



Los Angeles Clippers guard Paul George, center, shoots as San Antonio Spurs guard Dejounte Murray (lower left), and forward Drew Eubanks defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. Clippers won 106-92. (AP) — See Page 15

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Dutch head back to WC

Playoffs for Turkey, Ukraine

ROTTERDAM, The Netherlands, Nov 17, (AP): The Netherlands will be back at the World Cup after an eight-year gap, forcing Norway star Erling Haaland to wait until at least 2026 to make his debut on the biggest stage.

The Dutch did just enough with late goals in a 2-0 win in Rotterdam that eliminated the Norwegians who were missing Haaland, their injured 21-year-old forward.



Turkey overtook Norway into second place in Group G, winning 2-1 in Montenegro to enter the European playoffs in March.

Ukraine also won away, 2-0 at Bosnia-Herzegovina, to join Turkey as unseeded teams who will be on the road again in the playoffs semifinals.

The unbeaten Ukrainians, who drew six of their eight Group D games, rose into second place above Finland, which were eliminated by losing 2-0 at home to table-topping France.

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Kylian Mbappe set up Karim Benzema to score in the 66th before getting the second himself 10 minutes later after a speedy solo run down the left flank.

Wales and the Czech Republic started their Group E games knowing both were heading to the playoffs, with leaders Belgium already having claimed the direct qualification spot to the finals tournament in Qatar.

Wales ensured they will be seeded in the playoffs by drawing 1-1 with the top-ranked Belgians in Cardiff to finish runners-up in the group.

The Czechs, who beat visiting Estonia 2-0, placed third in the group and take one of the two playoffs entries for teams that won a Nations League group last year.

The Netherlands failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup despite being the beaten finalists in 2010 and reaching the semifinals four years later under then-coach Louis van Gaal.

Now aged 70 and nursing a newly injured hip that kept him from the dugout, Van Gaal oversaw win from a seat high up in the stands of the empty stadium in Rotterdam.

Entering the final 10 minutes, a Norway goal could have eliminated the Dutch completely. The tension was banished by Tottenham winger Steven Bergwijn scoring with a hard rising shot in the 84th.

Barcelona forward Memphis Depay sealed the win in stoppage time by finishing off a breakaway move through an exposed Norway defense.

Van Gaal's team finished two points ahead of Turkey after the tightest three-way contest in the 10 European qualifying groups.

Turkey, Ukraine, Wales and the Czech Republic completed the lineup of 12 nations that will compete for three tickets to Qatar in a tense six-day span in March.

They will go into three knockout brackets of four teams each when FIFA makes the draw on Nov. 26 in Zurich.

Algeria, Nigeria, Cameroon advance, Ivory Coast out

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Nov 17, (AP): Algeria, Cameroon, Nigeria and Tunisia took their last chances and qualified for the World Cup playoffs in Africa, but Ivory Coast didn't seize the day and is the continent's biggest team so far to miss out on next year's tournament in Qatar. African champion Algeria and Nigeria scraped through to the 10-team playoffs in March after both were held to home draws but clinched the point they needed to progress on the final day of the group stage.

Tunisia were more convincing, beat-

ing Zambia 3-1 to take the top spot and the playoff place in Group B, snuffing out Zambia's hopes.

Cameroon ended Ivory Coast's campaign with a 1-0 win in their much-hyped West African showdown in Cameroon. Karl Toko Ekambi's first-half goal settled the tense Group D decider as Ivory Coast lost the game and the lead of the group right at the end.

Ivory Coast, a two-time African champions, will miss their second straight World Cup after also failing to make it to Russia in 2018.

Only the 10 group winners progressed to the playoffs and Algeria, Cameroon, Nigeria and Tunisia took the last four spots. They joined Mali, Egypt, Ghana,

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Senegal, Morocco and Congo, which had already advanced, although there are two appeals brewing that may still have a say on who actually plays in the two-leg playoff ties to decide the final five

African teams to go to the World Cup.

Benin says it will appeal against their 2-0 loss to Congo on Sunday which denied them a playoff place because Congo made four substitutions using four separate stoppages in play. Current FIFA rules allow teams to make up to five substitutions but only during a total of three breaks in play.

South Africa also said it is protesting to FIFA and the Confederation of African Football after it lost 1-0 in Ghana this weekend, which sent Ghana through at the expense of the South Africans.



Montenegro's Marko Jankovic (left), duels for the ball with Turkey's Kerem Akturkoglu during the World Cup 2022 group G qualifying soccer match between Montenegro and Turkey, at the City stadium in Podgorica, Montenegro. (AP)

Chile lose at home to third-place Ecuador

Argentina qualify for WC; Uruguay at risk

SAO PAULO, Nov 17, (AP): Argentina secured a place in next year's World Cup after a 0-0 draw against Brazil on Tuesday, giving Lionel Messi one more shot at winning the only major trophy missing in his career.

