MotoGP yesterday in a race where his closest pursuer and younger brother Alex Marquez suffered a left hand fracture.

Marc Marquez, 32, came home on his Ducati ahead of two Italians, Marco Bezzecchi (Aprilia) with the winner's team-mate Francesco Bagnaia third.

Marc Marquez's victory -- at the circuit known as the 'Cathedral of Speed' celebrating its 100th anniversary -- brought him level with legend Giacomo Agostini on 68 elite wins, still 21 adrift of Valentino Rossi.

Agostini, 83, was present to watch another Marquez masterclass on a weekend that over 200,000 spectators piled through the turnstiles.

Marquez -- who was completing his sixth double of the campaign in winning the Sprint and the MotoGP race proper -- leads

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MARC MARQUEZ

Alex by 68 points with Bagnaia 126 adrift after 10 of the 22 race season.

Marquez, who was recording just his third Dutch MotoGP win,

had had a bumpy ride on Friday with two heavy crashes which resulted in bruising and having stitches on his chin.

"I am sorry for Alex, my father says he injured a finger, but racing is like this," said Marquez.

"Of course I am super happy with the job the team did on Friday (after the crashes) and all weekend, amazing weekend.

"Assen is not one of my best tracks."

Bagnaia got a superb start shooting straight past pole sitter Fabio Quartararo, the Frenchman's hopes of delivering Yamaha a victory on their 70th anniversary receding rapidly as he dropped down the field.

At least he remained in the race, Japan's Ai Ogura's participation

ended on the first lap as he was taken out by Miguel Oliveira.

Marc Marquez moved into second on the second lap with British MotoGP winner Bezzecchi gliding into third.

Marquez passed his teammate on the fifth lap but a lap later his sibling Alex Marquez caught a cropper as tussling with Pedro Acosta he came to grief.

Alex Marquez jumped back to his feet but was gingerly holding his wrist as he was biked back to the pitlane and was taken to the medical centre for a check-up.

An attritional race claimed two more riders as Joan Mir and Fermin Aldeguer suffered heavy crashes -- both consoling each other.

