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Australia qualified today for their first Olympic men's soccer tournament for 12 years with a hard-earned 1-0 victory over Uzbekistan in the third place playoff at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Under-23 Championships in Bangkok. Nicholas D'Agostino scored the winning goal in the 47th minute at the Thai capital's Rajamangala Stadium. D'Agostino's second-half attack helped the Olyroos claim a 1-0 victory over UZBEKISTAN in a match in which the winners secured the last Asian spot at Tokyo 2020 alongside Saudi Arabia and South Korea, who qualified to win the semi-finals. It is the first time Australia has qualified for the men's Olympic soccer tournament since Beijing 2008. The wait, however, continues for Uzbekistan, who have yet to qualify for the Olympics. His misery was compounded when substitute Oybek Bozorov was sent off in the 59th minute for a bad challenge. D'Agostino's goal came when he beat several Uzbek defenders before rubbing a shot into the bottom corner. I can't really put into words right now, so happy, said the 21-year-old Perth Glory striker. That was the goal we set ourself meddly to achieve before we came here. The hobby was amazing, we were stimulated throughout the year. Australia is the 12th team to qualify for Tokyo 2020. In addition to Saudi Arabia and South Korea, also made sure to compete in the Olympics are hosts Japan, France, Germany, Romania and Spain from Europe, New Zealand from Oceania, Egypt, Ivory Coast and South Africa. Two teams must qualify for the South American Football Confederation's Olympic Pre-Olympic Tournament which currently takes place in Colombia. La training will be completed in March, when the two finalists of the Confederation of Olympic Soccer Qualification of the Confederation of North America, Central America and the Caribbean in Guadalajara in Mexico will qualify for Tokyo 2020. The final of the AFC Under-23 Championship will take place tomorrow at Rajamangala Stadium. There is sure to be a new name in the trophy, as neither Saudi Arabia nor South Korea have ever won the tournament. Saudi Arabia was the runner-up in the inaugural tournament in 2013, when they were beaten 1-0 by Iraq. South Korea reached the final in 2016, losing 3-2 to Qatar. More follows. The Olympic Men's Soccer Tournament © Getty Images Tokyo 2020 will host the 25th edition of the Men's Olympic Soccer Tournament 16 teams, including hosts Japan, will compete to win the gold medal. We reveal the dates and qualifying details for each confederation. Only 16 teams will have the privilege of getting the gold medal at the 2020 Tokyo Men's Olympic Football Tournament, the best of the best, so booking a place in the competition is a success in itself. As a host nation, Japan are automatically classified to compete in. They have joined the four European qualifiers Spain, Germany, Romania and France, the three of Africa: Egypt, Ivory Coast and South Africa, the only qualifier from Oceania, New Zealand and Asia, three qualifiers from Korea from the Republic, Saudi Arabia and Australia. The question now is, who will occupy the remaining four seats in Tokyo next year? CONFEDERATIONS QUOTA PLACES AFC (Asia) 3 CAF (Africa) 3 Concacaf (North, Central America and the Caribbean) 2 CONMEBOL (South America) 2 OFC (Oceania) 1 UEFA (Europe) 4 Host country (Japan) 1 Let's take a look at the regional qualifying tournaments that took place in 2019 and then we'll see what's to come for the rest of 2020. Europe The UEFA European Under-21 Championship took place in Italy and San Marino from 16 June to 30 June, where the top four teams at the end of the tournament qualified for Tokyo 2020. Spain finished as champions, defeating Germany 2-1 in the final. Of the four European nations that participated in the previous Olympic Men's Soccer Tournament at Rio 2016, only Germany will return to Tokyo 2020. Tokyo 2020 qualified teams: Spain, Germany, Romania and France © Getty Images Oceania The 2019 OFC men's Olympic qualification was held in Fiji from September 21 to October 5, where eight teams competed for a coveted spot at Tokyo 2020. New Zealand won the ticket to Tokyo 2020 with a 5-0 win over the Solomon Islands in the continental decider. Qualified team for Tokyo 2020: New Zealand Africa The CAF U-23 Africa Cup of Nations took place in Egypt from November 8-22, where eight nations made their lives for three qualifying entries at Tokyo 2020. Egypt lifted the trophy, while Ivory Coast finished runners-up and South Africa won the match for third place. Qualified teams for Tokyo 2020: