

Sports

Nine poker players left, one will win \$7.7 million



Majka wins Tour's 11th stage



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COUGHLIN STUNNED AT PAN AM GAMES

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TORONTO: Canada's Marcus Haber is nearly kicked in the face by Costa Rica's Francisco Calvo during a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match. — AP

JAMAICA, COSTA RICA ADVANCE IN GOLD CUP

KANSAS CITY: Jamaica scored a late winning goal while Costa Rica needed only a scoreless draw as both teams advanced from Group B to the quarter-finals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup on Tuesday.

Jamaica's Garath McCleary tapped in a rebound in the 72nd minute to help his team beat El Salvador 1-0 and clinch the group with seven points. McCleary's second goal of the tournament set up a quarter-final clash against Haiti.

El Salvador could have clinched a berth to the quarter-finals with a win but could not score. The Jamaicans prevailed despite needing three goalkeepers and lost Darren Mattocks to a second yellow card in the 81st minute. Starting goalkeeper Jermaine Taylor was injured in the opening minutes, while replacement Dwayne Miller went down in the 23rd minute after taking a hit in the head. In the late match, Canada continued their offensive struggles

in front of a partisan crowd in Toronto. Canada had a great chance to end that drought in the 24th minute when Dejan Jakovic's throw-in set up an attempt by Marcus Haber that was saved. The Canadians failed to score in their three games at the tournament, allowing Costa Rica to advance to the quarter-finals with just three points.

Meanwhile, Jurgen Klinsmann spouted optimism after the United States played Panama to a 1-1 draw to wrap up the group stage of the Gold Cup, reasoning that despite a trio of sluggish performances the Americans had still survived unbeaten.

That didn't stop Klinsmann from shaking up his roster less than 24 hours later. The coach chose to add DaMarcus Beasley, Joe Corona and Alan Gordon for the knockout rounds, which begin with the quarter-finals Saturday in Baltimore. Taking a seat are Greg Garza, Alfredo Morales and Jozy Altidore, who

has been hampered by an ailing hamstring. Teams could make up to six roster changes using their 35-player preliminary list.

Altidore started the first two games in the group stage but was substituted out of both. He was left on the bench against Panama on Monday night. "We believe that Jozy's just not there yet. Jozy never really got into this tournament and never really picked up the rhythm," Klinsmann said in announcing the changes Tuesday. "He's just simply not in the shape right now to help us." Klinsmann said he knew that Altidore might not be match fit when he selected him for the Gold Cup, and that's why Gordon was on standby from the beginning. The Los Angeles Galaxy striker made his only national team appearance in a 2012 World Cup qualifier against Antigua and Barbuda; while he was on the Gold Cup roster two years ago, he didn't get into a match. Klinsmann said

that the addition of the 33-year-old Beasley will provide leadership and experience. The four-time World Cup veteran captained the U.S. to the Gold Cup title two years ago but had announced his retirement from international competition.

"Having DaMarcus come into the team is huge, because of his character, his giving nature, the spirit he brings, but also the high quality he brings," Klinsmann said.

"He brings a lot of experience into this group, and he's hungry. He's still as hungry as Day 1 in his career." Corona, who scored twice in the Gold Cup two years ago, was added for his experience against teams from the Caribbean and Central America. He also is proficient at maintaining possession, something the Americans have struggled to do. "In the tournament now we need to produce results and get things done. With Joe, we have that option to

bring him in now," Klinsmann said. "With his great technique, with his one-touch passing, he makes things very easy and simple. I think it's a great opportunity to have Joe back, even if it hurts a little bit for Alfredo, but that's just part of the game."

The US finished 2-0-1 atop Group A, though the unblemished run wasn't without stress. The Americans scuffled to a 2-1 victory over Honduras and needed a big play from Clint Dempsey for a 1-0 victory over Haiti. Still, Klinsmann chose to highlight the quality of the group rather than his own team's shortcomings and insisted the US is trending upward heading into the quarter-finals.

