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MARCH 2019

WEEK 13



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## Mexico triumph over Chile in Gerardo “Tata” Martino’s debut

The Mexico National Team got off to a winning start under Gerardo “Tata” Martino as El Tri earned a comprehensive 3-1 victory over Chile on Friday night.

Raul Jimenez, Hector Moreno, and Hirving “Chucky” Lozano scored in the second half for Mexico, while Nico Castillo struck for Chile in their only goal of the match.

Mexico got off to a fast start, but it was Chile who came closest to grabbing an early breakthrough when an Arturo Vidal header was saved by Guillermo Ochoa in the 13th minute.



El Tri then gave a glimpse of what life under Tata could possibly look like when a brilliant interchange of passes around the area finished with Raul Jimenez sending a cross in for Rodolfo Pizarro, who narrowly failed to connect inside the box.

The rest of the half didn’t have much else to talk about, apart from an overwhelming amount of fouls as a result of both teams negating one another in the midfield.

But early in the second period, Mexico fans erupted on their feet after a penalty was called for a push following a corner kick. As per usual, Raul Jimenez made no mistake from the spot to give

Mexico the lead.

What followed was a Mexican onslaught. First, Hector Moreno headed in from a corner to double the score for El Tri.

Moments later, a mistake from Chile’s backline allowed a Rodolfo Pizarro through ball to find a rushing Hirving “Chucky” Lozano to score the 3-0.

However, it wasn’t all going to be short work for Mexico, and four minutes after El Tri’s third, Club América striker Nico Castillo scored to put Chile within two.

At the end, Castillo’s goal would only serve as consolation as El Tri would go on to win the match 3-1.

Mexico’s next game will be on Tuesday when El Tri take on Paraguay at Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, California.



## Injured Messi set to return to Barcelona as Argentina lose 3-1 to Venezuela

Lionel Messi returned to Argentina duty for the first time since the World Cup on Friday but it was a disappointing outing for the forward as they lost 3-1 to Venezuela and he was ruled out of their next match with a groin problem.

Messi showed flashes of brilliance but it was not his night as Venezuela put three past their more illustrious rivals for the first time with goals from Salomon Rondon, Jhon Murillo and Josef Martinez. Lautaro Martinez got Argentina's consolation.

Messi finished the match but felt some pain in his groin and will sit out Tuesday's friendly against Morocco in Tangier, the Argentine Football Association said after the game.

The injury, described as a flare up of an existing problem, was not thought to be serious. Midfielder Gonzalo Martinez will also miss the Morocco match with a thigh strain.

A statement issue by Barcelona late on Friday said:

Lionel Messi did not have the return to international action that he would have wanted, and an injury picked up on Friday night means he will miss Argentina's game against Morocco on Tuesday.

The FC Barcelona star captained his side and played the entire 90 minutes of the friendly against Venezuela at the Wanda Metropolitano in Madrid, but they would lose 1-3.

It was his first appearance since the 2018 World Cup quarter final loss against France, which was followed by a short-lived international retirement for Argentina's all-time top goalscorer.

Whilst he would feature from start to finish, a problem with his pubis means that Messi will not play in the second friendly of the international break.

Messi took a sabbatical after his country's last-16 exit from the 2018 finals in Russia but he returned with a clean shaven new look to captain the side in the all-South American affair at Atletico Madrid's Metropolitano stadium.

Venezuela had only beaten Argentina once in 23 previous encounters, but they got the perfect start after five minutes when Rondon brought down a long pass inside the box and crashed a shot past keeper Franco Armani.

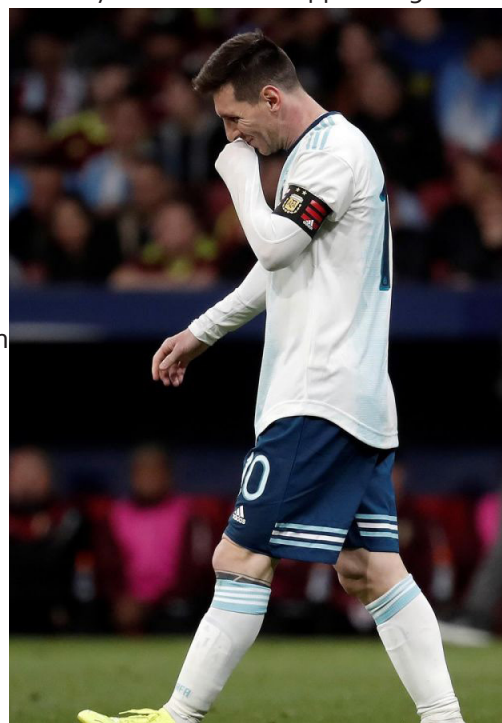
Rondon should have made it two with a header in the 40th but the second goal was only moments away as Murillo took advantage of a quick free kick to scamper to the edge of the box and curl a lovely right-foot shot into the far corner of the net.

