



EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000



Everywhere orange

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, June 17: The Dutch went in an orange frenzy this weekend after the Euro 2000 co-hosts won their second game in a row and qualified for the quarterfinals, reports AFP.

At last, the lion is on the loose," De Telegraaf headlined after Friday 3-0 win over Denmark made sure the Dutch would go through into the knockout phase of the competition.

"At last Oranje wakes up," said Het Algemeen Dagblad, highlighting how the team mood had changed following a lucky but disappointing 1-0 opening win over the Czech Republic.

Finally there was passion, finally there was anger, finally a victory that means something," it continued.

The 50,000 capacity De Kuip was already a sea of orange during the match and afterwards it seemed the colour was poured over the whole nation, with parties in all towns going late into the night.

"An orange party," headlined the local paper on top of pictures showing dancing and celebrating fans.

The next match for the Netherlands is against world champion France, with both sides already assured of advancing. Wednesday's match has already been billed as an early final.

France's injury list lengthens

BRUGES, Belgium, June 17: France are feeling the after effects of a bruising 2-1 win against the Czech Republic but is delighted to have booked a place in the quarterfinals of Euro 2000 with a match to spare, reports AFP.

The physical nature of the match took its toll and France have three injury worries for their game against the Dutch in Amsterdam on Wednesday.

Midfielder Emmanuel Petit, who injured his left knee, was forced off at halftime.

"After five minutes I was tackled by Poborsky and felt my left knee go," the Arsenal midfielder said. "I hope that it is just a pulled ligament."

Goalkeeper Fabien Barthez is also nursing a sore left thigh after the match and might be rested by coach Roger Lemerre in preparation for the quarterfinals, while left back Bixente Lizarazu injured a thigh while sprinting during a pre-match warmup.

Yet the so-called Group of Death — which pitted the world champions against co-hosts and tournament favourite the Netherlands, Euro 96 runners-up Czech Republic and Denmark — never lived up to its pre-tournament billing.

UEFA upset

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, June 17: UEFA Chief Executive Gerhard Aigner on Saturday condemned the hooligan riots in Brussels, Belgium and strongly condemned the "small minority who are trying to undermine this celebration" of soccer at Euro 2000, reports AFP.

Charleroi police arrest 131 fans

CHARLEROI, Belgium, June 17: (Reuters/DSI) Belgian police have arrested 131 hooligans after using water cannon to break up groups of rival England and Germany soccer fans ahead of Saturday's European Championship match, reports Reuters.

Supporters began throwing chairs and tables before the police, who had maintained a heavy presence in the centre of the southern Belgian town, intervened.

The trouble then died down and the police sealed off the Charles II square where up to 4,000 fans had gathered.

About 20 police in riot gear positioned themselves at the head of each of 10 streets leading into the square, each group backed by a water cannon, other police vehicles and horses.

Fans continued to taunt and shout abuse at each other but the police succeeded in segregating the two factions on different sides of the square.

Reuters reporters estimated about 2,500 England fans were there with around 1,500 Germans opposite them.

One local woman said: "This is not football, this is not sport. They should play these matches behind closed doors."

Police, who have vowed to take a "zero-tolerance" attitude towards hooliganism, have mounted a huge security operation for the game which has long been seen as a flash-point at the three-week European championship.

They said 374 England hooligans were arrested in Brussels after trouble on Friday night and the first of them were being deported about five hours before the game started.

Two military aircraft were being used to fly fans out of a military airbase, local news service Belga reported. Ministry spokesman Laurent Pannells said some fans would also return on the Channel Tunnel rail service Eurostar.



Ronald de Boer starts celebrating after scoring against Denmark at Rotterdam on June 16. —AFP photo

Westerveld knows the feeling

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, June 17: Dutch goalkeeper Sander Westerveld believes the Euro 2000 co-hosts have finally got the home crowd behind them after a 20 minute blitz saw Holland score three goals to sink Denmark Friday and book their place in the quarterfinals, reports AFP.

"The song 'you only sing when you're winning' is very appropriate for the fans in this country and after our second half performance I think we have them on our side," said Westerveld, a late replacement for the injured Edwin Van Der Sar.

"The Dutch fans are very demanding and when they are not happy they let you know," said the proud keeper, after winning only his second cap.

Westerveld came on for Van Der Sar who was injured in a collision which led to the Danes 80th minute penalty missed by Michael Schjønberg.

The 25-year-old Liverpool keeper said the opening goal scored by Patrick Kluivert lifted the pressure on the tournament favourites and from then on they were able to play the kind of football we have come to expect from the flying Dutchmen.



French striker Thierry Henry (L) placing the ball past Czech Republic custodian Pavel Srnicek to score during their Euro 2000 clash at Bruges on June 16. —AFP photo

Lemerre's father passes away

GENVAL, Belgium, June 17: The father of French coach Roger Lemerre died overnight shortly after his son had guided France into the quarterfinals of Euro 2000, team officials said Saturday, reports AFP.

Lemerre drove to his father's bedside from Bruges after attending the obligatory post-match press conference that followed the 2-1 win over the Czech Republic.

