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Uruguay Beats Russia to Take Last Rugby World Cup Berth

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Uruguay secured the 20th and last berth at the 2015 rugby World Cup with an exciting 36-27 victory over Russia in the second leg of their repechage at the Charrua stadium on Saturday.

Los Teros, who lost the first leg 22-21 in Krasnoyarsk two weeks ago, triumphed 57-49 on aggregate and now take their place in a daunting Pool A with hosts England, Wales, Australia and Fiji at the Sept. 18-Oct. 31 tournament.

It is the third time they have made the finals, after 1999 and 2003, having lost in the playoffs for the last two tournaments, while Russia were unable to consolidate on reaching the tournament for the first time in 2011.

Russia changed ends 17-12 up after scoring the first try just before halftime, catching Uruguay napping with a quickly-taken tap penalty 10 meters out.

With the hosts expecting a kick at goal, flyhalf Yury Kushnarev took the penalty and passed out to his left where scrumhalf Alexandr Ianushkin went over in the corner.

Up to that point, the teams had scored tit for tat with four penalties each from Kushnarev and his opposite number Felipe Berchesi, mainly for offside infringements.

Kushnarev hit the near upright with a penalty right after the restart but then increased Russia's lead to 20-12 with his fifth success at goal.

Uruguay, however, hit back hard and decisively with three tries inside 10 minutes from centre Joaquin Prada, prop Alejo Corral and scrumhalf Agustin Ormaechea, all three close enough to the posts to allow Berchesi the three conversions that put them 33-20 up.

A kick out of defense led to the halfbacks both running at the Russians with Prada taking the final pass and darting though a series of failed efforts to stop him to touch down under the posts.

The capacity 14,000 crowd, a record for a match in Uruguay, raised the roof with the try and the hosts' pack made their superior scrummaging tell as Corral, who plays his club rugby in Argentina, went over from a maul.

Ormaechea, whose father Diego became the oldest player at a World Cup in 1999 aged 40, darted over from the back of a scrum to open an ultimately unassailable 13-point lead.

Then Russia had wing Denis Simplikevich shown a yellow card for a dangerous tackle, the second Russian sin-binned in the match after prop Andrei Igretsov in the first half, and Uruguay's Carlos Arboleya joined him.

Vasily Artemyev scored a second try for Russia three minutes from time but any hopes of a comeback were finished when Berchesi slotted his fifth penalty.

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