

TOTTENHAM UNVEIL NEW STADIUM

Mauricio Pochettino said everyone connected with Tottenham Hotspur "needed to cry" after the club's new stadium finally staged its first football match. The 62,000-seat arena, close to the north London club's old home of White Hart Lane, has been beset by delays and reports of spiralling costs which, according to some estimates, have reached £1 billion (\$1.32 billion, 1.17 billion euros). But Sunday saw it play host to a maiden test event, with Tottenham's Under-18 side beating their Southampton counterparts 3-1. Club official's hope Spurs' senior team will play their first match at the new ground, a Premier League fixture against Crystal Palace, on April 3. Spurs' J'Neil Bennett wrote his name into the history books by scoring the first ever goal at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, a wonderful curling strike from the edge of the box that flew into the bottom corner.



Pressure off Loew after Dutch win

AFP, Berlin



Germany coach Joachim Loew was lavished with praise on Monday morning after his team snatched a late win over the Netherlands in their opening Euro 2020 qualifier on Sunday.



Loew has been under enormous pressure since Germany crashed out of the World Cup and suffered relegation in the Nations League last year.

In recent weeks, he has faced growing criticism for his decision to drop veteran stars Thomas Mueller, Mats Hummels and Jerome Boateng from the national team.

Yet after Sunday's dramatic victory in Amsterdam, the 59-year-old appears to have got the German media back onside.

"Loew delivered in the first truly important game since the World Cup, and showed up everyone who said he is no longer the right man for the job," wrote Bild on Monday.

"A victory for the coach!" read the headline in Kicker magazine.

"Loew has managed to unite this young team behind him," the magazine wrote.

The praise marks a decisive change in tone from the recent criticism. Just last week, Die Zeit newspaper summarised the mood around the Germany team with the headline "Loew versus everyone else".

On Sunday evening, the Germany coach played down the idea that he had stuck it to his critics with victory over the Netherlands.

"I don't see the win as an act of vindication," he said. "When my team play as well as they did, then I am positive, regardless of what is going on off the field."



Germany defender Nico Schulz (2nd from L) celebrates his winning goal with teammates during their Euro 2020 qualifier against the Netherlands at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam on Sunday. Germany won the match 3-2.

PHOTO: AFP

Germany clinch a thriller

Hazard scores in milestone match

AFP, Paris



Germany's Nico Schulz sealed a thrilling 3-2 win over the Netherlands in a see-saw Euro 2020 qualifier as Joachim Loew's new-look line-up survived a severe test on Sunday.

Elsewhere, World Cup finalists Croatia stumbled to a 2-1 defeat in Hungary, and Eden Hazard celebrated a century of caps with the opening goal in Belgium's 2-0 win over Cyprus.

A revamped Germany raced into a 2-0 lead in Amsterdam with thrilling strikes from Leroy Sane and Serge Gnabry but the hosts struck back with a second half header from Matthijs De Ligt before Memphis Depay pounced for an equaliser on 63 minutes.

The four-time world champions were put under immense pressure from a Netherlands side seeking a winner but the visitors, who were booed by their own fans in a 1-1 friendly draw against Serbia last Wednesday, snatched victory in the 90th minute through 25-year-old Schulz. The Hoffenheim midfielder, who made his international in August, tapped home a loose ball after a tireless Sane had taken the



Belgium star Eden Hazard (L) celebrates his opening goal with teammate and brother Thorgan Hazard during their Euro 2020 qualifier against Cyprus in Nicosia on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

defence with him on a run into the box.

The win comes after Loew took an axe to Germany's squad ahead of the qualifying campaign in the aftermath of last year's calamitous World Cup elimination, when he told Bayern Munich trio Thomas Mueller, Jerome Boateng and Mats Hummels they had no future in the national side.

Bayern stopper Manuel Neuer may also come under pressure for his place after De Ligt beat him with

a flying header just after the restart. Neuer, 32, was also slow to react as Depay pounced for the equaliser.

