

Boca Juniors wins first Maradona Soccer Cup

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Havana, December 14 (RHC)-- Argentina's Boca Juniors won the first Maradona Cup in soccer by beating Spain's Barcelona 4-2 in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 draw in regular time.

Ferran Jutglá gave the Catalans the lead in the 50th minute and Exequiel Zeballos equalized for the Xeneizes in the 77th minute, in a match marked by the return of Brazilian Dani Alves to the Azulgranas.

The initial edition of the competition, dedicated to the Argentine star Diego Armando Maradona a year after his death, went to the penalty shootout and from the spot the South American players scored all the

kicks and Matheus Pereira and Guillem Jaime missed for Barça.

The team played to the rhythm of Alves, who, despite starting from the right wing -he finished the match as an inside player-, played a leading role in the attack.

Alves ended up wearing the captain's armband in his second debut as a Barça player while waiting to be able to play official matches in January.

In addition, Barça coach Xavi Hernandez took advantage of the match to give minutes to players who do not have much prominence and to test others in a position outside their usual one, such as Brazil's Philippe Coutinho and Austria's Yusuf Demir.

The players of the Catalan subsidiary who started as starters, Jutglá, Álvaro Sanz and Alejandro Balde, were joined in the second half by Ilias Akhomach, Brazilian Matheus Pereira, Mika Mármol, Guillem Jaime and Arnau Comas.

After a goalless first half, Jutglá opened the scoring at Riyadh's Mrsool Park in the 50th minute with a powerful shot that flew into the left corner of the net defended by Agustín Rossi.

Boca Juniors drew level in the 77th minute, when Zeballos took advantage of a quick counterattack and with the outside of his left foot shot past Brazilian-born Italian goalkeeper Norberto Murara "Neto" inside the box to win the Cup later on in a penalty shootout.

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