

American Cup Round UP

29/06/2015



Chilean defender Gonzalo Jara has been banned from the remainder of the Copa America [for provoking Uruguay's Edinson Cavani in a quarterfinal match](#).

The three-game ban handed down Sunday by South America's governing body rules out Jara from Monday's semifinal against Peru.

Jara came up behind Cavani in Wednesday's match and pushed his finger into Cavani's backside. Cavani reacted and raised his hand toward Jara's head, with the Chilean feigning an injury and collapsing on the pitch.

The match referee missed Jara's gesture and sent off Cavani. Chile defeated Uruguay 1-0 to advance.

It wasn't the first time Jara was seen provoking another player. In 2013, Uruguay star striker Luis Suarez was sent off from a World Cup qualifier for punching Jara in the face after a similar provocation from the Chilean.

Jara has been an important player in Chile's defence and a suspension could be costly for the hosts, who are trying to win the South American tournament for the first time.

Following the incident, Jara's club, Mainz, announced they were prepared to let him leave this summer.

The Bundesliga club's sporting director [Christian Heidel told Bild](#): "We do not tolerate that. What makes me more angry than the prod, however, is what happens after. There is nothing I hate more than theatrics.

"He knows that if an offer comes in, he can go."

Argentina leads final 4 in Copa America semifinals

The Copa America semifinals are again missing a local favorite.

Argentina did its part, but Brazil — as in the World Cup a year ago, and in this same South American championship four years ago — no longer shines like it once did and is again out early in a major championship.

Paraguay knocked out the five-time World Cup winner Saturday 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw. This was not as shocking as Germany's 7-1 humiliation of Brazil in the semifinals a year ago in Brazil's own World Cup, but it's a reminder that the country has lost some of its mystique and no longer plays the so-called "jogo bonito."

Paraguay is no stranger to this tournament. It was the losing finalist four years ago against Uruguay and could be headed to the finals again. It faces Argentina on Tuesday in one semifinal, and host Chile goes against Peru on Monday in the other.

The final is July 4.

Not only is Argentina in the semifinals, but all four teams are coached by Argentines: Jorge Sampaoli with Chile, Ricardo Gareca with Peru, Ramon Diaz with Paraguay and Gerardo Martino with Argentina.

Here's a quick look at the last four.

PRESSURE ON MESSI

Argentina star Lionel Messi is under pressure to finally deliver, the way he has for his club team Barcelona. Two-time World Cup champion Argentina has not won a major title in 22 years, and Messi is expected to change that.

Messi and Argentina were knocked out of this tournament four years ago in the quarterfinals at home in Argentina, and lost the World Cup final 1-0 to Germany a year ago.

Messi must be tired. Barcelona won the Champions League title against Juventus in Berlin. He then traveled halfway around the globe with the Copa America starting just five days later.

Messi has scored only one goal in the tournament, and Argentina has scored only four in four matches. It defeated Colombia 5-4 on penalties after a scoreless draw in the quarterfinals on

Friday.

"It's terrible how hard it is for me to score for the national team," said Messi, who has 46 goals for Argentina, second to leader Gabriel Batistuta with 56.

PARAGUAY, TIED UP

Paraguay reached the 2011 finals without winning a single match. It had three draws in group play, and two more in the quarterfinals and semifinals, where it won on penalties.

Paraguay finished last in 2014 World Cup qualifying from South America, but has rebounded under new coach Diaz, who was the most successful coach at Buenos Aires club River Plate before moving to Paraguay.

"We've played against Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, and none could beat us," Diaz said.

Paraguay drew 2-2 with Argentina in group play, and 1-1 with Uruguay before ousting Brazil on Saturday.

CHILE HAS EXPECTATIONS

Chile has never won the title, and this is supposed to be the year with top players — called the "Golden Generation" — like midfielder Arturo Vidal of Juventus, forward Alexis Sanchez of Arsenal, and goalkeeper Claudio Bravo of Barcelona in its side.

Chile has been the best — and highest scoring team — in the tournament.

The side may be without key defender Gonzalo Jara. Jara was caught on camera poking Uruguay forward Edinson Cavani in the rear end during Chile's 1-0 victory over defending champion Uruguay in the quarterfinal. Cavani reacted and was sent off. South America's governing body, CONMEBOL, is expected to rule on Jara before the semifinal, and could ban him.

Chile, Venezuela and Ecuador are the only teams yet to win the South American championship.

PERU STILL THERE

Peru is the surprise, and it also has a longstanding regional rivalry with Chile. Peru opened with a 2-1 loss to Brazil, but defeated Venezuela 1-0 and then reached the quarterfinals with a scoreless draw against Colombia.

Paolo Guerrero scored all three goals in Peru's 3-1 victory over Bolivia in the quarterfinals.

"We are showing that this team wants to keep going," Guerrero said. "We want to get better, and we hope this is the start of something."

Brazil will learn from semis exit: Dunga

Sao Paulo: Coach Dunga says Brazil's elimination from the Copa America will serve as a learning curve ahead of the 2018 World Cup qualifiers.

The Selecao were knocked out of the tournament in Chile after losing a quarter-final penalty shootout to Paraguay on Saturday, reports Xinhua.

"We are all going to take a lot of lessons into the qualifiers," Dunga said upon arriving with Brazil's squad here on Sunday.

"Just like the Copa America, it's going to be difficult but we can't forget the Brazilian characteristics and we need to capitalise on our technical attributes," Dunga, who captained Brazil to World Cup-winning campaign in 1994, added.

South America's 25-month World Cup qualifying campaign will begin in October, with the draw to be announced on July 25.

Defender Miranda lamented Brazil's inability to heal the psychological wounds left by their cataclysmic 1-7 World Cup semi-final loss to Germany last year.

"Unfortunately we weren't able to lift the morale of Brazilian fans," the Atletico Madrid centre-back said.

"But life goes on. Now we are thinking about working as hard as we can to do well in the qualifiers."
