



Spain's Cesar Azpilicueta, (right), scored against Croatia during the Euro 2020 soccer championship round of 16 match between Croatia and Spain, at Parken stadium in Copenhagen, Denmark. (AP)

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Hazard scores winning goal as top-ranked team reach quarters

Belgium keep Ronaldo in check, end Portugal title defense

SEVILLE, Spain, June 28, (AP) — Belgium stopped Cristiano Ronaldo on one end, and had just enough attacking power on the other.

The top-ranked Belgians held Ronaldo scoreless and held onto a first-half lead to beat Portugal 1-0 and advance to the quarterfinals of the European Championship.

Ronaldo, who threw his captain's armband to the ground in despair after the final whistle, is still one goal shy of becoming the all-time men's top scorer in international soccer. He came into the match tied with former Iran striker Ali Daei at 109 goals.

Belgium, which have never before won a major soccer title, will next face Italy on Friday in Munich.

Belgium's potent attack, led by Kevin De Bruyne, Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku, also struggled, but Thorgan Hazard scored the winning goal in the 42nd minute with a swerving shot from outside the area. Portugal goalkeeper Rui Patrício was left wrong-footed and was late to swat the ball away.

Belgium played most of the second half without De Bruyne, who had to be substituted after being tackled from behind and injuring his left ankle. De Bruyne missed the team's first game at Euro 2020 while recovering from a facial injury sustained in the Champions League final.

Portugal had several good chances to equalize late in the match, including a header by Rúben Dias saved by Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and a shot by Raphael Guerreiro that hit the post.

The Portuguese did most of the attacking in the second half, finishing the match with 24 attempts. Belgium had



Belgium's Thomas Vermaelen, (left), and Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo challenge for the ball during the Euro 2020 soccer championship round of 16 match between Belgium and Portugal at the La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain. (AP)

six in total and scored the only time it hit the target.

While Portugal's run for a second consecutive European title ended, Belgium stayed on track to end their title drought. The Belgians lost in the European Championship final in 1980 and finished third three years ago at the World Cup for their best finish at that tournament.

The Red Devils have won all four

matches so far at Euro 2020 and won all 10 qualifiers for the tournament. They are unbeaten in 13 consecutive matches in all competitions, since a loss to England last year in the Nations League. Belgium have lost only one of its last 27 international matches.

Ronaldo was kept in check for most of the match, with his best scoring chance coming from a free kick saved by Courtois in the 25th minute. He also

was off target with a free kick in the 74th, and then only managed a weak shot on goal from inside the area a few

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minutes later.

The Juventus striker seemed frustrated by the lack of opportunities, and he also couldn't do much to help his

teammates, with Diogo Jota misfiring from close range.

It had been a slow start at La Cartuja Stadium on a hot night in southern Spain, with neither team threatening much offensively.

Portugal kept Belgium's attack under control until Thorgan Hazard scored after a failed clearance in front of the area. The buildup to the goal started with Courtois dummying Ron-

aldo inside his own area. The forward tried to put pressure on the goalkeeper but he cut back with the ball as Ronaldo went past him.

The game grew heated at times, with a small altercation starting in the 76th after Portugal defender Pepe came in hard on Thorgan Hazard while play was stopped as Lukaku waited to be attended by doctors after being hit on the head by an opponent's foot.

Middleton powers Bucks past Hawks

Young injures ankle

ATLANTA, June 28, (AP) — Khris Middleton showed once again that the Milwaukee Bucks have more than one player capable of taking over a game.

He did it Sunday night at the best possible time.

Middleton scored 20 of his play-off career high-tying 38 points in the fourth quarter, leading the Bucks to a 113-102 victory over the Atlanta Hawks for a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

"What he did today was unreal," Giannis Antetokounmpo said. "He was unbelievable. Carried the team at the end. ... What I saw today was greatness. Simple as that." Trae Young scored 35 points for Atlanta but was slowed in the final period. He stepped on an official's foot late in the third and injured his right ankle. He will have an MRI on the ankle on Monday.

"It's hurting. It's frustrating," Young said, adding the injury impacted "my blow-by speed." Game 4 is Tuesday night in Atlanta.

Middleton scored 10 points in the decisive run in the fourth that gave Milwaukee the lead. He had 11 rebounds and seven assists.

"I just finally got them to go," Middleton said. "I've been struggling some with the ball going in the basket. Finally they started dropping for me at the right time. I'm thankful for that." Antetokounmpo, who often has the spotlight for Milwaukee, had 33 points. The Bucks trailed most of the game before surging in the fourth quarter. Atlanta led 95-88 before Middleton made his first of three 3-pointers during the 15-3 run for a 103-98 lead.

"Just being around him a lot, he starts to see it go in, he starts to feel good, he gets in a rhythm in a lot of ways," said Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer before adding "I'm just glad he's on our side." After never leading in a 125-91 Game 2 loss, the Hawks were eager for a better start in their first home game of the series. Turnovers by Middleton and Antetokounmpo led to dunks by Clint Capela, and Kevin Huerter added a 3-pointer for a 7-0 lead.

