

Brazil Breezes Through Ghana While Ronaldo Makes Soccer History

Contributed by O.Ch.
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Brazil ended Ghana's scrappy World Cup debut today, June 27, with three streaking goals, the first an early flash by Ronaldo that made him the most prolific scorer in tournament history.

Ronaldo scored his 15th World Cup goal in the fifth minute - breaking Gerd Mueller's all-time tournament scoring record - and hopes his mark goes beyond Brazil's 3-0 win over Ghana.

"I want to continue to increase the record," Ronaldo said, "but without forgetting that the main goal in the World Cup is winning the title."

Ghana made Brazil work for its 11th straight World Cup win, challenging the five-time champions and outplaying them at times, but the Black Stars' shots were either off the mark or well within reach of goalkeeper Dida.

"We won the game, but the result doesn't show it was not an easy game at all," Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said. "The first half they did well, they should have scored. They had chances."

Brazil took another step toward its fourth straight World Cup finals. It next plays in the quarterfinals against France, which beat Spain 3-1 later Tuesday.

"The big guys are coming to the quarterfinals," Parreira said. "It is getting closer and closer. It's getting tougher and tougher."

Each of Brazil's goals was built upon long, penetrating passes, including Ronaldo's early score to break Mueller's record.

On the counterattack, Kaká sent a second long pass up the heart of the field to an unmarked Ronaldo, who touched the ball once toward Richard Kingson, then sent the goalkeeper flailing with a step-over. Ronaldo cut left, and with a defender closing, poked the ball into the net.

Ronaldo said he never intended to break the World Cup scoring record.

"It was never my goal, it just happened match after match," he said. "This is the result of lots of work, lots of sacrifice."

Mueller scored his 14 goals over 13 games in the 1970 and 1974 World Cups; Ronaldo has played 18 games in the past three tournaments.

Ronaldo performed poorly in Brazil's first two matches against Croatia and Australia, when the Real Madrid striker was held scoreless and substituted for twice. He was also bothered by a weight controversy and a string of minor health problems.

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