

Pulisic's First International Hat Trick Helps United States Defeat Panama 5-1, Putting Yanks On Doorstep Of Qualifying For FIFA World Cup 2022

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ORLANDO, Fla. - Christian Pulisic's first-ever international hat trick, along with goals from Paul Arriola and Jesus Ferreira, gave the United States men's national soccer team a 5-1 win over Panama in the next-to-last game of CONCACAF (North and Central America and the Caribbean) qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar at Exploria Stadium, the home park of Orlando City, S.C., in Major League Soccer, in Orlando, Fla Sunday evening.



Pulisic's first goal came from the penalty spot after 15 minutes when Panamanian captain Anibal Godoy was seen shoving down Yanks' midfielder Walker Zimmerman in the box. The penalty was confirmed by the video assistant referee and Pulisic calmly sent the goalie the wrong way in hitting the upper left-hand corner to give the Americans the lead at 1-0.

The Yanks doubled the lead in the 21st minute, off a crossing pass from Antonee Robinson that Arriola calmly flicked in off his head to make it 2-0. In the 27th minute, a pretty passing play between Arriola, Luca de la Torre and Shaq Moore resulted in Ferreira getting a tap-in for an easy goal and a 3-0 American lead, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

In the second minute of first-half stoppage time, Godoy gave away another penalty, which Pulisic converted to give the United States a 4-0 halftime lead to send the American supporters into dreamland.

Pulisic then completed his hat trick after 65 minutes, taking a cross and using some sublime moves to split his defenders and slotted the ball into the lower right-hand corner to make it 5-0. Panama got a consolation goal in the 86th minute when Godoy, who plays for Nashville SC in MLS, headed a cross into the left-hand corner to make the final 5-1 for the Yanks.

In other matches played on Sunday, Canada qualified for its second-ever World Cup, their first since 1986, with a 4-0 win over Jamaica, visiting Mexico edged Honduras 1-0 and Costa Rica prevented the Yanks from clinching a spot in the World Cup with a 2-1 win at El Salvador.

The CONCACAF standings with one match each remaining shows Canada on top with 28 points, the United States and Mexico still tied for second with 25 points each, with the Americans having a better goal differential, plus-13 to plus-seven, Costa Rica in fourth place and in the intercontinental playoff spot with 22 points and a plus-three goal differential, Panama was eliminated with the loss and sits in fifth place with 18 points, El Salvador is in sixth with 10 points, Jamaica is in seventh place with eight points and winless Honduras will finish bottom of the table, currently on four points. All have been eliminated.

The final matches of qualifying take place on Wednesday, with the United States playing at Costa Rica, with Los Ticos needing to win by at least six goals to automatically qualify for the World Cup and avoid the intercontinental playoff against the Oceania Federation playoff winner between New Zealand and the Solomon Islands.

Meanwhile, Mexico will host El Salvador needing only a draw to go through to the World Cup, while Jamaica host Honduras and Panama plays host to Canada. All games start at 8:05 p.m., St. Louis time.

The draw of the groupings for the final 32 teams will take place on Friday morning at 10:30 a.m and will be televised live on FS1.