Football players of Venezuela celebrate after scoring a goal during the Friendly match between Argentina and Venezuela at Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid, Spain on March 22, 2019 Getty Images

Lautaro Martinez finished off a superb counter attack to pull Argentina back into the game after 59 minutes but their hopes were short lived and Venezuela's Josef Martinez made it 3-1 from the penalty spot with a quarter of an hour remaining.

"In the first half we created chances but they scored twice when we made mistakes," said Lautaro Martinez. "In the second half we did well and moved the ball about but they got that penalty. We need to keep improving."

Argentina face Morocco in Tangier on Tuesday, while Venezuela's next face Catalonia in Girona on Monday.



## MLS Disciplinary Committee suspends Marco Fabian additional game

The MLS Disciplinary Committee has suspended one player, fined three players and issued a warning to two teams after Week 3 of the 2019 MLS regular season.

### Fabian violent conduct

The Disciplinary Committee issued Philadelphia Union midfielder Marco Fabian an additional game suspension (two games total) and an additional fine of an undisclosed amount for his violent conduct during the 58th minute of Philadelphia's match against Sporting KC on Mar. 10. Fabian, who originally received a red card for the incident, served the first game of his suspension against Atlanta United on March 17 and will serve his second game against Columbus Crew SC on Saturday.



### Piatti embellishment/simulation

The Disciplinary Committee has found Montreal Impact forward Ignacio Piatti guilty of simulation/embellishment. The incident took place in first-half stoppage time of the match against Orlando City on March 16. As a result, Piatti has been fined an undisclosed amount.

### Silva failure to leave field

The Disciplinary Committee has found Real Salt Lake defender Marcelo Silva in violation of leaving the field in a timely and orderly manner following his red card. The incident took place in the 66th minute of RSL's game against D.C. United on March 16. As a result, Silva has been fined an undisclosed amount.

### Montreal, Orlando mass confrontation warning; Dwyer fine

The Disciplinary Committee has found the Montreal Impact and Orlando City in violation of the mass confrontation policy in second-half stoppage time of their game and issued a warning to each club for their first violation this season. In addition, Orlando City forward Dom Dwyer has been found to have instigated and escalated the mass confrontation during the same incident, and has been issued an undisclosed fine.

CREDIT: MLSSoccer staff MLSSOCCER.COM

 An advertisement for Hotel Mangaby. The background is a scenic view of a tropical beach with turquoise water, white sand, and lush green hills in the distance. In the foreground, there are several inset images showing hotel amenities: a parking lot, a swimming pool with lounge chairs, a hot spring area with a waterfall, and a modern hotel building at night.
 

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## New York Red Bulls 0, Orlando City SC 1

Sacha Kljestan burned his former club with his first goal of the season, lifting Orlando City SC to a 1-0 win over the New York Red Bulls Saturday night at Red Bull Arena.

Known more for his playmaking, Kljestan, who was booed by the home fans when his name was announced as part of the Lions' starting XI, got on the end of an open Joao Moutinho cross and slipped his shot past Luis Robles.

The Red Bulls thought they had the equalizer three minutes later when Danny Royer latched onto a Marc Rzatkowski free kick and put a downward header toward the goal. But Carlos Ascues made a terrific goal-line clearance as the Red Bulls suffered their first regular-season home loss since July 28 against Columbus Crew SC.

### Goals

73' — ORL — Sacha Kljestan

### Three Things

**THE BIG PICTURE:** The Lions would have been happy leaving Red Bull Arena with a draw, so they're absolutely thrilled with taking all three points in a rough-and-tumble affair. The Red Bulls were left bruised and battered, losing Connor Lade and possibly Omir Fernandez to injury.