Egypt, Ivory Coast and South Africa © Getty Images Asia Three places at Tokyo 2020 were up for grabs at the AFC Under-23 Championship Thailand 2020, which was held from January 8-26. Sixteen nations participated in the region's last qualifying tournament with Republic Korea finishing as champions, Saudi Arabia runners-up and Australia finished in third place, with all three teams sealing their places in the Olympic Men's Soccer Tournament. Japan, Republic of Korea and Iraq were the three Asian nations that competed in the last Olympic tournament at Rio 2016. Qualified teams for Tokyo 2020: Korea of the Republic, Saudi Arabia and Australia This is what is yet to come in 2020: South America Colombia hosts the South American Olympic qualifying tournament from January 18 to February 9, 2020. The two best teams in the competition will book tickets for Tokyo 2020. Argentina and Colombia qualified for the last time, while Brazil, who qualified for Rio 2016 as hosts, won gold. Colombia Pre-Olympic Groups 2020: Group A: Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina Group B: Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, North Peru, Central America and Caribbean The Tournament Concacaf men's qualification is scheduled to be held from March 20 to April 1 in Guadalajara, Mexico. The tournament will see eight of the region compete for two places in Tokyo 2020. Honduras and Mexico last represented the region at Rio 2016. 2020 Concacaf Men's Olympic Qualifying Championship Groups: Group A: Mexico, USA, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic Group B: Honduras, Canada, El Salvador, Haiti Updated January 28, 2020 ; ; Image copyright Daniela Porcelli The drama in women's Olympic qualifying at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) usually takes place on the field. With five teams currently ranked in the top 20 in FIFA qualifying and only two ranked, it is undoubtedly the most difficult region to qualify for. This year, however, the drama so far has been totally off the field. A revised qualification process for 2020 initially kept the promise of better football and safer playing conditions for the teams involved. In 2012 and 2016, the final qualifying round was a survival of the fittest exercise made up of six teams that played five games in 11 days, with the top two finishers in a one-table format reaching the Olympics. By 2020, Asia's big guns entered the tournament in the third round, which would consist of two groups of four teams playing a week-long tournament in two host locations starting on February 3. The top two teams in each group advance to a two-way playoff played on March 6 and 11, with the Group A winner facing the Group B runner-up and vice versa. The two winners in total over the two-way book one place in Tokyo. If only it were that simple. Group B is down to three teams amid political tension, while the Group A host abruptly switched from China to Australia amid the coronavirus outbreak in China. On Friday morning (Australian time), a schedule change was announced to extend the Schedule of Group A beyond the FIFA window to realize that the Chinese national team is quarantined until after the proposed date of the first match. Subscribe to The Equalizer Extra today! The scene was set for initial drama during the October 18 draw, when North Korea was handed a spot in Group A, hosted by Jeju, South Korea. Relations between north and south have been deteriorating over the last twelve months, taking to the normally diplomatic sporting world. The first indication of problems came three days before the tie, when the South Koreans played out a World Cup qualifier against North Pyongyang in what has been described as the strangest circumstances those involved have ever experienced. There is no live broadcast, no foreign fans or media, not to mention a bizarre treatment off the field. North Korea followed this experience late the same month by withdrawing its women's team from the December EAFF E-1 Football Championship organized by Korea. Finally came the news in late December that the North Koreans were also withdrawing from Olympic qualifying, instead sending a team south to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The AFC chose not to replace the North Koreans, leaving Korea, Vietnam and Myanmar to play Jeju. As a result, there will only be a total of three games played in the group, one each on 3, 6 and 9 February. The drama of Group B has been of a different nature. Wuhan, China, was to play in Australia, Thailand, Chinese Taipei and the Chinese women's national team. Wuhan, of course, has suddenly