Second-place Argentina qualified after Chile lost 2-0 at home to third-place Ecuador.

Competition leading Brazil had already secured the first of South America's four direct entries to Qatar 2022.

Few opportunities were available for Argentina and Brazil in a tense match marked by Messi's low key performance and Neymar's absence due to injury. Goalkeepers Emiliano Martinez and Alisson were just about spectators most of the match.

The most controversial moment of the match in San Juan, in Argentina's Northwest, was in the 35th minute when Raphinha was hit by Nicolas Otemendi's elbow and started bleeding. There was no video review of the move. The Brazilian needed five stitches during the break.

Messi, who played the entire match after recovering from a knee injury, said he felt well on the pitch. He played for only 15 minutes in Argentina's 1-0 win over Uruguay last week so he could recover to face Brazil.

"It is not easy to play with the pace that this match demanded," Messi said

after the match. He had only one opportunity from the edge of the box near the final whistle, but it was easily saved by Brazil goalkeeper Alisson.

Brazil player Fred, who hit the bar with a shot in the 60th minute, said his team's defense was once more tested



Argentina's Nahuel Molina (left), and Brazil's Vini Jr eye the ball during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 at Bicentenario Stadium in San Juan, Argentina. (AP)



Netherlands' Matthijs de Ligt heads the ball during the World Cup 2022 group G qualifying soccer match between the Netherlands and Norway at De Kuip stadium in Rotterdam, Netherlands. (AP)

and once more succeeded in qualifiers.

"Today we didn't score, we missed some opportunities, but once again we have a clean sheet," he said. "We hope to arrive well at the World Cup."

Brazil lead South American qualifiers with 35 points, six ahead of Argentina. Both teams have completed 13 games, one fewer than scheduled because their encounter in September was suspended after seven minutes when Brazilian officials belatedly enforced COVID-19 restrictions. Two-time World Cup champions Uruguay lost 3-0 at Bolivia and will finish the year out of qualifying positions for a spot in Qatar, in seventh place in the 10-team round-robin competition.

The Uruguay have four matches remaining to push for qualification.

The top four teams in South America earn direct entry to the World Cup. The fifth-place team go into an inter-continental playoff for a spot in Qatar next year.

Bolivia opened the scoring in the 30th minute when goalkeeper Fernando Muslera failed to hold Juan Carlos Arce's cross. Marcelo Martins got the second in the altitude of La Paz with a

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header in the 45th.

Arce finished off in the 79th with another header. It could have been worse for Uruguay had Bolivia not missed a penalty in the second half.

Uruguay coach Oscar Tabárez told a post-match news conference he's not "throwing in the towel."

"I am a professional, I signed a contract and it says everything I need to do," the veteran coach said. "I don't know who can ask me to do that (resign) after this time at work."

During his second spell with Uruguay, Tabárez took the team to the past three World Cups, including a memorable campaign to the semifinals in South Africa in 2010. He has also won the 2011 Copa America. Peru overtook Uruguay after a 2-1 win at Venezuela, moving Ricardo Gareca's team to 17 points along with Colombia, which had a 0-0 draw with Paraguay.



Canada's Jonathan David (right), and Mexico's Roberto Carlos Alvarado Hernandez vie for the ball during the second half of a World Cup soccer qualifying match in Edmonton, Alberta. (AP)

Canada take top spot as US settle for draw with Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Nov 17, (AP): Damion Lowe leapt above Walker Zimmerman at the top of the 6-yard box in the 84th minute and headed Leon Bailey's corner kick to the left of US goalkeeper Zack Steffen.

Back at The Office for the first time in 25 months, yellow-clad Reggae Boyz fans erupted at the apparent go-ahead goal.

But wait! Costa Rican referee Juan Gabriel Calderón whistled Lowe for a relatively slight push into Zimmerman's shoulder, a call frequently not made against a CONCACAF home team.

The Americans started the second half of World Cup qualifying with a bumpy 1-1 draw against Jamaica on Tuesday night. Tim Weah's 11th-minute goal on an angled 6-yard shot off his weaker left foot was offset by Michail Antonio's spectacular

34-yard strike in the 22nd.

The US dropped into second place with 15 points going into their final six qualifiers - three home games plus road matches at Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica.

Canada moved into first with 16 points thanks to a 2-1 win over Mexico in Edmonton, Alberta, where the temperature at kickoff was 16 degrees. Mexico and Panama have 14 points each, followed by Costa Rica

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(nine), Jamaica (seven), El Salvador (six) and Honduras (three). The top three nations qualify from North and Central America and the Caribbean, and the fourth go to a playoff.

On the disallowed goal, Jamaica coach Theodore Whitmore didn't have a good view from the sideline. "I wouldn't complain about the officiating," he said.

CONCACAF does not use video review in World Cup qualifiers.

"Sometimes you don't get that call," Zimmerman said. "But I do think it was a foul. I think he hit me before hitting the ball."



Weah