**MOMENT OF THE MATCH:** There was but one goal and it was by the Red Bulls former captain. Moutinho had ample time to send in his cross and Kljestan made no mistake, burying his shot first-time.

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Ascues did his part to ensure the Lions not only took all three points, but also recorded their first clean sheet of the season with a brilliant goal-line clearance.

CREDIT: Dylan Butler Contributor



## New England Revolution 0, FC Cincinnati 2

Kekuta Manneh and Kenny Saief scored a goal in each half as FC Cincinnati continued to roll, running over the reeling New England Revolution, 2-0, Sunday at Gillette Stadium.

Manneh opened the scoring for FC Cincinnati one minute before halftime as the visitors closed out the first half strong. Manneh played a ball out wide to Saief, who returned the favor and the Gambian forward tapped in from eight yards out.

Four minutes earlier, Emmanuel Ledesma forced Brad Knighton into a diving save to parry away a 22-yard free kick and the Argentine fired just over the bar moments later.

Spencer Richey is making the double-save a weekly occurrence, first denying Carles Gil and then kicking away a Diego Fagundez rebound in the 61st minute.

Four minutes later, Manneh became a provider on Saief's first MLS goal, controlling a Ledesma cross before finding an unmarked Saief, who tapped in easily in front of goal.

### Goals

44' — CIN — Kekuta Manneh    65' — CIN — Kenny Saief

### Three Things

**THE BIG PICTURE:** Break up FC Cincinnati! On the road, the expansion side played on the front foot, capitalized on its chances and are now three games without a loss (2-0-1) since a season-opening defeat in Seattle. The Revs were a bit more dangerous in the second half after what was no doubt a tongue lashing by coach Brad Friedel, but they offered little resistance in another listless loss and were booed at the final whistle by their frustrated fans.

**MOMENT OF THE MATCH:** Richey did well to snuff out the only quality chance for the Revs with another double-save and a second consecutive clean sheet.

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** What a first MLS start for Saief, who was a constant threat running at the Revs defenders and was rewarded with his first league goal after setting up Manneh's goal.

CREDIT: MLS SOCCER

Dylan Butler Contributor



## LAFc 2, Real Salt Lake 1

LAFc vowed "payback" in their first match against Real Salt Lake since being knocked out of the Audi 2018 MLS Cup Playoffs, but that promise was left for late, as a stoppage-time goal from Walker Zimmerman gave the home side the 2-1 win at Banc of California Stadium on Saturday.

Both teams had absences due to international duty and RSL were missing two players on suspension, but despite the makeshift lineup Mike Petke's squad matched up well against Bob Bradley's fearsome attack and the teams showed plenty of feisty play throughout.

The scoring started in the 35th minute, as Damir Kreilach scored a penalty for RSL, after Latif Blessing clattered into Bofo Saucedo in the 18-yard-box. But LAFc had an answer five minutes later, as Diego Rossi hit a one-timer off a deflected cross to even up the match.

Saucedo scored a go-ahead goal just after the halftime break, but the goal was chalked off on an offside call. From there, LAFc ratcheted up the pressure, but RSL were stout in defense. They went down a man for the second consecutive game when substitute Justin Portillo, in his MLS debut, was given a straight red card for a clothesline tackle on Rossi in the 84th minute.

It seemed destined to finish a draw with RSL holding firm, but Zimmerman stepped up and slotted a cool curler from outside the box to win the game in the 92nd minute.

### Goals

35' – RSL – Damir Kreilach (PK)  
 40' – LAFc – Diego Rossi  
 92' – LAFc – Walker Zimmerman

### Three Things

**THE BIG PICTURE:** It wasn't a playoff game, and it wasn't the 5-1 margin Blessing promised during the week, but LAFc gritting out another late finish to stay unbeaten will leave the Black & Gold pretty happy. For RSL, the late loss is a bitter pill after playing LAFc evenly throughout.

**MOMENT OF THE MATCH:** No surprise, the winning goal was not only consequential but it was a wicked finish, too.

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** LAFc were keen to re-sign Zimmerman in the offseason to be the centerpiece of their defense, and the center back showed his scoring chops with a goal that teammate Carlos Vela would be proud of, to cap off another strong shift this season.





