Soccer

Morris scores in first start

By JIM VERTUNO
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Jordan Morris made a loud statement in his first start for the U.S. national team against his country's biggest and most bitter rival.

Friendly
USA 2
Mexico 0

His reward? A game pennant given to him by veteran Michael Bradley to hang in his room at college.

The 20-year-old Stanford sophomore scored his first international goal early in the second half, Juan Agudelo added his first international goal in four years, and the Americans dispatched Mexico by their traditional 2-0 score in an exhibition game Wednesday night.

"I was nervous but I was excited," Morris said. "It's something I've dreamed of since I was a little kid, scoring a goal, especially in such a big game in front of so many fans."

Morris, thought to be the first collegian to start for the U.S. in at least two decades, scored in the 49th minute after Bradley brought the ball upfield and passed to Gyasi Zardes. The return pass ricocheted off defender Mario Osuna and was picked up by Morris at the top of the penalty area. He took a touch, broke in and slid the ball between the legs of goalkeeper Cirilo Saucedo from 10 yards.

"It just kind of popped out," Morris said. "I'm happy that when I got the chance, I got to the ball and put it away."

Agudelo replaced Morris in the 65th and scored seven minutes later. Bradley made a long pass from the midfield line and Agudelo controlled it just outside the penalty area. He cut inside with half a dozen touches and beat Saucedo to the near post with a low shot from 19 yards.

It was the third international goal for Agudelo and first since March 2011. Playing his second international match since November 2012 and his first since March last year, he dropped to his knees and was mobbed by a group of teammates.

Before a sellout crowd of 64,369, U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann improved to 3-0-3 against his team's regional rival.

The U.S. has defeated Mexico by "dos a cero" in four straight home World Cup qualifiers, all in Columbus, Ohio. The U.S. is 13-5-5 against Mexico since 2000, including a win in the second round of the 2002 World Cup.

With the game not on a FIFA international date, both teams were missing top players. And with the U.S. looking ahead to this summer's CONCACAF Gold Cup, Klinsmann mixed a roster of veterans and young players.

Morris, who trained with the national team last May and made his debut at Ireland in November, started because captain Clint Dempsey is sidelined by a hamstring injury and Jozy Altidore was serving a one-game suspension for a red card.

"You say, 'Why not give him a chance?'" Klinsmann said. "He trained very well. We see his improvement."

Klinsmann also saw some nerves in the youngster.

"When Jordan was doing his shooting before the game, he was pretty much missing everything. I told him, 'Just relax. It's OK,'" Klinsmann said. "To see a boy like Morris score his first international goal, you jump for joy."

Klinsmann also gave defender Ventura Alvarado his first start and started center back Omar Gonzalez for the first time since last summer's World Cup.

AP Photo/Darren Abate

USA forward Jordan Morris (8) chases the ball against Mexico defender Carlos Salcedo (13) during the first half of an international friendly soccer match, Wednesday, April 15, 2015, in San Antonio.

MLB

Dodgers complete sweep

By JOE RESNICK
Associated Press

Los Angeles 5
Seattle 2

LOS ANGELES — Brett Anderson posted his first victory with the Los Angeles Dodgers, Scott Van Slyke hit a two-run double, and the two-time defending NL West champions completed a three-game sweep of the Seattle Mariners with a 5-2 victory on Wednesday night.

Anderson (1-0) allowed two runs — one earned — and six hits over five innings and struck out three in the annual Civil Rights Game, which included a pregame ceremony celebrating the 68th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's major league debut.

Pedro Baez, one of several relievers manager Don Mattingly is leaning on in the absence of injured closer Kenley Jansen, pitched 1 1-3 scoreless innings and J.P. Howell got two outs for his first save since June 12, 2011, with Tampa Bay.

Taijuan Walker (0-1) gave up five runs, six hits and four walks in four innings.

Seattle's Nelson Cruz extended his home run streak to a career-best five straight games. The three-time All-Star led the majors last season with nine interleague home runs, and he had four in this series. Cruz signed a four-year, $47 million, contract with the Mariners in December after hitting a career-high 40 homers for Baltimore.

The Dodgers, coming off back-to-back walkoff victories against Seattle in the first interleague series of the season for both clubs, did all of their scoring in the first three innings. They grabbed a 3-0 lead in the first on a two-out RBI single by Andre Ethier and Van Slyke's double to left field.

Adrian Gonzalez hit an RBI single off the glove of first baseman Logan Morrison in the second, and Joc Pederson added a run-scoring single in the third. He added a double in the sixth for his 19th hit in the team's first nine games.

