



ANALYSIS

Cape Verde do it again. World Cup debutants stun Uruguay to take big step towards knockout stage



Varela celebrates Cape Verde's second goal of the game (Carmen Mandato - FIFA/FIFA via Getty Images)



By Dan Sheldon and Sergio Gonzalez

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Six days after Cape Verde secured a scarcely believable 0-0 draw against the pre-tournament favourites Spain, they were at it again, this time drawing 2-2 with Uruguay in Miami.

In their first-ever appearance at a World Cup, they have taken points off two teams that have won the tournament three times between them (Spain in 2010 and Uruguay in 1930 and 1950).

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Cape Verde scored their first-ever goal to take the lead at Hard Rock Stadium when Kevin Pina's 25-yard free kick found the net after some

stadium, when Kevin Pina's 35-yard free kick found the net after some dreadful defending from Uruguay. The ball squeezed between a gap in their two-man defensive wall at the set piece, before bouncing beyond Uruguay goalkeeper Fernando Muslera.

Uruguay hit back with two goals late in the first half, through Maximiliano Araujo and Agustin Canobbio, and it looked as if Marcelo Bielsa's side would strengthen their grip on the game after the break.

But then another bizarre passage of play helped Cape Verde draw level, as Muslera was caught miles off his line and Helio Varela volleyed the ball into an empty net.

Remarkably, the draw gives Cape Verde a 67 percent chance of reaching the knockout round, [as per The Athletic's forecast model](#), while Uruguay have just a 35 percent chance of advancing.

Group H		MATCHES	GF	GA	GD	PTS.
 Spain		D W	4	0	+4	4
 Uruguay 2-2		D	3	3	0	2
 Cape Verde 2-2		D	2	2	0	2
 Saudi Arabia		D L	1	5	-4	1

Current standings reflect in-progress results.

Uruguay have a tough fixture against Spain in their final group game on June 26, while Cape Verde face Saudi Arabia.

Dan Sheldon and Sergio Gonzalez analyse the key talking points in Miami...



What on earth happened for Cape Verde's opening goal?

As Pina turned and sprinted to the other end of the pitch to celebrate scoring a free kick from long range, you could be forgiven for thinking what must be going through Bielsa's mind.

Muslera had set his wall and, given the distance between the ball and the back of his net, he almost certainly would not have been thinking the ball was going to find its way past him.



But as Pina struck the free kick, which did not climb above knee height, the Uruguay wall did the opposite of what it is supposed to do.





Instead of standing there and taking the hit, the players split right down the middle, creating a lovely gap for the ball to zip past them and towards Muslera, who arguably could have done better with the save.



Muslera reacted late, but should be given some leeway as the ball went into the one spot his wall should have protected.



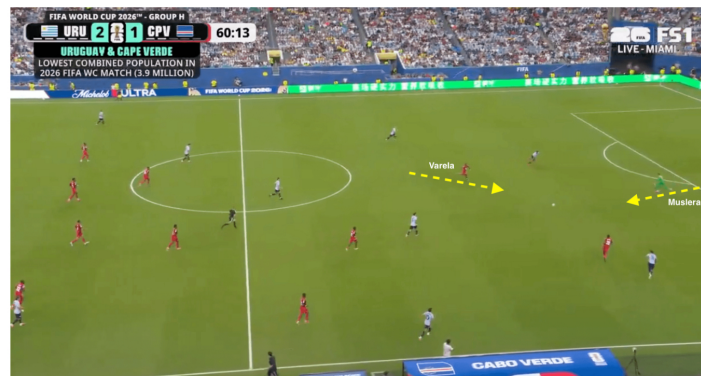
Irrespective of how Pina's strike found its way to the back of the net, it was an electric moment inside the Miami Stadium as the thousands of Cape Verde fans leapt out of their seats and could not hide their joy.

Dan Sheldon

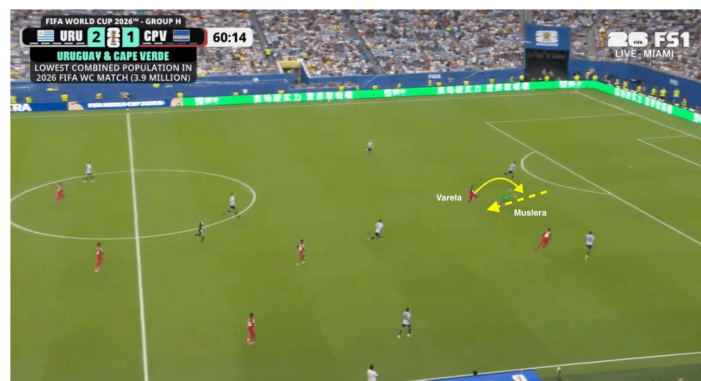
And what about their second one?

Sometimes one gift just isn't enough.

So, when Mathias Olivera played a terrible attempted pass towards his centre-half, coupled with Muslera needlessly sprinting so far out of his box to intercept it, Varela could not believe his luck.