become known worldwide in recent weeks as the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak. On January 22, the AFC announced that the classification would move to Nanjing, 334 miles east of Wuhan. Four days later, as the outbreak worsened, China officially retired as hosts and Sydney, Australia, was announced as the new Host of Group B with match dates and times to be determined. On Tuesday, the schedule was initially confirmed as the same as the original timeline, with matches on February 3, 6 and 9. However, upon arriving in Australia it was learned that the Chinese team travelled through Wuhan in the last week. As a result, the entire Chinese contingent has been quarantined in Brisbane, where they will remain until February 5. A meeting of several world organisations determined a schedule that will see China start playing on the second day of the match and then play host Australia on February 12, after the international window ends. Houston Dash sees unarmored potential in Mexico to make matters worse for the Chinese side, already forced to wear a depleted side. Three players from the team, including midfielder star Wang Shuang, are from the Wuhan area and had stayed there to be with the family for the Lunar New Year holiday. When China made the decision to ban out-of-town travel, these players were trapped and were unable to join their teammates. These events, especially the chaos surrounding Group B, oversaw what has the potential to be the most open qualifying competition the AFC has perhaps seen so far. With Japan already ranked for the Olympics as host, Australia struggling since early 2018, South Korea's new management under its first foreign coach, Colin Bell, and China stumbling to only a handful of victories during 2019, there has never been less certainty about which two teams will qualify. On the more of that, the intrigue of a meaningful party between North and South Korea is always something to consider. Now, however, it would be a major upset if South Korea doesn't win Group A easily. Vietnam will benefit from the North Koreans' absence and is expected to overweigh Myanmar to finish second in the group. In Group B, the worst case scenario is that it turns out during this quarantine period that a member of the Chinese contingent has contracted the coronavirus forcing the team to withdraw from qualifying. If that happens, Australia wins the group and Thailand benefits by finishing second. From Australia and South Korea would be heavily favored to beat Vietnam and Thailand, respectively, to qualify. Let Sam Kerr write his own story at Chelsea in the China plays as planned, the group will be decided on the new final day of the match, when China and Australia are scheduled to meet. As hosts, and not having had to go through the deal that China is going through, Australia should be considered strong favourites. Either way, the Australia-China match is now effectively a one-party qualifier. Neither team would fight in a playoff with Vietnam. The last time Australia played Vietnam in the 2018 AFC Women's Asian Cup, the Matildas won 8-0. The last time China played Vietnam, also in 2018, the result was 4-0. South Korea versus Australia or China would be an intriguing playoff, however. Bell's first game in charge of the South Koreans came last month in the EAFF E-1 Cup against China, a 0-0 draw the Koreans should have won. This match featured a Chinese team with all its strength against a missing Korean team are three players based in England. Bell's team beat Chinese Taipei 3-0 and led Japan in the 88th minute before falling 1-0 on a penalty. With Ji So-yun (Chelsea), Lee Geum-min (Manchester City) and Cho So-hyun (West Ham United) at their disposal this time around, a two-leg victory over China and their first Olympic qualification would be a realistic result. If they face Australia, things get a little harder. The only meeting in 2019 between the two teams came in Australia's Four Nations Friendship Cup, where the Matildas won easily, 4-1. However, at the 2018 AFC Asian Cup the result was 0-0 and the Koreans have a history, even with Australia at their best, of keeping matches between the two tight. With growing confidence following his 2019 US tour and Australia's struggles, an upset is not out of the question. For now, however, the focus remains on what is happening off the playing field, how the rescheduling of Group B will change the dynamic, and hopes that the Chinese team will come out of quarantine healthy and unscathed. AustraliaChinaFeaturedSouth KoreaStream KoreaStream

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