The Hawks stretched the advantage to 13 points. Antetokounmpo was held



Atlanta Hawks' Bogdan Bogdanovic (13) rebounds the ball against Milwaukee Bucks' Khris Middleton (22) and Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) during the first half of Game 3 of the NBA Eastern Conference basketball finals in Atlanta. (AP)

to five first-quarter points but regained his scoring form in the second period. He had 11 points in the period as the Bucks finally pulled even at 56-all on a 3-pointer by Pat Connaughton with 12 seconds remaining in the half.

The Bucks took their first lead at 82-80 on a basket by Bobby Portis Jr. with 1:47 remaining in the third. A 3-pointer by Danilo Gallinari, who had 18 points, gave Atlanta an 85-83 lead at the end of the period.



Brazil's Gabriel Barbosa, (right), and Ecuador's Piero Hincapié battle for the ball during a Copa America soccer match at Olimpico stadium in Goiania, Brazil. (AP)

Ecuador hold Brazil, advance Copa quarters

SAO PAULO, June 28, (AP) — Ecuador held a below-strength Brazil to a 1-1 draw on Sunday to secure a spot in the Copa America quarterfinals.

Neymar, defender Thiago Silva and striker Gabriel Jesus didn't play against Ecuador at the Olimpico Stadium in Goiania.

The draw moved Ecuador to fourth spot in Group B, eliminating Venezuela and likely setting up a quarterfinal match against Argentina. Brazil had already secured top spot in the group before the match began, allowing coach Tite to continue testing his lineup with an eye on the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

The defending champions opened the scoring in the 37th minute with a header by Eder Militão after a corner. Angel Mena equalized for Ecuador

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in the 53rd when he finished with an angled shot in front of goalkeeper Alison. The draw ended a streak of 10 consecutive Brazil wins.

Brazil defender Marquinhos said the game against Ecuador was important for Brazil "so all players of the squad could have at least some time of play, so everyone can be ready when knockout begins." "Also," he added, "players who were tired had some rest so they can go to the knockout and play their best." Marquinhos also expressed concern about the pitch at the Nilton Santos Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, where Brazil will play in the quarterfinals and, if they win, in the semifinals of the tournament.

Peru beat Venezuela 1-0 with a goal by André Carillo from close range in the 48th minute. The Venezuelans needed a win to progress to the playoff stage. The Peruvians started the tournament being hammered by Brazil 4-0, but recovered after a 2-1 win over Colombia. The 2-2 draw against Ecuador had already put the team close to securing their knockout stage place.

"Peru were overcoming itself as matches went on. We played against

very intense teams and had little time to recover," coach Ricardo Gareca said. "To impose ourselves against different adversaries and manage to get a spot fairly speaks clearly about the fortitude (of) this national team." Group B ended with Brazil on 10 points, followed by Peru (7), Colombia (4), Ecuador (3) and Venezuela (2).

Meanwhile, Ecuador midfielder Damian Diaz tested positive for the coronavirus.

Diaz was in "great conditions, isolated," Ecuador said on social media. He was the only player in the squad who tested positive, the team added.



Belgium's Tim Merlier celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the third stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 182.9 kilometers (113.65 miles) with start in Lorient and finish in Pontivy, France. (AP)

Van der Poel keeps yellow jersey

Merlier wins Tour de France stage 3, contenders tumble

PONTIVY, France, June 28, (AP) — Tim Merlier of Belgium powered to victory in the third stage of the Tour de France on Monday when several top contenders hit the ground during another crash-marred day.

Merlier won ahead of his Alpecin-Fenix teammate Jasper Philipsen and Frenchman Nacer Bouhanni.

There was a crash in the closing stages when ace sprinter Caleb Ewan's front wheel slid from under him in the final turn. He brought down Peter Sagan with him.

Mathieu van der Poel rode safely at the front throughout the day and escaped unscathed to keep the yellow jersey he earned on Sunday.

The narrow roads in the stage finale took a toll on many competitors who crashed as the peloton rode at full speed. Last year's runner-up, Primoz Roglic, went down about nine kilometers from the end in the town of Pontivy.

Roglic immediately got back on his bike but lost ground to his main rivals as his Jumbo-Visma teammates tried to pace him back to the peloton.

Defending champion Tadej Pogacar was slowed a few kilometers further down the road following another crash but it was unclear whether he crashed.

Earlier, former Tour champion Geraint Thomas hit the tarmac but managed to keep on racing and was paced back to the peloton.

The Ineos-Grenadiers leader fell off his bike and hit the ground hard with about 145 kilometers left. The 2018 champion

sat on the road for a while clutching his right shoulder and grimacing in pain as he was tended to by the race doctor. It looked like he would retire but ultimately went back on his bike.

Tour organizers said the peloton was riding at 43 kph when the crash took place. Robert Gesink, a teammate of last-year's runner-up Primoz Roglic, also fell and was forced to abandon.

With his racing kit lacerated, Thomas struggled at the

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back. Teammate Luke Rowe waited for him and the Welsh pair lagged 2 1/2 minutes behind the main pack. With the help of more teammates they eventually caught the peloton after Thomas changed his bike.

Thomas was 20th overall before the start of the stage, 41 seconds behind race leader Mathieu van der Poel. He predicted "a stressful day" because of the bad weather conditions.

The race started in the rain in Lorient and a group of five riders surged ahead immediately.

Behind, the peloton rode at a pedestrian pace and riders were accompanied by scattered showers making the roads slippery and dangerous.

The crash-prone Thomas has shown in the past he can soldier on in pain.