## Struggling Orlando City desperate for a win; Vela building an early MVP case

It may be the international break, but there is no break from the action in MLS. The league puts forth another entertaining slate of games, with the New York Red Bulls hosting Nani and Orlando City on Saturday (7:30 p.m. ET, ESPN+), Carlos Vela and LAFC welcoming in Real Salt Lake, and newbies FC Cincinnati looking to make it two in a row against the New England Revolution.

### A rough start for Nani and Orlando City

You have to feel for Orlando City fans. They pack their stadium for home matches, only to have to bear witness to some pretty poor soccer. For a team that has never reached the playoffs, the idea was that 2019 would be the year, and the arrival of former Manchester United man Nani added to that hope. Unfortunately for them, three games in, this team looks nowhere close to making the postseason.

To his credit, Nani has been one of the few bright spots, but the defense has been dismal. They have looked incapable of playing the ball out of the back and into the midfield, evidenced by the horrid turnovers in their own half in last week's 3-1 loss to Montreal. It all lends itself to the thinking that the fans in purple are in for another long season.

Saturday's visit to Jersey to face the Red Bulls is not exactly good timing either. The Red Bulls are just the type of team to punish opponents who mistreat the ball, and judging by Orlando's early woes, the Red Bulls should get plenty of cracks at goal. The only question is whether anyone will be there at Red Bull Arena to see it, as just a few more than 15,000 showed up to take in last week's 4-1 hammering of San Jose. It's a disappointing number, no doubt, for one of the league's perennial top-performing teams.

### Charlie Candle setting MLS alight

Carlos Vela, or "Charlie Candle" if we are going to use an exact English translation, is setting MLS alight with his play thus far for LAFC in 2019. You want setting the table and playmaking? Boom, Vela delivered a masterclass in a 4-1 win over the Portland Timbers in week 2. You want class finishing and goals? Voila, the Mexican forward delivered again with a two-goal performance in a 2-2 draw against New York City FC at Yankee Stadium.

The season is still just three weeks old, but there is no question that Vela is the early-season MVP, backed by his three goals and two assists. Nevertheless, it is very curious that Mexico boss Gerardo "Tata" Martino kept Vela off his squad for this week's international break. It's not like Martino is one of those national team coaches who devalues MLS, either.

Luckily for LAFC fans, that means Vela will be suited up for Saturday's home date with Real Salt Lake (10:30 p.m. ET, ESPN+). Oh yeah, this one has a little extra fuel for Vela & Co. being that it was Real Salt Lake who upset LAFC in the first round of the playoffs last season. With the boys from Utah missing a whole slew of players due to the international break, Vela will have a golden opportunity to pad his stats in this one.



### New kids on the block head to New England

It was quite the day last Sunday in Cincinnati as newbies FC Cincinnati earned their first-ever MLS win in blowing the doors off the Portland Timbers 3-0. Whether that was a product of riding the buoyant fans inside Nippert Stadium or taking advantage of Portland's awful defense (10 goals in three games!), FC Cincinnati can now say they have taken points off both of last year's MLS Cup participants. Not too shabby.

Up next is a visit to New England on Sunday to face the Revolution (4:00 p.m. ET, ESPN+). After the high of collecting their first-ever result against reigning champions Atlanta United in Atlanta, and then a first victory in their first home game, it would be natural to experience a letdown on Sunday.

But the Revs have been far from reliable so far in 2019. In fact, it's hard to figure out what Brad Friedel's team is all about. Carles Gil has been an excellent signing, with three goals in three games, but there's not a whole lot else to feel good about. This should be a straightforward win for New England, which means that if it's not, Friedel is likely to find himself on the hot seat.

## Three MLS players, five former MLSers feature as Panama hold Brazil to draw

A Panama squad with a heavy MLS influence earned an impressive result against Brazil on Saturday afternoon, holding the five-time World Cup winners to 1-1 draw in a friendly played in Portugal.

Three current MLS players started for Los Canaleros: San Jose Earthquakes duo Anibal Godoy and Harold Cummings, as well as New York Red Bulls right back Michael Murillo. Additionally, five former MLSers featured in Panama's starting lineup: Adolfo Machado, Fidel Escobar, Armando Cooper, Gabriel Torres and Alberto Quintero.

It was Machado, who left the Houston Dynamo following the 2018 campaign, who scored the historic goal for Panama.



His 35th-minute header from a free kick, just four minutes after Brazil had taken the league, was his country's first ever against La Seleçao.

