

Sports

Weah, Dest revive US World Cup hopes, Mexico stay top

LOS ANGELES: Timothy Weah set up the winner as the United States came from behind to defeat Costa Rica 2-1 and reignite their 2022 World Cup qualifying campaign on Wednesday. Weah, who plays for French champions Lille, was drafted into the US starting line-up shortly before kick-off after DC United's Chris Arriola suffered an injury in the warm-up.

The 21-year-old son of Liberian football icon George Weah was instrumental in the winning US goal, picking up a pass from Barcelona wingback Sergino Dest and rifling a shot towards Costa Rica goalkeeper Leonel Moreira's near-post.

Weah's effort cannoned off the woodwork and ricocheted off Moreira and into the net for an own goal on 66 minutes. It completed a well-earned comeback for US coach Gregg Berhalter's young side, who recovered after falling behind inside the first minute from Keysher Fuller before Dest's 25th-minute equalizer.

The win in Columbus, Ohio, gave the United States 11 points from six matches, three behind Mexico after El Tri's 2-0 victory over El Salvador in San Salvador. "The team dug in and stuck together and I was really happy with the performance after conceding the first-minute goal," US captain Tyler Adams said.

The United States had suffered an upset 1-0 away defeat to Panama on Sunday, when Berhalter was criticized for making seven

changes from the team that beat Jamaica last week. Against Costa Rica on Wednesday, Berhalter returned to the nucleus of the team that had brushed aside Jamaica, making 10 changes, and his team looked a more threatening and dynamic unit as a result.

The line-up was also the youngest ever US team to start a World Cup qualifying match, with an average age of 22 years and 229 days.



**US with
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But the Americans were given a fright early on when a swift counter-attack by Costa Rica saw Ronald Matarrita beat Dest down the left flank before crossing to the far post for Fuller to volley home from inside the area.

The setback galvanized the United States, however, and they dominated possession for long periods before drawing level midway through the half. Weah broke down the left and played a deep cross that found Yunus Musah on

counter but I'm happy. We haven't conceded a goal, we have six points, it's another step towards qualifying." Chelsea dominated the ball in the early stages but it was the home side who had the first real chances of the game, both of which came after pouncing on sloppy passes in midfield.

Chelsea held at bay

Adrien Rabiot was barracked by the home crowd in the 16th minute when after sprinting away on a break with almost the entire Chelsea team still upfield, he elected to play a pass to Federico Bernardeschi which was completely mishit and rolled to Edouard Mendy. Four minutes later it was Chiesa's turn to show the Blues a clean pair of heels after pinching the ball, only for his low shot from a tight angle to drift just wide.

Juve's gameplan of sitting in and stopping Chelsea from getting a passing rhythm going worked but they initially lacked a focal point and too often let off the hook a Chelsea team missing the dynamism of N'Golo Kante and Mason Mount. However they got the goal they deserved immediately after the break through Chiesa, who has had an uncertain start to the season but confidently met Bernardeschi's through ball to lash home the opener at the near post. — AFP

Chelsea responded by again pressing Juve back into their box but again struggled to break through the hosts' well-drilled backline. It was Juve who were wondering how Bernardeschi didn't double their lead in the 64th minute when he tripped over his own feet with the goal at his mercy. And they were breathing a big sigh of relief with six minutes left when after a prolonged spell of Chelsea dominance Romelu Lukaku thumped wide after being nicely set up by Mateo Kovacic. — AFP



SAN SALVADOR: Mexico's Hector Moreno (center) celebrates with his teammates after scoring against El Salvador during their Qatar 2020 FIFA World Cup Concacaf qualifier football match at Cuscatlan Stadium, in San Salvador, on Wednesday. — AFP

the opposite flank.

The Valencia midfielder laid off to Dest, who cut in and rifled a left-footed shot into the top corner past Costa Rica keeper Keylor Navas. The United States will try to build on the victory when they host Mexico on November 12.

Mexico maintained their lead in the eight-

nation final qualifying group with a victory over El Salvador in a bruising encounter that saw both teams reduced to 10 men in the second half. Mexico center back Hector Moreno headed in a corner kick in the 30th minute. Raul Jimenez sealed the win with a penalty in second-half stoppage time. — AFP

Chiesa strikes to give Juve huge win over holders Chelsea

TURIN: Federico Chiesa proved to be a big game player once again with the only goal in Juventus' 1-0 Champions League win over holders Chelsea which could kick-start their faltering season. Sat 10th in Serie A after a succession of unconvincing performances domestically, Juve top Group H with a perfect six points thanks to a superbly taken winner 10 seconds after half-time from Chiesa, one of Italy's stars at Euro 2020.

Massimiliano Allegri's side took down the European champions, despite missing starting forwards Paulo Dybala and Alvaro Morata, with a disciplined performance that sucked the life out of the Blues and restricted them to very little in front of goal. "We showed the Juventus spirit tonight, and that's what the coach asks of us," Chiesa, who has been criticized by Allegri this season, told Amazon.

"There has never been any problem between me and the coach, I do what he asks of me. When Juve start off poorly there is always a lot of unnecessary noise: we all want to take the club back to the top." Juve are three points clear of both Chelsea and Zenit, who they play in Saint Petersburg in three weeks. "The players put in a great performance against the European champions. We were solid defensively and conceded very few chances. (Wojciech) Szczesny barely had a save to make," said Allegri to Amazon.

"We also missed some really good chances on the

Zain main sponsor of Kuwait's biggest Street Football League

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its main sponsorship of Street Football League (SFL), the country's biggest street football competition. SFL aims at creating a community for street football enthusiasts and encouraging them to showcase their skills and talents within a professional setting.

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Zain's support to this unique competition comes as part of its strategy that closely focuses on supporting and developing the local sports and youth scenes. The company puts the support of Kuwaiti sports at the forefront of its priorities, especially when it comes to shouldering similar programs that target enthusiasts and non-pro players, encouraging them to enjoy the sport they love within an organized and pro setting. Street Football League aims at creating a community for street footballers, encouraging talents to showcase their skills, and contributing to elevating Kuwait's football scene. SFL also aims at supplying talents to professional clubs, offering a pro setting for enthusiast and street footballers, as well as spreading values through awareness campaigns.

SFL's season includes four competitions: First Division, Second Division, League Cup, and Super Cup. Each season features over 80 teams, of which 40 are divided between the first and second divisions. The Super Cup features an encounter between the First Division champions and the Cup champions. Games are held weekly within a professional setting supervised by volunteers. Zain strongly believes in the important role played by the private sector in developing the youth and sports sectors in Kuwait. The company makes this concept a reality by sponsoring and supporting various major sporting events in Kuwait, as well as sponsoring and encouraging many Kuwaiti athletes who represent Kuwait in local, regional, and international arenas.