But by the time he arrived at his father's home in the northern French town of Cherbourg he had died, the officials said.

Lemerre will be back with the French team here late Saturday with a training session planned for the evening.

The world champions next play against the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Wednesday.

BRUGES, Belgium, June 17: Youri Djorkaeff, dropped from the starting line-up, came off the bench to score the winner as France booked their place in the Euro 2000 quarterfinals with a 2-1 revenge win over the Czech Republic on Friday, reports AFP.

"I must learn to kill off matches and I am annoyed that I put my teammates in difficulty."

"But the important thing is that we are in the next round. This group is no cakewalk. Now I am really looking forward to a great game with Holland," said France's top scorer in the 1998 World Cup.

France took the lead after a terrible defensive mistake by Petr Gabriel presented Arsenal striker Henry with the softest of goals.

The Sparta Prague defender scuffed an attempted back pass from 30 yards out, allowing Henry to set off on a free run on goal and slide the ball between the legs of the advancing Pavel Srnicek.

The goal followed a bright start by the Czechs who had twice threatened the French goal in the opening exchanges.

A smart shot on the turn by Pavel Nedved - who had passed a late fitness test after injuring his ankle against the Dutch - forced a good save from Fabien Barthez.

Soon afterwards giant centre forward Jan Koller went close with a header which clipped a bar as the lively Czechs took the game to the world champions with good movement and quick passing.

Gabriel's disappointing match continued when he was shown the yellow card by English referee Graham Poll for dumping Henry on his back with a clumsy challenge. He was later replaced at half-time by Milan Fukal.

His 15th minute caution came while the Czechs were still within inches of fulfilling his promise with 20 minutes to go when his header - from a Nedved free-kick - rebounded off the crossbar.

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STANDINGS

BRUSSELS, June 17 (AFP): Euro 2000 tables after Friday's matches:

Group A

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Portugal	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Romania	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Germany	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
England	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Group B

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Italy	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Belgium	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Sweden	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Turkey	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group C

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Norway	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Slovenia	1	0	1	0	3	3	1
Yugoslavia	1	0	1	0	3	3	1
Spain	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Group D

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
France	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Netherlands	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Czech Rep	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Denmark	2	0	0	2	0	6	0



FRANCESCO TOTTI

Voted man-of-the-match after scoring early in Italy's 2-0 win over Belgium, Totti has been replaced midway through the second half in both his matches so far, both times by Alessandro Del Piero.

Struggling to last the full 90 minutes, Totti is convinced that he has more to give at this tournament.

"I'm having a good European Championship so far and I hope that I can continue like this," he said at their training ground here.

"What counts, though, is always showing it on the pitch."

Totti claimed that he wasn't physically tired, but that there was room for improvement.

"I could be better at coping with the 90 minutes," he said. "In the first match, I started out guns blazing and then after half an hour, it's only to be expected that I slowed up. As did the rest of the team."

"I was less lucid than I expected to be, that was the main thing."

Asked about the euphoria surrounding him, and what's been dubbed Totti's Italy, he said: "It's a wonderful feeling."

"But it's not Totti's national team, because there are other teammates and they're helping me to develop and to gradually fit in with the team. The credit is all above all theirs."

"The strength of this Italy side is their team spirit. At the beginning, people claimed that we weren't getting on with each other and that there were a few cliques. But it wasn't true at all."

He also played down a recent Italian newspaper poll which voted the handsome 23-year-old as the best-looking looking man at the tournament.

"It's nice, and I'd like to thank those who voted for me," he said. "The only problem is that I have a very jealous girlfriend."

Add to that the suspension of Lazio defender Sinisa Mihajlovic after his sending off last Tuesday, and there's every reason for Norway coach Nils Johansen to be optimistic.

Yugoslavia's Euro 2000 campaign was saved by the sheer experience and indiscipline of

GOALSCORERS

BRUSSELS, June 17 (AFP): Euro 2000 final scorers after Friday's matches:

2 - Zlatko Zahovic (Slo), Savo Milosevic (Yug), Thierry Henry (Fra)

1 - Bart Goor (Bel), Emile Mpenza (Bel), Johan Mjallby (Swe), Filippo Inzaghi (Ita), Antonio Conte (Ita), Okan Buruk (Tur), Laurent Blanc (Fra), Sylvain Wiltord (Fra), Frank de Boer (Ned), Vltoer Moldovan (Rom), Mehmet Scholl (Ger), Paul Scholes (Eng), Luis Figo (Por), Joao Pinto (Por), Nuno Gomes (Por), Steffen Iversen (Nor), Miran Pavlin (Slo), Ljubinko Drulovic (Yug), Francesco Totti (Ita), Stefano Fiore (Ita), Karel Poborsky (Cze), Youri Djorkaeff (Fra), Ronald de Boer (Ned), Boudejwien Zenden (Ned).

Having convincingly locked out the stars of the Primera Liga, Norway's well-organised side are clearly not going to suffer the same impromptu collapse as the Slovenians. In short, Yugoslavia won't get out of jail a second time.