

Messi frustrated after Argentina draw with Chile

Lionel Messi free-kick cancelled out as Chile hold Argentina in Copa America

● Paraguay bounce back to beat 10-man Bolivia

AFP | Brasilia

Argentina superstar Lionel Messi scored a stunning freekick but Chile hit back to earn a 1-1 draw in the Copa America on Monday.

Messi's magical left foot gave dominant Argentina a deserved first half lead but Eduardo Vargas equalized in the second half after Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez saved veteran midfielder Arturo Vidal's penalty.

Despite Argentina's dominance, Messi lamented that "we weren't calm, we didn't have control of the ball."

His coach Lionel Scaloni saw things differently, though.



Argentina's Lionel Messi shoots at goal

"We deserved to win but in the end we drew. In any case, it's only the start of a very tough tournament," said Scaloni.

Before the Group A game started in the Nelson Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro, there was a light and effects tribute to Argentina legend Diego Maradona, who died in November aged 60, although the ground was empty due to coronavirus restrictions.

The first chance fell to Messi on eight minutes as Leandro Paredes picked out Nicolas Tagliafico on the left and the full-back nodded the ball down for his captain, who sent a volley wide.

Minutes later, Giovanni Lo Celso crossed from the left but a sliding Lautaro Martinez could only spoon the ball over the bar from inside the six-yard box.

Argentina were in total command and Lo Celso picked out Nicolas Gonzalez to shoot from

20 yards but goalkeeper Claudio Bravo got down well to his right to tip the ball around the post.

From Messi's corner Gonzalez headed over the bar and moments later he was released by Lo Celso but shot straight at Bravo.

It would be a frustrating night for Gonzalez.

Argentina got the goal their domination deserved on 33 minutes, and inevitably it was Messi who scored, curling a free-kick from 25 yards out just beyond Bravo's dive.

They should have had a second soon afterwards but teed up by Gonzalo Montiel 10 yards out, Martinez screwed his shot horribly wide.

"I would be worried if the team wasn't creating chances. The important thing is we are, we're getting lots of players in the box. And it will go in," said Scaloni.

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We needed to be calm, have control of possession and play more quickly. The penalty changed the match, too

LIONEL MESSI

'Defiant' Chileans

Chile started the second half with more intent and Erick Pulgar played Vargas into the area but his shot on the stretch was saved by Martinez.

However, Vidal stormed in to try to fire home the rebound and was caught by Tagliafico as he shot.

Referee Wilmar Roldan consulted VAR and then awarded a penalty.

Angel Romero scored twice as Paraguay bounced back to beat 10-man Bolivia 3-1 in Goiania and top Group A.

Erwin Saavedra gave Bolivia the lead from the penalty spot on 10 minutes after a long VAR review.

Paraguay dominated throughout but the game changed deep into first half stoppage time when Bolivia's Jaime Cuellar was sent off for a second booking.

Alejandro Romero Gamara restored parity just past the hour mark and Romero put Paraguay in front three minutes later.

Romero sealed the win 10 minutes from time as Paraguay enjoyed almost 80 percent possession and had more than 30

Bahrain to go for Arab athletics gold



Bahrain's Abdelrahman Mahmoud...looking to capture shot put gold (file photo)

● Fourteen-member national athletics team set to compete in biennial competition

● Five-day multi-event championship set to get underway today in Tunisia

TDI | Manama

Defending champions Bahrain are participating in the 22nd Arab Athletics Championships in Tunisia with a 14-member team, the Bahrain Athletics Association (BAA) has announced.

The competition is scheduled to get underway today and it will continue until Sunday.

The Bahraini delegation at the event is headed by BAA board member and national teams director Mohammed Abdulaziz.

The national squad consists of four women and 10 men.

The women are led by Tejitu Daba Chalchissa, who will be competing in the half-mar-

athon. Taking to the track will be Tigist Gashaw in the 5,000m and 1,500m; while Manal Al Bahrawi will be running the 1,500m and 800m; and Bontu Edao Rebitu will complete in the 10,000m.