The Mariners got on the board in the fourth when Cruz homered to right-center. They got another run in the sixth on an RBI groundout by Kyle Seager with the bases loaded, and were threatening for more when Robinson Cano ran himself into a costly out.

Paco Rodriguez had just walked Morrison when Cano inexplicably kept creeping down the third base line, trying to get catcher Yasmani Grandal napping. But Rodriguez frantically motioned and yelled to his batterymate, who reacted quickly and ran Cano back to third before Juan Uribe tagged him for the second out.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Mariners: Felix Hernandez, whose second start of the season on Sunday at Oakland ended after five innings because of tightness in his right quadriceps, threw a side session Wednesday on flat ground and did not experience any setbacks. So, the 2010 AL Cy Young Award winner is a go to start on Saturday against Texas at Safeco Field. "My conversation with Felix is he's fine," manager Lloyd McClendon said. "He's ready to go."

AP Photo/Alex Gallardo

Seattle Mariners' Fernando Rodney, right, looks over as players stand on the first base line to honor Jackie Robinson day by wearing number 42 for a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles, Wednesday, April 15, 2015.

HERNANDEZ: Defense admission during closing arguments played key role

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him from the team. The team declined to comment on the verdict.

Prosecutors presented a wealth of evidence that Hernandez was with Lloyd at the time he was killed, including home security video from Hernandez's mansion, witness testimony and cellphone records that tracked Lloyd's movements.

Hernandez's lawyer, James Sultan, acknowledged for the first time during closing arguments that Hernandez was there when Lloyd was killed.

But the attorney pinned the shooting on two of Hernandez's friends, Ernest Wallace and Carlos Ortiz, saying his client was a "23-year-old kid" who witnessed a shocking crime and did not know what to do. Wallace and Ortiz will stand trial later.

Prosecutors have suggested Lloyd may have been killed because he knew too much about Hernandez's alleged involvement in a 2012 drive-by shooting in Boston that killed two. But they were not allowed to tell the jury that because the judge said it was speculation.

As a result, they never offered jurors a motive beyond saying Hernandez appeared angry with Lloyd at a nightclub two nights before the killing.

In the 2012 case, Hernandez is accused of gunning down a pair of men over a spilled drink at a nightclub.

All 12 jurors and three alternates spoke to reporters Wednesday, saying they were shocked by the defense admission that Hernandez was at the scene of the killing — an acknowledgement that they said helped confirm that he was guilty.

They also described how the judge talked to them privately after they reached their decision and told them about other allegations and evidence not presented in the case, including the 2012 slayings and the last texts Lloyd sent minutes before he died saying that said he was with "NFL."

The jurors said that information reaffirmed their feeling that they had made the right decision.

In the Lloyd killing, the defense argued that investigators fixated on Hernandez because of his celebrity and conducted a shoddy investigation in their zeal to confirm their suspicions.

Prosecutors said Hernandez organized the killing, summoned his two friends to help carry it out and drove Lloyd and the others to the secluded spot in the industrial park. During closing arguments, prosecutors also accused Hernandez of pulling the trigger, though under the law it was not necessary to prove who fired the shots to convict him.

Security video from inside Hernandez's home showed him holding what appeared to be a gun less than 10 minutes after Lloyd was killed. The surveillance system also captured Hernandez, Wallace and Ortiz relaxing at his home hours after Lloyd was shot, hanging out in the basement "man cave," lounging by the pool and cuddling Hernandez's baby daughter.

The conviction carries a mandatory sentence of life without parole and automatically triggers an appeal to Massachusetts' highest court.

Hernandez was initially taken to the state's Cedar Junction prison, a maximum-security facility less than a 4-mile drive from Gillette Stadium, where he once caught touchdown passes from Tom Brady in front of tens of thousands of fans.

He was to be processed there and eventually taken to Souza Baranowski prison in Shirley, another maximum-security institution, according to Darren Duarte, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Department of Corrections.

Lloyd's sister, Olivia Thibou, said Wednesday that prosecutors in the trial were her "dream team." Lloyd's mother, Ursula Ward, told the judge she forgave Hernandez and everyone else "who had a hand in my son's murder, either before or after."

BLAZERS: Griz will have home court advantage

Continued from 1B

his sixth straight game with a right knee injury, and Devin Harris was sidelined after injuring his left big toe Monday against Utah.

But all the other regulars played. Chandler had his 31st double-double — the most since he had 38 with New Orleans in 2007-08 — while Dirk Nowitzki had 16 points and Monta Ellis added 15.

"I don't know how you tune up if you're not trying to win," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said before the game. "Probably not a very useful exercise to be out there if you're not going for it."

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