

Croatia drops a step but remains on the world soccer podium

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By Orlando González Cruz

Havana, December 17 (RHC)-- The Croatian national team defeated Morocco today in the challenge for third place in the FIFA World Cup hosted by Qatar, and which this Sunday will lower its curtains with the Argentina-France clash.

Although many say that the match for third place is the challenge that nobody wants to play, what happened at the Khalifa International Stadium completely contradicted this statement.

As early as the ninth minute, the game was already tied at one. First the Europeans took the lead with a beautiful headed goal by Joško Gvardiol (7th minute) assisted by Ivan Perišić. The Africans quickly went on the attack and equalized through Achraf Dari (9th minute), taking advantage of an opponent's rebound after a free kick near the box.

After the equalizer, the match became an attractive back-and-forth affair with real chances for both sides to score a second goal. Finally, it was the Croatians who would put that goal on the board late in the first half, through Mislav Oršić (42nd minute), who realized that goalkeeper Bono was slightly ahead of him and coolly slotted it to the far post.

In the second half, both teams continued to press and could have scored more than one goal, as there were some controversial plays that neither the main referee nor the VAR converted into penalties. The emotions were latent until the last moment, when Morocco had the chance to nestle the ball in the back of the Croatian net, but the Moroccan shot went over the goal guarded by Dominik Livaković.

After this result, everything is ready for tomorrow's final. Argentina and France will fight for the most important trophy in soccer and the winner will become the fourth team with the best record in the history of World Cups.

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