

# US 'overwhelm' Costa Rica to finish 4-game, 11-day stretch



United States' Reggie Cannon (20) and Costa Rica's Ronald Matarrita (22) vie for the ball during the second half during an international friendly soccer match, on June 9, in Sandy, Utah. (AP)

Dike, Cannon score 1st international goals

**SANDY, Utah, June 10, (AP):** The United States finished a grueling stretch of four games in 11 days over 5,400 miles that resulted in three wins, including the CONCACAF Nations League trophy. Twenty-four players saw action, and eight scored.

Prep time for the Europe-based players is over. Next up is the start of World Cup qualifying in September.

## SOCCER

"The depth of this team will really come in handy," Brenden Aaronson said after scoring in the eighth minute to start a 4-0 exhibition rout of Costa Rica. "I think it's going really well so far. And I think we showed that today."

Daryl Dike and Reggie Cannon added their first international goals and Gio Reyna converted a penalty kick in the 77th, three minutes after entering.

U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter changed nine starters from the lineup he used to beat Mexico 3-2 in extra time on Sunday to win the first CONCACAF Nations League.

Christian Pulisic, Weston McKennie and Josh Sargent didn't play at all.

Defender Mark McKenzie, the target of racial abuse on the Internet after a poor first half Sunday, was the only player to start for the fourth straight game and had a stronger effort.

"I came out of the Mexico game being extremely proud of Mark and the way he handled himself," Berhalter said. "He didn't need to play another minute today and I still would have been proud of him."

# Ronaldo scores as Portugal blank Israel



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo shoots the ball during the international friendly soccer match between Portugal and Israel at the Alvalade stadium in Lisbon, on June 9. (AP)

This schedule was designed to mimic pandemic-delayed World Cup qualifying, where the U.S. opens with three matches from Sept. 2-8, a window FIFA designed for two.

"What I realized is that it's going to take a group to get this done. It's not going to take 11 starters," Berhalter said. "We think we have a young, talented group. And to gain that CONCACAF experience was massive. And when we turn around and we go into World Cup qualifying, we'll have a good idea of what that's going to be like and what the three-game rhythm's going to be like."

Reyna was the only multiple goal scorer over the four games, which began with a 2-1 friendly loss at Switzerland on May 30 and was followed by last Thursday's 1-0 win over

Honduras in the Nations League semi-final. Pulisic, McKennie, Jordan Siebatcheu and Sebastian Lletget also scored.

"I think there's guys that will be able to go three games and 90 minutes, but it's not going to be many, especially given the way we want to play and the way we want to press," Berhalter said.

Europe-based players will go on brief vacations and then skip next month's CONCACAF Gold Cup to report for preseason ahead of 2021-22 club seasons.

The 20th-ranked U.S. improved 11-1-1 in its last 13 matches and won its 10th consecutive game against a regional opponent since a 2019 Nations League loss to Canada, matching the American high set in 2013.

**LISBON, Portugal, June 10, (AP):** Cristiano Ronaldo scored to lead Portugal to a 4-0 win over Israel in its final warm-up match before defending its European Championship title.

Ronaldo scored in the 44th minute to take his international tally to 104 goals. He will enter Euro 2020 five goals away from tying the all-time scoring record for a men's national team. The record is held by former Iran striker Ali Daei, the only other male soccer player to surpass the 100-goal milestone.

## SOCCER

Bruno Fernandes and João Cancelo also scored for Portugal, which was coming off a 0-0 draw at Spain in its first warm-up match last week.

Ronaldo missed a few good chances before finally finding the net with a left-footed shot from inside the area at the José Alvalade Stadium. His goal came two minutes after Fernandes had opened the scoring with a low shot from near the penalty spot after a pass by Cancelo, who added to the lead with a nice low strike into the corner in the 86th.

Fernandes scored his second goal by hitting the top corner with a shot from outside the area in stoppage time.

Portugal coach Fernando Santos started with Fernandes, Bernardo Silva and Diogo Jota playing alongside Ronaldo, who was substituted in the 72nd. João Félix was not included in the match squad. Pepe and Rúben Dias led the defense.

Portugal will play Euro 2020 in a difficult Group F that also includes Germany, France and Hungary. It will open against Hungary on Tuesday in Budapest. It then faces Germany on June 19 and France on June 23.

