Argentina beat Peru as Uruguay hold Brazil

AFP – A magnificent volley from Lautaro Martinez was enough to give world champions Argentina a 1-0 win over Peru while Brazil were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Uruguay in South American World Cup qualifying on Tuesday.
Argentina remain on top of the CONMEBOL standings with their qualification for the 2026 tournament surely just a matter of time.

It was far from a vintage performance from Lionel Scaloni's team, but a moment of magic from Inter Milan's Martinez proved decisive at the 'Bombonera' stadium in Buenos Aires.

Lionel Messi floated in a cross from the left and Martinez leapt into the air, leaning back as he cracked a thundering left-footed volley past Pedro Gallese.

Argentina's eighth win from 12 games leaves them on 25 points at the top of the table, five points ahead of Uruguay who earned a valuable point at Brazil.

Five-times World Cup winners Brazil laboured for long stretches of the game in Salvador and fell behind to a fine finish from Uruguay's Real Madrid midfielder Federico Valverde in the 55th minute.

But seven minutes later Brazil equalised when a headed clearance fell kindly to Gerson who smashed home a perfectly-struck volley.

Gabriel Martinelli went close to a winner when he showed a deft touch to switch feet before a volley which brought a fine save out of Sergio Rochet.

The draw leaves Brazil in fifth on 18 points, a point behind fourth-placed Colombia who suffered an upset 1-0 home defeat

to Ecuador in Barranquilla.

– Paraguay held, Chile win –

Veteran striker Enner Valencia stunned the home crowd with an outstanding solo effort in the seventh minute, the former West Ham United forward breaking away from three Colombian defenders and powering into the box before slotting home.

Colombia forward Jhon Cordoba then missed a golden opportunity to level the score, stumbling off balance and missing from point blank range after being set up by James Rodriguez.

Cordoba was central to the 34th minute incident that left Ecuador short-handed for the rest of the game.

The gangly striker raced clear and rounded Ecuador keeper Hernan Galindez before going down as Piero Hincapie closed in on him.

The referee ruled that Hincapie had tripped the forward and despite lengthy appeals and a VAR review the decision stood.

Galindez was then alert to keep out the resulting free-kick from Rodriguez and the keeper then had a busy end to the half as Colombia peppered his goal.

Liverpool winger Luis Diaz headed a Daniel Munoz cross against the post and Galindez did well to smother Cordoba at close range.

Colombia grew increasingly frustrated as Ecuador’s defence held firm in the second half with Galindez parrying to keep out substitute Jhon Duran and the unfortunate Cordoba blasted the loose ball high and wide from a tight angle.

Elsewhere Tuesday, Paraguay earned a 2-2 draw at Bolivia with the home side going ahead in the 15th minute with a confident strike from Ervin Vaca.

Newcastle United forward Miguel Almiron levelled for Paraguay in the 71st minute with a clinical finish after a smart passing move across the box.

Bolivia restored their lead nine minutes later with a Miguel Terceros penalty after Gustavo Gomez brought down Lucas Chavez in the box.

Both benches got involved in protests and Bolivian sub Adalid Terrazas and Paraguay’s Diego Gomez, who had been substituted, were both shown red cards.

Paraguay grabbed a point in stoppage time in some style with a magnificent solo effort from Julio Enciso who dribbled from deep before unleashing a thundering drive from 20 yards out.

Ninth-placed Chile have a lot of work to do if they are to make one of the six automatic qualifcation spots but boosted their faint hopes with a 4-2 thrashing of Venzeula.

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