

South Africa pulled off a stunning 1-0 win over South Korea Wednesday night, advancing to the World Cup knockout stage for the first time.

Co-hosts Mexico cemented top place in World Cup Group A with a perfect record as they defeated the Czech Republic 3-0 on home turf in a deafeningly noisy Estadio Azteca in Mexico City.

Despite knowing the win-or-die stakes before them, Czechia never looked a decent shout against a Mexican team borne aloft by a frenzied home crowd.

Mateo Chávez gave Mexico the lead in the 55th minute and Julián Quiñones took advantage of disarray in the Czech defense six minutes later to extend the lead.

Álvaro Fidalgo completed a sparkling evening for the Mexicans as he smashed in a beautiful cross four minutes into added time.

Czechia v Mexico: Group A

Mexico even brought on goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa as a second-half substitute, allowing the veteran to play in a sixth World Cup finals at the age of 40. He was lifted and carried by his teammates when the final whistle blew.

It is now officially party time at the Azteca.

The Mexicans have kept a clean sheet in each of their last three World Cup matches. That's a grand total of 315 minutes without a single goal conceded. This is a team that will take some serious work to stop when they're playing at home.

Mexico move on to a last-32 match in the same stadium on 30 June while the Czechs return home after finishing bottom of the group.

South Africa in dreamland

South Africa beat South Korea 1-0 to reach the World Cup knockout rounds for the first time in their history — an astonishing turnaround after a dismal opening defeat.

Bafana Bafana, playing at the tournament for the first time since they hosted it in 2010, were widely written off after their 2-0 loss to Group A winners Mexico.

But they battled to a draw against the Czech Republic and came out on top of what

was effectively a shootout with South Korea for second place in Monterrey, thanks to Thapelo Maseko's second-half strike.

South Korea coach Hong Myung-bo made a shock call by leaving captain Son Heung-min — considered by many to be Asia's greatest-ever player — out of the starting line-up.

The Asian team started strongly, with stand-in captain Kim Min-jae's powerful header blocked on the goalline by Aubrey Modiba before Lee Kang-in flashed wide.

South Africa quickly settled, playing with hunger and adventure, but their finishing was wasteful.

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They seemed certain to take the lead in the 30th minute when the ball fell to Evidence Makgopa after South Korean goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu parried Thabane Mbatha's shot.

But Makgopa could only tamely poke the ball straight at the goalkeeper from close range.

Son came on at the start of the second half, one of three changes made by coach Hong as he sought to change the script.

Early in the second period Maseko squandered another good position while South Korea forward Oh Hyeon-gyu tested goalkeeper Ronwen Williams at the other end.

As news filtered through from Mexico City that the host nation were leading against the Czech Republic, there was an added sense of urgency.

South Africa seized their moment with Tshepo Moremi crossing to Maseko, who this time kept his cool, firing home inside the near post in the 63rd minute.

South Korea pushed hard in the closing stages but simply ran out of time, meaning South Africa will face co-hosts Canada in Los Angeles at 5am on 29 June.

Morocco v Haiti

Morocco confirmed their progress to the World Cup last 32 but twice had to come from behind to get the better of plucky Haiti 4-2 in an action-packed game. They fell short of topping Brazil in the Group C standings.

Morocco finished level on seven points with the five-times world champions, who beat Scotland 3-0, but are runners-up on goal difference and will play the Group F winners, Japan, the Netherlands or Sweden, next week in the first knockout round.

The Real Madrid striker then nodded in Brazil's second in first-half stoppage time after losing his marker all too easily at Miami Stadium.

Manchester United striker Matheus Cunha added a third in the 60th minute, delivering a potential fatal blow to Scotland's chances of squeezing into the last 32.

Brazil's win also saw coach Carlo Ancelotti give veteran striker Neymar his first appearance of the tournament, the Seleção's all-time leading scorer coming on as a substitute in the 76th minute.

"We played as a collective and that's a good thing," a satisfied Ancelotti said afterwards. "There are many positive things, such as Neymar's appearance, which can help us."

