



English fans invade Ikea

AGENCIES, London

England erupted with wild celebrations after their victory over Sweden in the team's first quarterfinal victory for nearly 30 years.

In Stratford, London, fans have been captured on film invading the local branch of Swedish furniture store Ikea and jumping on the beds. Another video showed a security guard entering the shop to put a stop to the celebrations.

Authorities issued warnings as fans in the capital and across the country flocked onto the streets, bringing traffic to a standstill.

Elsewhere, elated supporters from Brighton to Gibraltar, many wearing England shirts or none at all, danced and sprayed beer into the air to celebrate the historic win.

Chants of "it's coming home" broke out as England's place in the semifinals was secured, with the game set to take place in Moscow on Wednesday night.

Fans up and down the country had gathered at big screens and pub gardens to watch the event, basking in the ongoing heatwave.

Transport for London (TfL) reported traffic blockages in Lewisham and Southwark as fans poured onto the streets following the match. TfL said: "A2 Lewisham Way at the junction of New Cross Road - there are large crowd numbers in the carriageway."

One reveller made his way onto a double-decker bus draped in an enormous England flag, according to the Birmingham Mail. Similar scenes were breaking out in Manchester, with singing fans making their way down Oldham Street while waving shirts in the air.

Politicians of all stripes expressed their support for the victorious England team, with both Prince William and Boris Johnson tweeting that football is "coming home".

There were raucous, unrelenting celebrations from England supporters as the Flat Iron Square in London turned into a giant party after The Three Lions' World Cup quarterfinal victory over Sweden. PHOTO: REUTERS

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THE COUNTRY'S FIRST METRO RAIL

It's coming home

English media in a frenzy

REUTERS, London

England have their best chance in decades to lift the World Cup, having fallen short in the semifinals in 1990, and the nation's media are getting into a frenzy.

Goals from Harry Maguire and Dele Alli gave Gareth Southgate's side a deserved 2-0 last-eight win over Sweden on Saturday, and they must now prepare to take on Croatia in three days time for a spot in the World Cup final.

"Semi Gods," the Sunday Mirror declared with a picture of English players celebrating Maguire's thumping header to opening the scoring, while the Sunday People's headline urged the fans and the squad to "Keep calm and Harry on".

The Observer said a nation hungry for joy has finally found its



new heroes. The Sunday Express said a quietly confident nation has started to believe that football could really be "coming home", as England's 1996 soccer anthem goes.

The last time England reached the semis was in 1990 in Italy, when they lost out to Germany in a penalty shootout. But the country's media believe things could be different with the confident unit led by captain Harry Kane, the top scorer in the tournament so far.

David Baddiel - who co-wrote the anthem 'Three Lions' for the Euro 96 tournament - told the Sunday Times that the current squad has shrugged off the suffocating burdens of history and could lift the trophy for the first time since 1966.

"I am daring to hope because I think this is a team marked by

joy and newness and youth and Gareth Southgate's deep emotional intelligence," said Baddiel, whose iconic song has made its way back up the music charts this week.

Former England international Gary Neville, who was assistant to Roy Hodgson when they were knocked out by Iceland in last-16 at Euro 2016, felt the current pool of players have shown great maturity throughout the tournament in Russia.

"I have to say over the last 25 years of England, when we're winning we usually drop deep and protect, and when we're losing we get desperate," Neville told ITV.

"This team, with every performance I've seen in this tournament, it has been controlled and composed."



A fan dressed as England's increasingly popular manager Gareth Southgate was treated by elated fans as if he were the real thing. PHOTO: REUTERS

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The 'late heroes' of the World Cup

FIFA.COM

The World Cup has a long history of players, who made few waves in the opening rounds, yet became heroes as the competition reached its crescendo. As this year's world finals reaches the last four, we look at some of these 'late heroes' of past World Cups, and some names that might be added to the list at Russia 2018.

Pele: 1958

The 1958 tournament in Sweden is remembered as Pele's World Cup, but few remember that he took no part in the opening two games: an injury in a warm-up game had sidelined the 17-year-old. Pele returned for the final group game against Soviet Union, but made little impact.

It was in the knockout rounds that O Rei exploded into life: a tense quarterfinal against Wales was decided in the 73rd minute by Pele before his second-half hatrick helped Brazil to a 5-2 win over France. Then came the unforgettable final against the host nation where his two goals heralded the arrival of a new football superstar.

Geoff Hurst: 1966

West Ham striker Geoff Hurst, later knighted, was not the forward who was 'supposed' to lead the 1966 England team to World Cup triumph on home turf. It was Jimmy Greaves, the Tottenham hero, who was expected to provide the goals. But Greaves failed to find the net in the opening round, and injury kept him out of the quarterfinal against Argentina. That tempestuous match was instead decided by Greaves' 'understudy' Hurst, whose clever angled header provided the only goal.

Hurst remained in the team for the semis and bagged a hatrick in the Wembley finale to secure a World Cup crown.

Paolo Rossi: 1982

Rossi had been one of the stars of Italy's 1978 team, but in 1982, he had only just returned to the professional game after suspension. As Gli Azzurri laboured unconvincingly through the opening round, Rossi looked sadly out of form.

But when Italy faced a dazzling Brazil in the second phase, Brazil goalkeeper Valdir Peres stated his only real worry was that Rossi might come back to life. So it proved, with a Rossi hatrick securing a 3-2 win for the Italians. He carried on with a brace against Poland in the semifinals, and hit one more in the final against West Germany to end as the top-scorer.

Fabio Grosso: 2006

24 years later, Italy again lifted the trophy, and it was full of renowned players. By contrast, Fabio Grosso, a journeyman left-back, seemed like an interloper.

In their round of 16 match against Australia, they were reduced to ten men and in danger of an exit, when a surging run from Grosso won the Italians a penalty, which Totti dispatched.

He remained in the side and was on hand to score a fine goal to break the deadlock against hosts Germany in the semis. The final against France went to penalties and Italy claimed a fourth World Cup with who else but Grosso scoring the deciding fifth spot-kick.