

Columbus, Philadelphia and LAFC reach Leagues Cup semis

AFP- Reigning MLS champions [Columbus Crew](#) will face the [Philadelphia Union](#) in the semi-finals of the Leagues Cup after victories in the last eight on Saturday.

Columbus marched into the last four with a 4-3 win on penalties over [New York City](#) after the game ended 1-1 while a ten-man Union also needed a shoot-out to beat Mexican team Mazatlan.

Just 14 seconds into the game in Columbus, visitors New York took the lead when [Alonso Martinez](#) robbed Crew defender [Rudy Camacho](#) and burst into the box before slotting home.

Striker [Cucho Hernandez](#) had a great chance to level the game but dragged his shot wide from inside the box and the Colombian forced a fine save from [Matt Freese](#).

But four minutes before the interval, Columbus, who had eliminated Cup holders [Inter Miami](#) in the previous round, drew level.

Max Arfsten whipped in a cross from the right and Hernandez met it with a perfectly angled header into the bottom corner.

Chances were rare in the second half and despite plenty of late pressure from Columbus the game went to the shoot-out.

Columbus keeper [Patrick Schulte](#) saved from [Maxi Morales](#), but then [Diego Rossi](#) saw his effort saved by City's Freese.

After New York's Santiago Rodriguez blasted his effort high and wide, it was left to [DeJuan Jones](#) to clinch the victory with a cool penalty.

Philadelphia found themselves a man down just before half-time when forward [Tai Baribo](#) was harshly sent off for a second

yellow card offense.

But two minutes later, Danish forward [Mikael Uhre](#) put the Union ahead when he broke down the left and cut inside before finishing with a deft chip over Mazatlan keeper Ricardo Gutierrez.

The Liga MX team drew level in the 59th minute when [Alonso Escoboza](#) rose to head in a cross from Ramiro Arciga.

But despite their numerical and possession advantage, Mazatlan were unable to find a winner with Philly keeper [Andre Blake](#) ensuring the game went to a shoot-out after a brilliant reflex save kept out a goalbound header from [Facundo Almada](#).

Jamaican Blake was the hero in the shoot-out with two superb saves as Jim Curtin's side won 4-3 to make it to the last four for successive seasons.

[Los Angeles FC](#) also progressed after an impressive 3-0 win at the [Seattle Sounders](#).

[Ryan Hollingshead](#) slotted LAFC ahead in the 14th minute before veteran [Kei Kamara](#) doubled the lead 11 minutes later.

[Denis Bouanga](#) wrapped up the win in the 53rd minute with a clinical finish after racing on to a ball over the top from French goalkeeper [Hugo Lloris](#).

LAFC will face the winner of Saturday's last quarter-final between the [Colorado Rapids](#) and [Mexico's Club America](#).

AFP