



## Sorry, Cristiano, Bruno Is Portugal's Best Player! Winners and Losers As Fernandes Leads Portugal To



Despite Ronaldo's best efforts, his former Man United team-mate proved once again for Portugal in the 2-0 win over Uruguay.

Cristiano Ronaldo did what he could to be the center of attention, but there's no denying that the star of the show in Portugal's win over Uruguay was Bruno Fernandes.

The Manchester United midfielder was credited for both goals as the Seleccao sealed their place in the last 16 with a game remaining.

His first kick was actually a cross, which Ronaldo claimed had touched, but replays showed there was no contact.

Bruno's second goal came from the penalty spot, after Ronaldo had been substituted, and he came close to completing what should have been a hat-trick, with his shot from the edge of the area hitting the post.

Below, GOAL examines the winners and losers of Fernandes' masterclass at the magnificent Lusail Stadium, which illustrates exactly why he is now Portugal's most important player...

Bruno Fernandes:

Did Ronaldo get a touch on Fernandes' cross which turned into a goal? In reality, it doesn't really matter who gets the credit, because that won't change the fact that Bruno is the best player on the pitch.

Again, the Manchester United midfielder was outstanding after Portugal's win over Ghana, creating two assists to turn the game decisively for his country.

The player shines again here, always seen as the player most likely to make something happen. Ronaldo will once again dominate all the headlines but Bruno is thundering at this World Cup, and looks more than capable of challenging the likes of Kylian Mbappe for the Golden Ball.

Diogo Costa:

The Portugal keeper nearly cost his team victory against Ghana after not realizing that Inaki Williams was hiding behind him in the dying seconds, just waiting to pounce as he prepared to drive the ball high. Luckily for Costa, the striker slipped after stealing possession.

But in this match, it must be admitted that Costa was the key to the success of his team, performing great in two one-on-one situations. There may have been an element of luck in the way he drew power from Bentancur's shot, but Costa deserves great credit for the way he stood up to block the ball in any way he could.

Ghana revenge mission:

Ghana has been waiting a long time for this. It may not be the semi-finals of the World Cup but they will get another crack at Uruguay in a three-day encounter in a monumental match that will likely decide who progresses to the last 16 of Qatar 2022, some 12 years after their controversial 2010 elimination from South Africa in Luis Suarez's hand.

One point might be enough for the Black Stars but they will be pushing their all for a win that will secure a spot in the knockout stages, as well as a sweet revenge victory over La Celeste.

Nuno Mendes:

Nuno Mendes' World Cup has just begun and may be over. The Paris Saint-Germain full-back had missed the opener against Ghana with a hamstring problem but was recalled from the first minute to face Uruguay. Unfortunately, he had to be pulled out before the break with a suspected recurrence of the injury. It is not yet known the severity of this injury, but the tears streaming down Mendes' face as he limped off the pitch suggest it is a bad deal.

Cristiano Ronaldo's efforts:

The Portugal captain was branded a "genius" by Sunday Oliseh for the way he won the penalty he converted in the 3-2 win over Ghana, and the veteran cunning is on display again here, after he claimed to have touched on Fernandes' cross to score. You can't blame a guy for trying, of course, and there's no doubt that his effort to get on the ball played a big part in the cross that beat Sergio Rochet. But let's face it, Ronaldo is in for a lot of punishment for trying to claim a goal that isn't his. However, he was one of the differentiators in this fight.

Liverpool Fans:

Liverpool fans will surely be delighted to see one of their beloved Uruguay strikers beat Bruno at Lusail. However, the Reds' current centre-forward Darwin Nunez has struggled to make any impact on the game. Former Anfield favorite Luis Suarez wasted a great chance to equalize shortly after coming off the bench. But who knows, perhaps the much-anticipated World Cup reunion with Ghana in match three will bring out the best from the veteran forward.

## PORTUGAL RATINGS

Behind

Diogo Costa (8/10):

Made two big saves from one-on-one situations. One of the keys to victory after avoiding embarrassment against Ghana.

Joao Cancelo (6):

Quite a solid performance from a Manchester City player, who doesn't have the same freedom with the national team as he did at club level.

Ruben Dias (7):

Suffered a heavy knock with Bentancur on the ankle just six minutes into the match but recovered to put on a calm performance.

Pepes (7):

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Paying off the trust as a starter with a decent performance.

Nuno Mendes (5):

A sad night for the PSG man, who was pushed back into the first 11 but had to be taken off before the end of the first half.

Midfielder

Bernardo Silva (6):

Made a rare miscalculation when he blocked a cross meant for Felix in front of goal, but his impact grew over the course of the game.

Ruben Neves (5):

Was booked for a foul on Varela on the right of the area and ended up on the left for an equally bad tackle from Vecina. Pulled out not long after.

William Carvalho (5):

Replaces Otavio on the starting list and adds more physicality to the midfield, but not much in terms of quality. It flared up early after hitting a cross from Ronaldo's chest and making one dreadful attempt to pass.

Front

Joao Felix (5):

The first big chance arrived early in the second half and he shot weakly into the side net when he really had to try to pass the ball to Bruno. Not his best night, considering he started the tournament so well.

Cristiano Ronaldo (6):

Some of his moves and the way he keeps the ball is fantastic, including one with his very strong chest. Played his part in the goal, but will be disappointed he didn't put in the decisive touch on Bruno's cross.

Bruno Fernandes (9):

Absolutely amazing from start to finish. Made two stunning passes in the first half, one with the outside of his boot. He then proved decisive for Portugal with a cross and a coolly taken penalty.

Substitute

Raphael Guerreiro (6):

Came on for the injured Mendes before half-time. The first major contribution was crossing when well positioned down the left flank. He made the last pass before Fernandes' opener.

Rafael Leao (6):

Replaced Neves with just over 20 minutes of normal time left and was immediately involved. Just a lack of mature bait supply.

Gonçalo Ramos (-):

Replacing Ronaldo at the end of the game.

Joao Palhinha (-):

Takes over midfield from Carvalho in the 82nd minute.

Matheus Nunes (-):

Lowered as a substitute for Felix before the game was over.

Trainer

Fernando Santos (8):

Got almost everything right and deserves credit for pulling off a tired Ronaldo for the last 15 minutes of the game.