Elsewhere in Europe, a handful of current MLS players were in action as qualifying for Euro 2020 kicked off around the continent. New York City FC forward Alexandru Mitrita started but was subbed out to start the second half for Romania, who fell 2-1 in Sweden. Seattle's Gustav Svensson entered the game as a 68th-minute substitute for Sweden.

San Jose duo Vako and Guram Kashia both started for Georgia

and went the full go as they kicked off qualifying by hosting Switzerland, but they could not help their team stave off defeat as they fell 2-0 to a favored Swiss side. It was a similar story for Chicago Fire wide man Nico Hasler, who started for Liechtenstein but couldn't help his side to an upset of Greece, who walked out 2-0 victors. Meanwhile, Minnesota midfielder Rasmus Schuller did not feature off the bench as Finland fell by the same scoreline to Italy.

In African Cup of Nations Qualifying, Sporting KC defender Abdul Rwatubyaye started and went the distance for already-eliminated Rwanda, who fell 3-0 at the Ivory Coast in the final round of games before the tournament proper this summer.

The day's big MLS vs. MLS matchup came in Concacaf, as El Salvador downed Jamaica 2-0 in the teams' final Concacaf Nations League qualifier on Saturday in San Salvador. Andre Blake (Philadelphia Union) had an uncharacteristic gaffe in goal for Jamaica, as his flubbed block led to El Salvador's first goal. It got worse, as Darren Mattocks (FC Cincinnati) was sent off late for the Reggae Boyz for a high boot. Kemar Lawrence (New York Red Bulls), Cory Burke (Philadelphia Union), Alvas Powell (FC Cincinnati) and Peter-Lee Vassell (LAFC) all started for Jamaica, while Darwin Ceren (Houston Dynamo) started for the winning side.

Earlier on Saturday evening, Philadelphia midfielder Warren Creavalle was a 67th-minute substitute as Guyana game themselves a shot at Gold Cup qualification with a 2-1 win over Belize. Seattle defender Jordy Delem also started for Martinique, who cemented their spot in the Gold Cup and the top tier of the Nations League with a 1-0 win over Guadeloupe.

## Philadelphia Union 3, Columbus Crew SC 0

Behind a man-of-the-match performance from David Accam, the Philadelphia Union rolled to a 3-0 home win over Columbus Crew SC on Saturday night.

Accam, who hadn't scored since last July, found net in the 31st and 41st minutes. He also assisted an insurance tally by Ilsinho in the 48th minute, as Philadelphia used possession and the energy of homegrown midfielder Brenden Aaronson to see out the match.

The Ghanaian's first strike came after a through ball from Fafa Picault, as he collected the ball and slotted inside the far post past Joe Bendik. The goalkeeper was starting his first game for Crew SC with Zack Steffen nursing a minor knee injury.



Accam then capitalized on some wayward Columbus defending to make it 2-0 before halftime, toe-poking past Bendik at the near post. Ilsinho's strike arrived shortly after, with the Brazilian smashing a right-footed shot off the underside of the crossbar.

The Crew, missing Gyasi Zardes and Will Trapp to US national team duty, managed one shot on goal all game. It was the first time Columbus were held scoreless all season and marked their first loss under head coach Caleb Porter.

### Goals

31' – PHI – David Accam

41' – PHI – David Accam

48' – PHI – Ilsinho

### Three Things

**THE BIG PICTURE:** After drawing 1-1 at Atlanta United FC last weekend, the Union recorded their first win of the 2019 season four matches in. With Ernst Tanner serving as the club's sporting director, it's taken some time for points to come as frustration built. Philadelphia was also missing three usual starters: goalie Andre Blake (international duty), midfielder Marco Fabian (suspension) and striker Cory Burke (international duty).

**MOMENT OF THE MATCH:** Celebrations can often be indicative of what a player is going through off the field, and that seemingly applied to Accam's goal in the 31st minute. Upon dropping to his knees, Accam was overcome with emotion as his teammates swarmed with congratulatory remarks.

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Accam reminded fans and foes alike why the Union sent over \$1 million in allocation money to the Chicago Fire ahead of the 2018 season for his services. The Ghanaian's first-half brace was opportunistic, and he even added an assist. That broke a goal-scoring drought stretching back to July 11, 2018 and an assist drought extending back to Oct. 15, 2017. Accam had one goal all of last season.



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