

Rodrygo racially abused after Messi argument



Argentina Lionel Messi (l) and Brazilian Rodrygo clash before the delayed start of a World Cup qualifying match in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on November 21, 2023.
● RICARDO MORAES/REUTERS

ESPN – Rodrygo said he received racist insults on social media after Brazil's 1-0 World Cup qualifying defeat to Argentina in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday. The game at the Maracana stadium kicked off almost 30 minutes late after clashes between Brazilian police and Argentine fans in the stands.

Nicolás Otamendi's 63rd-minute goal for world champions Argentina was enough to inflict Brazil's first-ever home loss in World Cup qualifying, leaving them sixth in the CONMEBOL standings with just seven points from six games.

As the two teams waited on the pitch for the match to begin, TV images showed Brazil forward Rodrygo in a heated discussion with Argentina captain Lionel Messi and midfielder Rodrigo de Paul.

In a post on Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter) on Thursday, Rodrygo said he had been targeted by racists on social media after the game.

"Racists are always on duty," he said. "My social networks were invaded with insults and all kinds of nonsense. It's there for everyone to see!

"If we don't do what they want, if we don't behave as they think we should, if we wear something that bothers them, if we don't lower our heads when we are attacked, if we occupy spaces that they think are theirs alone, racists take action with his criminal behaviour. Their bad luck. We will not stop!"

Rodrygo's Brazil and Real Madrid teammate Vinicius Júnior offered his support shortly afterwards, tweeting, "We won't stop!"

Vinicius has been repeatedly targeted with racist abuse by opposition fans while playing for Real Madrid in LaLiga. A criminal case against three Valencia fans who allegedly racially abused him during Madrid's game at Metalla in May is ongoing.

Ahead of the game against Argentina, Vinicius launched an anti-racism campaign in Brazil this week, with posters carrying messages appearing on billboards in cities across the country.

IWF World Junior Championships:

Yousefi dominates superheavyweight as Iran wins men's crown



Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifter Alireza Yousefi made a clean sweep of three superheavyweight gold medals to steer the country to the men's title at the IWF World Junior Championships in Guadalajara, Mexico.

The Iranian 10-man squad collected five golds, nine silvers, and a single bronze to tally 660 points for a fifth crown in 12 years – first since 2018.

Taha Ne'mati Moqaddam walked away with three silver medals to complete a dominant one-two for Iran in the +109kg con-

tests, while the 17-year-old's 176kg lift shattered the world youth record in the snatch category of the weight class.

A two-time Asian youth champion, Ne'mati added 21kg to his personal best total in making 176-205-381 despite failing with two clean and jerk attempts.

Yousefi, meanwhile, proved to be in a league of his own in the junior superheavyweight class by yet another 400kg-plus performance in securing a triple-gold winning campaign in the competitions for a second year running.

Making his final appearance as a junior weightlifter, the Iranian, a Youth Olympic Games champion in 2018, withdrew from his third snatch attempt but the 180-240-420 display was still enough to see Yousefi write his name into the history books of the sport in the country.

Yousefi became the third Iranian to claim back-to-back world golds in the age category – following Kianoush Rostami (2010 and 2011) and Saeed Mohammadpour (2011 and 2012). Had Yousefi not missed his second C&J lift, the 20-year-

old would have had a shot at his own world record of 246kg, which he established during a career-best performance (190-246-436) in May's senior Asian Championships in South Korea, where he finished fifth.

Yousefi stepped into the event in Mexico with six world records in junior and youth age classes under his belt, until his fellow Iranian took one away on Thursday. Slovakian Vladimir Macura grabbed the snatch and total bronzes with 168kg and 359kg, while a successful 192kg lift saw Polish contestant Igor Osuch settle for

the third podium in the C&J contest.

Thursday's results took Iran's medal haul in the final three days to two golds and three silvers on total, moving Hadi Panzvan's squad up to fourth in the medals table behind the United States, Mexico and Armenia. Alireza Nasiri got Iran off the mark in Guadalajara when he finished third in the snatch contests with a 166kg lift before grabbing the C&J (205kg) and total (371kg) golds in the men's 96kg showdown.

Abolfazl Zare' added three silvers to Iran's medal



Iranian weightlifter Alireza Yousefi is seen in action in the men's +109kg contests at the IWF World Junior Championships in Guadalajara, Mexico, on November 23, 2023.
● IWF

count, registering 166-199-365 to stand on the runner-up podiums – behind Armenian Garik Karapetyan (175-203-378) – in the 102kg class.

The 109kg event also yielded three silver medals for Iran, courtesy of Arya Paydar, who finished on 168-205-373.



Serbian Novak Djokovic reacts to the crowd during his Davis Cup singles victory over Briton Cameron Norrie in Malaga, Spain, on November 23, 2023.
● FRAN SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES

Djokovic says British fans disrespectful during Davis Cup win

REUTERS – Novak Djokovic accused British fans of disrespect during Serbia's Davis Cup quarter-final victory in Malaga on Thursday.

The 24-time Grand Slam winner said some fans had tried to annoy him during his straight sets win (6-4, 6-4) over Cameron Norrie and snapped at them when they drummed loudly during his post-match interview, telling them to shut up.

"That's disrespect but that's something you have to be prepared for in a Davis Cup," he later told reporters.

"It's normal that sometimes fans step over the line. In the heat of the moment sometimes you react too and you ... show

that you don't allow this kind of behaviour.

"I mean, they can do whatever they want but I'm going to respond to that. They were trying to annoy me the entire match, so yeah, we had a little bit of a chat in the end," he added.

Djokovic said he was not feeling fresh after a long season but wanted to end the year by helping Serbia with the Davis Cup.

"Being there on the court for my country is always extra push, extra motivation," added the 36-year-old world number one, who is looking to complete a remarkable year after winning three Grand Slam titles and the ATP Finals.

"Part of me looks forward

to rest and recalibration and leave the racquet on the side but right now I cannot allow myself to enjoy those thoughts about holidays."

Serbia face Italy in the semi-finals today.

Jannik Sinner inspired the former champions to a 2-1 comeback win over the Netherlands, the world number four winning his singles and a decisive doubles.

Sinner paired up with Lorenzo Sonego to overcome the duo of Tallon Griekspoor and Wesley Koolhof 6-3 6-4 as Italy reached back-to-back semi-finals in the premier men's team competition for the first time since three successive last-four appearances in 1996-98.