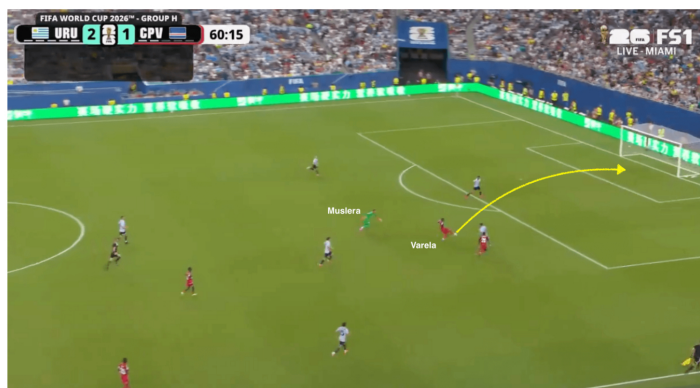


The second-half substitute, who had not long been on the pitch, took one touch to take it past Muslera, before volleying it into an empty net from distance.



A moment of collective madness at the back from Uruguay, however, should not overshadow just how great Varela's touch and finish were. He stayed calm in the chaos.





And if the scenes following Pina's goal were something to behold, then the reaction to Cape Verde's second was even better. All of the substitutes sprinted down to the corner to celebrate in front of a pocket of supporters who did not stop singing and waving their flags from the first minute to the last.

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Dan Sheldon

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Are Uruguay good or bad?

The answer to that is in the results.

The first two at this tournament, against teams in Saudi Arabia and Cape Verde that many believed they were superior to, have not been good enough. Two draws leave them with an uphill battle to reach the knockout stage, with their final group game against Spain.

Coming into the tournament, the biggest question about Uruguay was where the goals would come from.

Those have come largely from their wingers in recent times, but what couldn't have been expected were the colossal mental mistakes that led to the three goals they have given up in their two matches so far. Bielsa's team have managed possession and created chances, but without causing any real sustained threat to their opponents.

Given the nature of who they have played so far, no real contenders to speak of that is just not good enough. So no, Uruguay are not good enough

speak of, that is just not good enough. So, no, Uruguay are not good enough right now to be considered any kind of threat against Spain and, as a result, they cannot be considered 'good'.

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They've historically liked to do things the hard way, but this looks like a bridge too far for this team.

Sergio Gonzalez

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This was another utterly remarkable night for Cape Verde

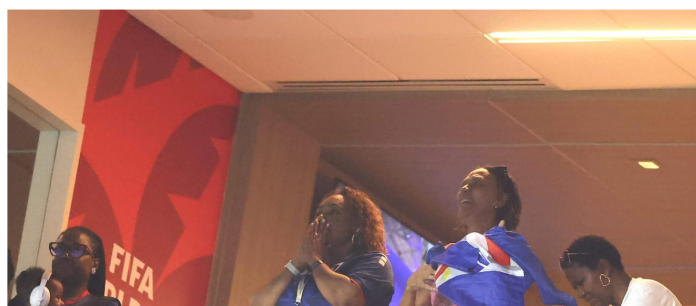
If there are ever any complaints about a 48-team World Cup lacking in quality, then Cape Verde are the perfect antidote to that narrative.

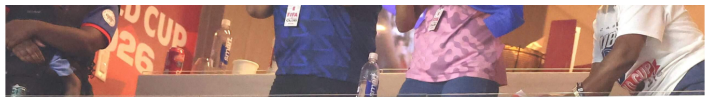
To draw against Spain in their opening match was nothing short of remarkable, but to follow that up with an equally impressive performance to draw with Uruguay was something to behold.

After Pina scored in the first half, they were in dreamland for 23 minutes. Yet when Uruguay hit back and took the lead with two quick goals before half-time, it looked as though they would go on to add to their tally after the break.

But if the Spain tie taught us anything, then that would be to not write off Cape Verde, nor should you underestimate their resolve.

Yes, Uruguay were their own worst enemy, but Cape Verde — ranked 59th in the world rankings, 40 spots below their South American opponents — have proven themselves to be the gift that keeps on giving for neutrals at this World Cup.





Vozinha's mother, Ana Candida Evora, draped in the flag of Cape Verde, watches her son Photo: Lars Baron/Getty Images

And to top off their performance, Vozinha's mother, Ana Candida Evora, was inside the stadium to witness it after the U.S. government granted her a visa.

There was little Vozinha could have done about the goals he conceded, but he did have one nice moment in the second half that caused the volume to go up.

Uruguay's Darwin Nunez was speedily closing him down, but Vozinha stayed patient and let Nunez come within a yard or so before taking the ball past him with a deft touch to make him go the other way.

Dan Sheldon

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Christy P.

Sun

Beautiful game. Be great to see the Cape Verde lads go through. All of Ireland is cheering for ye boys go on!!

212



Andrew B.

Sun

Cape Verde is why the World Cup is great. Yes, FIFA is corrupt and the visa situation is stupid but I was at the Spain game and it was beautiful to see them dig in for 90 minutes and see what it meant to their fans. I'm a Cape Verde fan now.

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Ben T.

Sun

@Andrew B. Same! I bought tickets hoping to be impressed by Yamal and the rest of Spain's team, but left inspired by Cabo Verde and their fans!

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