"We can improve still a lot, absolutely," Klinsmann said. "You can take the game apart and see that we didn't have the passing rhythm we needed. We made mistakes. But we know we're growing game to game and that's what this is all about." —AP

ARSENAL, EVERTON IN SINGAPORE FINAL

SINGAPORE: Teenager Chuba Akpom netted a hat-trick as Arsenal reached the final of the invitational Asia Trophy against Everton with a 4-0 win over a Singapore Select XI at the National Stadium yesterday. The England under-20 international fired home a close range effort on the half-hour, converted a 76th minute penalty and then completed his treble four minutes later to give the FA Cup holders an emphatic win in the first match of their pre-season.

Jack Wilshere also converted a penalty for the Gunners as they set up a meeting on Saturday against Everton, who beat Stoke City in a penalty shootout earlier in the day following a goalless draw between the two Premier League sides. Arsenal broke the deadlock after catching the home side on the counter-attack on the half-hour mark. Alex Iwobi's pass picked out Wilshere on the right of the Singapore box and although Baihakki Khaizan made a fine tackle to halt the England international, Akpom picked up the loose ball and blasted past goalkeeper Izwan Mahbud from close range.

Akpom went close to adding a second in the 35th minute when Iwobi sent him clear but Izwan was quickly off his line to smother the youngster's effort.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain managed to slide the ball past Izwan on a one-on-one early in the second half but saw his effort cleared off the line by Madhu Mohana.

However, the visiting side's pressure eventually told when they won a penalty in the 61st minute after Mathieu Debuchy went down under challenge by Sirina Camara and Wilshere made no mistake from the spot as he sent Izwan the wrong way. With the home side tiring, Arsenal won another penalty in the 76th minute after Izwan brought down Jon Toral and Akpom fired home to make it 3-0. The 19-year-old rounded off his excellent evening by



SINGAPORE: Arsenal's Jon Toral (right) vies for the ball with Singapore Selection's Fazrul Nawaz during their soccer match for the Barclays Asia Trophy. — AP

netting his third goal and Arsenal's fourth with 10 minutes left after rising unmarked to head home a Hector Bellerin cross. Earlier yesterday, Tim Howard made a crucial save to deny Marco Van Ginkel in a shootout after a 0-0 stalemate between Everton and Stoke.

The American goalkeeper got a strong hand to turn away the Dutch midfielder's effort in the second round of spot kicks before Phil Jagielka found the top right corner with Everton's final attempt to seal a 5-4 victory for the Toffees. — AFP

ZOLA TO COACH QATAR'S AL-ARABI

DOHA: Former Italy forward Gianfranco Zola said he has taken a gamble in turning down management offers from England and at home to take charge of Qatari side Al Arabi.

The former Chelsea, Napoli and Parma playmaker signed a two-year deal with the seven-times Qatari champions on Tuesday, bringing with him another ex-Italian forward Pierluigi Casiraghi to assist.

"I know I'm taking a big gamble by leaving behind offers from Italy and England and taking up a coaching position in Qatar," Zola, who was most recently working as a television pundit in Qatar, was quoted as saying by Doha Stadium Plus yesterday.

"It's a calculated risk. I believe in myself, my staff and the Arabi management. I'm not a total stranger to Qatar either. I've good knowledge of the Qatar Stars League and its teams. I've a feeling we'll do well." Zola has struggled for management success in England with West Ham United and Watford and at home with Cagliari, who sacked him in March.

The Italian joked he hoped his new bosses, who dismissed another former Chelsea player in Dan Petrescu before finishing eighth in the 12-team league, would add some star quality to the squad.

"If the club is willing to buy Lionel Messi for me, that'll be my first requirement. I'll then be the happiest man on earth," he said.

"But for me, the real challenge is to improve the quality of local players. It's key to our ability to win major titles in the long run. Foreign players can only help to a certain extent. My staff is experienced at developing raw talent. We can really make a difference." — Reuters