Brazil and Scotland's clash in Florida was one of six matches taking place on Thursday as a hectic final round of group fixtures got underway.

Switzerland claims top spot in Group B

Rubén Vargas and Johan Manzambi fired Switzerland to the top spot in World Cup Group B with a 2-1 win over Canada, as the co-hosts also secured a historic spot in the knockout rounds.

With the top two teams in the pool meeting in Vancouver, both knew that a victory would ensure first place in the group and, in theory, a kinder draw in the knockout stages.

Vargas and Manzambi's second-half strikes were enough to ensure the Swiss finished on seven points, while Promise David pulled a goal back in the final 15 minutes for Canada. They finished up three points behind their opponent but

reached the last 32 for the first time in their history.

Switzerland v Canada: Group B

Before this year's tournament, Canada had never won a match at the World Cup, but with their second-place finish in the pool, they will play the runner-up from Group A on Monday in Los Angeles.

Switzerland will meet one of the best third-placed sides next week.

Before kick-off, Canada midfielder Ismaël Koné entered the pitch in a wheelchair after suffering a leg break in Canada's 6-0 demolition of Qatar last week and was treated to a standing ovation by the spectators at BC Place in Vancouver.

Breel Embolo was presented with a golden chance to open the scoring for the Swiss after 10 minutes, but could only fire straight at the goalkeeper before Manzambi struck the rebound into the chest of a defender.

Canada's first big opportunity to break the deadlock arrived just after the half-hour as striker Cyle Larin cut in on his right foot and tried to bend the ball beyond Gregor Kobel.

The Swiss stopper was called into action again shortly before half-time as he dropped down to his right to palm a tame Ali Ahmed effort wide of his near post.

After an entertaining first half, the match sparked into life seconds after the interval as Vargas gave Switzerland lift-off.

A simple ball down the line released Manzambi, whose cross from the right evaded everyone until the 27-year-old popped up in acres of space at the back post and took an excellent first touch before rifling past Maxime Crépeau.

Manzambi then put the cherry on a fine performance as he netted his third of the tournament on 57 minutes, profiting from some poor goalkeeping to squeeze in a right-footed shot after decent hold-up play on the edge of the box by Embolo.

Canada boss Jesse Marsch responded by making three substitutions, including sending on LAFC midfielder Stephen Eustaquio.

Jonathan David, who scored a hat-trick in Canada's last outing, turned sharply in the

Swiss box and fired an effort at goal as the co-hosts tried to get a foot back in the match before the second hydration break, but Nico Elvedi flung himself in the ball's path.

But moments after the three-minute break, Promise David, who had just entered the field, gave Canada hope as he stretched to turn in a sublime ball from Nathan Saliba.

The goal set up a grandstand finish with a leveller for Canada certain to send them through as group winners.

The Canadians came close from a couple of set-pieces at the match's climax but Switzerland held on to claim top spot.

Bosnia and Herzegovina wrapped up third in Group B thanks to a 3-1 win over Qatar and will face an anxious wait to see if their four points are enough to extend their stay at the World Cup.

On a landmark afternoon for captain Edin Džeko, who won his 150th cap for Bosnia, his side found the breakthrough their relentless first-half pressure deserved when Kerim Alajbegović produced the sort of moment that can illuminate a World Cup.

Picking up possession on the edge of the area in the 29th minute, he slalomed through a crowd of defenders before dispatching an unstoppable right-footed drive into the top corner.

Bosnia doubled their lead soon after in far less elegant fashion.

Sead Kolašinac delivered a deep cross to Džeko at the back post and, fittingly on his milestone appearance, the veteran striker played a decisive role, volleying the ball back across goal where it ricocheted off a Qatari and bobbed into the net for an own goal that appeared to settle the contest.

Qatar, which had spent almost the entire first half on the back foot, suddenly sprang to life minutes before the break as Hassan Al-Haydos tapped home from close range, but the Bosnians always looked the more likely to score again and grabbed a third goal 10 minutes from the end through Ermin Mahmić to wrap up the victory.