

Jay, U.S.A. Advance To Confederations Cup Semifinals

Americans beat Egypt 3-0, Brazil beats Italy by same score in unbelievable finish on Sunday.

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RUSTENBURG, South Africa - Former UIC soccer star Jay DeMerit and his U.S. Men's National Team mates did what many deemed the improbable on Sunday, advancing to the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup semifinals thanks to a 3-0 win over Egypt.

The Americans, who faced a difficult road in Group B with the likes of reigning World Cup champion Italy and perennial world football dominator Brazil in the pairings, needed to beat Egypt by three goals and have Brazil keep Italy at bay.

That's just what happened, as DeMerit's leadership on the backline helped the Red, White and Blue produce a clean sheet while Charlie Davies' marker in the 21st minute and post-intermission tallies by Michael Bradley and Clint Dempsey gave the U.S. the style of victory it needed.

Brazil then defeated Italy by a 3-0 decision. That put Italy and the U.S. in a tie for points in group play (three) and goal differential (minus two), but Uncle Sam's corps advanced by virtue of scoring four total goals in group play to the Italians' three.

DeMerit, a standout back for the Flames from 1998 until 2001, has started all three of the U.S. Men's National Team's matches in Confederations Cup action and continues to receive praise for his play.

"Another good match for the Watford defender, who made timely tackles and stayed in good position at all times," wrote ESPNsoccer.net's Ives Galarcep in regards to the UIC alum.

"Bang-bang blocks on Ahmed Abdelghani with the score 1-0 personified a rugged, poised performance," *Soccer America's* Ridge Mahoney wrote about DeMerit's play on Sunday. "Quick and sure in his tackles, relentless in his pursuit and tracking of attackers, also good in the air."

The U.S. must now face Spain, FIFA's top-ranked team, in the semifinals this Wednesday, June 24 at 1:25 p.m. Central live on ESPN and ESPN360.com.

Fans can watch the replay of the U.S.-Egypt match on ESPN360.com

Read a recent blog posting by DeMerit on his time with the U.S. National Team.

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Jay DeMerit, who donned a UIC kit for four years, is now representing the U.S. on world stages.