For the men, Bahrain will be represented by Al Siddique Mkho in the 5,000m and 1,500m; Mohammed Ayoob and Abdulrazzaq Ismail in the 800m; Abraham Rotich in the 1,500m; Zuhair Awad in the 5,000m; Dawit Fikadu and Abdunasser Almy in the 10,000m; Joshua Limoshin in the half-marathon; Marwan Madani in the discus throw; and Abdelrahman Mahmoud in the shot put.

A total of 20 countries are taking part in the championship, including Bahrain, Lebanon, Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Oman, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Morocco, Jordan, Syria, Sudan, Qatar, Libya, Djibouti, Somalia, Comoros and hosts Tunisia.

Bahrain were the overall champions in the previous Arab championship held in Egypt in 2019. They clinched a total of 24 medals then, including 15 gold, five silver and four bronze.

Morata jeered as wasteful Spain frustrated by Sweden



Spain's Gerard Moreno in action with Sweden's Marcus Danielson

AFP | Seville

Spain's new team struggled with the familiar problems on Monday as a string of missed chances allowed Sweden to hang on for a goalless draw in their Euro 2020 opener in Seville.

Alvaro Morata wasted the best opportunity of a dominant first half, in which Spain churned out 419 passes, the most of any team on record in the opening 45 minutes of a European Championship fixture. Morata was whistled by his own fans when substituted with 25 minutes left, with Luis

Enrique now facing questions over his decision to leave out Gerard Moreno, the Villarreal striker who scored 23 goals last season.

Spain lost their rhythm after the interval and Sweden might even have won it, the excellent Alexander Isak hitting the post before his strike partner Marcus Berg missed a sitter from two yards out.

"They decided to defend, defend and defend. It was a very unfair result," said Luis Enrique, who also complained about the pitch. "The players struggled to control the ball," he said.

Ronaldo breaks Euro goalscoring record as Portugal beat Hungary

Reuters | London

Cristiano Ronaldo netted a double to become the European Championship's all-time leading scorer as Portugal struck three times late on to beat a stubborn Hungary 3-0 in their Euro 2020 opener at a packed Puskas Arena yesterday.

The holders, who appear to have a much stronger squad than when they won their first major title five years ago, laboured for long periods in Budapest.

But Raphael Guerreiro made the vital breakthrough in the 84th minute and Ronaldo slammed in a penalty shortly afterwards before tapping home in injury time.

The Juventus striker has now scored 11 goals in the tournament, two more than French great Michel Platini, who netted nine times when he led France to glory in 1984.

The 36-year-old is also just three goals away from matching Iranian Ali Daei's all-time international scoring record of 109.

Ronaldo chose by far the biggest crowd of the tournament



Portugal's Nelson Semedo in action with Hungary's Attila Fiola

to break the record in front of, with Budapest the only Euro 2020 venue not to limit fan capacity due to Covid-19.

The Puskas Arena has a capacity of almost 68,000 fans.

World Cup winners France and three-time European champions Germany meet in the other Group F game later in the day at Munich's Allianz Arena.

Portugal coach Fernando Santos opted to play Liverpool forward Diogo Jota and Bernardo Silva alongside Ronaldo ahead of Joao Felix.

It almost paid instant divi-

dends, as Jota forced Hungary goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi into a smart save with a left-footed drive in the fourth minute, although he perhaps should have squared the ball for an unmarked Ronaldo.

Five minutes later, Jota, who was out injured for most of the latter stages of the club season, volleyed Bruno Fernandes' free-

11

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kick over the crossbar.

Ronaldo created an opportunity for Bernardo Silva in the 28th minute by winning the ball back high up the pitch, only for the Manchester City winger to delay his shot too long and see the opening snuffed out by an excellent tackle from Hungary centre-back Willi Orban.

Hungary offered very little from open play, although they sent Portugal a warning shortly before half-time when Adam Szalai headed a free-kick too close to Rui Patricio.

Results

*Scores as of closing

EURO 2020

Hungary	0	3	Portugal
France	1	0	Germany