

# *In the battle of Lusail, Argentina wins its third World Cup*

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By Orlando González Cruz

Havana, December 18 (RHC)-- In an epic battle, Argentina won the third World Cup title in its history on Sunday, after a 4-2 penalty shootout victory over France, following a 3-3 draw in regulation time and two extra periods.

The Albiceleste put on a soccer festival in the first half, completely annulling the French team's ball circulation.

They took the lead on the scoreboard through a penalty converted by the stellar Lionel Messi (23' p), and the extension came through a lethal counter-attack, successfully completed by Angel Di Maria (36'), who had a brilliant opening 45 minutes.

With the scoreboard two-nil down and the match headed in favor of the South Americans, they went to the break.

The beginning of the second half augured that the victory of the team from the land of tango would sail through calm waters, but this feeling could not be further from what would happen on Qatari soil. Those present at the Lusail stadium, and the millions of human beings watching the game on their televisions, would experience one of the most exciting finals in the history of soccer.

In the blink of an eye, the reigning world champions turned the scoreline around with two goals from their top player, Kylian Mbappé (80' p, 81').

The French closed the second half better and it seemed that Messi's dream of reaching the only major title he was missing was going up in smoke; but soccer could not be so unfair to its best architect, and the Argentines held on and forced the extra time.

In extra time, Lionel Scaloni put fresh legs on the field to cushion the "young sprinters" that Didier Deschamps had rightly introduced in the second half. The "Scaloneta" would be rewarded with a goal that went just past the goal defended by Hugo Lloris, the work of "La Pulga", with his second goal of the day (108').

It looked like it was the end of the game, but the king would not give up his crown so easily, and a penalty converted by the phenomenal Mbappé (118' p) brought the final level again.

In the last action of the game, those with the rooster on their jersey had the sentence, but it was the time of "Dibu", who stopped the shot at the precise moment and extinguished the French goal cry.

In the penalties, the Argentine goalkeeper would continue to feed his legend and, as he himself would say in the Copa América, "eating his rivals". For their part, the Albiceleste's penalty takers, led by their captain, made sure not to miss from the penalty spot.

The rest is history: Argentina will proudly wear the third star on its jersey and its fans can let out the decades-long cry of "Argentina campeón!"

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