## English clubs fined

# UEFA 'pauses' disciplinary Super League rebels case

**GENEVA, June 10, (AP):** UEFA put a hold Wednesday on its disciplinary case against Super League rebel clubs Barcelona, Juventus and Real Madrid, while the six Premier League clubs that tried to join the breakaway accepted a collective fine of 22 million pounds (\$31 million).

The three clubs who refused to renounce the Super League project are facing a possible ban from the Champions League, although that now looks unlikely before next season.

Barcelona, Juventus and Real Madrid won a ruling from a Spanish court in April that they could not be punished by Switzerland-based UEFA and FIFA. Their case was also referred by the judge in Madrid to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg which could weigh in if UEFA is breaching competition laws. "The UEFA Appeals Body has decided to stay the proceedings until further notice," the European soccer body said in a statement, acknowledging it was notified by Swiss authorities last week of the Madrid court order.

## SOCCER

"UEFA understands why the disciplinary proceedings needed to be suspended for the time being, but remains confident in and will continue to defend its position in all the relevant jurisdictions."

It was unclear if next steps will see UEFA challenge the injunction in Madrid or seek to persuade judges in Luxembourg, where the timeline for rulings could take at least several months unless fast-tracked.

All three holdout clubs qualified for next season's Champions League though none won their domestic league title. Their national federations submitted entries for all three with UEFA and the group-stage draw is scheduled for Aug. 26.

The plan to split from the existing Champions League run by UEFA collapsed within 48 hours in April after the English clubs - Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Tottenham and Manchester clubs United and City - pulled out amid a backlash from their own fans and the government.

The Premier League on Wednesday said its fines amount to around 3.6 million pounds (\$5.1 million) per club, with the cash being invested in support for fans, grassroots leagues and community programs. The league called the clubs' acceptance of the fines a "gesture of goodwill."

"They have wholeheartedly apologized to their fans, fellow clubs, the Premier League and the FA (Football Association)," the league said in a statement.

They have accepted being deducted



In this Feb 15, 2021 file photo, Chelsea's Timo Werner (left) vies for the ball with Newcastle's Isaac Hayden during the English Premier League match at the Stamford Bridge, London, England. (AP)

30 points and fined 25 million pounds (\$35 million) if they try to join any similar sort of largely closed competition in the future that isn't part of the established structures.

It's a second round of sanctions for the six English clubs. They agreed a settlement deal with UEFA last month joined by the other Italian and Spanish teams among the Super League founders: AC Milan, Inter Milan and Atlético Madrid.

The nine agreed to UEFA's terms to forfeit 5% of their prize money from European competitions in the 2022-23 season and pay a combined 15 million euros (\$18.3 million) also as a "gesture of goodwill" to benefit children, youth and grassroots football.

For top clubs, a successful season in the Champions League currently earns around 100 million euros (\$122 million) in UEFA prize money.

The agreement also saw the nine consent to be fined 100 million euros (\$122 million) if they seek again to play in an unauthorized competition or 50 million euros (\$61 million) if they breach any other commitments to UEFA as part of the settlement.

After UEFA formally opened the disciplinary case two weeks ago, Barcelona, Juventus and Madrid said in a joint statement they would not accept "any form of coercion or intolerable pressure."

The statutes of UEFA and FIFA prohibit clubs taking disputes to local courts outside soccer's judicial bodies whose decisions can be appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.

Barcelona, Juventus and Madrid have claimed they are trying to change the traditional structure of European soccer, after teams and leagues were badly hit financially by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Either we reform football or we will have to watch its inevitable downfall," they said last month.

# Salmiya, Kuwait clubs ready for 23rd ACL Handball Champ'ship

**KUWAIT CITY, June 10, (KUNA):** Kuwait and Salmiya sport clubs said they were ready to compete in the 23rd Asian Club League Handball Championship from June 12 to 21 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

In separate statements to KUNA on Thursday, the clubs' officials noted that their teams aim to represent Kuwait in the final stages of the competition and develop the performance of Kuwaiti handball.

Kuwait club's team played five friendly matches in the training camp in Serbia, winning four matches, the club's handball media coordinator Saad

Al-Shimhari said. He added that the team signed contracts with four professional players for the tournament.

## HANDBALL

On his part, member of the board of Salmiya club Dr Hussein Al-Khodhari noted that the team prepared for the tournament in a training camp in the Qatari capital, Doha.

Clubs from Saudi, Qatar, Bahrain, Uzbekistan, Iran and Yemen will also take part in the competition.

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