Dutch 'keeper Jasper Cillessen was left with little chance after Gnabry ended his mazy run by outwitting Virgil Van Dijk before sending a rasping long-range effort into the bottom corner in the early action.

Chelsea star Hazard celebrated his 100th cap by scoring the opener in their 2-0 win over Cyprus in Group I with Michy Batshuayi grabbing the second as Real Madrid's

Thibaut Courtois went largely untested in the Belgian goal.

Ballon d'Or winner Luka Modric was powerless to stop beaten World Cup finalists Croatia from slipping to a 2-1 defeat to Hungary in Group E on Sunday as Mate Patkai notched a 76th minute winner in Budapest.

Croatia had struggled against Azerbaijan in their opening qualifier last Thursday before escaping with a 2-1 win, but they made the perfect start in the Hungarian capital when Ante Rebic put them ahead on 13 minutes.

But Hungary pulled level through Adam Szalai's fifth goal in as many games and with a quarter of an hour left, 31-year-old Patkai scored his first international goal to pull off a famous victory.

Scotland got back to winning ways with an uninspiring 2-0 win at perennial makeweights San Marino, following an embarrassing defeat at Kazakhstan in their opening qualifier.

"It was a wee bit nervy, it's been a tough few days for everyone," admitted Scotland coach Alex McLeish.

Minnows Israel made it four points from their opening two qualifiers as they swept past Austria 4-2 thanks to an Eran Zahavi hat-trick, setting them up nicely for a tilt at qualification.

'Zidane the right man for Real'

GOAL.COM



Jose Mourinho has said that he believes Zinedine Zidane is the right man for the Real Madrid managerial position.

Zidane was re-appointed as Madrid's head coach earlier this month, just 10 months after he had resigned from the same position.

The Frenchman replaced Santiago Solari, who himself had replaced Julen Lopetegui earlier in the 2018-19 campaign.

After Solari's dismissal, many tipped Mourinho to return to the Santiago Bernabeu after he had been sacked as Manchester United boss in December.

Mourinho was Madrid's manager from 2010 to 2013, but the Blancos instead opted to bring back three-time Champions League winner Zidane.

And Mourinho himself has now said that the Blancos made the right call, adding that the Frenchman is just getting started in his managerial career despite what he has already achieved.

"I do not think we can talk about a career for him yet," Mourinho said of Zidane on Canal Plus.

"But in a very short time, he did what no one had done before, that is winning three consecutive Champions Leagues".

"Now he is starting a new step in his career. He has to build a team, he has to make choices, buy players, and sell them. He has to train them, give them his philosophy of play.

"I think he's probably the best person for this club."

Mourinho has not been shy about his desire to return to club management, and said this week he has already turned down a number of job offers.

The Portuguese said that he's growing more eager to return every day.

"Day after day, I miss training. I'm not going to hide it," Mourinho said.

Uruguay win China Cup

AFP, Shanghai

Stand-in forward Cristhian Stuani scored his third goal in two games as Uruguay taught Thailand a footballing lesson to win the China Cup with a 4-0 victory on Monday.

The 2018 World Cup quarterfinalists hardly missed the injured star striking duo of Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani as they made it seven goals in two games.

Uruguay, comfortable 3-0 victors over Uzbekistan on Friday in the four-team tournament, profited from some poor Thailand defending in the Chinese city of Nanning.

Unmarked Inter Milan midfielder Matias Vecino headed home after just six minutes -- Thai goalkeeper Siwarak Tedsungnoen should have done better -- and it was 2-0 on 38 minutes when Gaston Pereiro prodded in after the Thai defence went AWOL.

Stuani, starting because of the absence of PSG's Cavani and Barcelona's Suarez, made it 3-0 just before the hour with a close-range bullet header from a corner.

SHORT CORNER

Djokovic downs Delbonis

Novak Djokovic remains on course for a record seventh Miami Open title, but the world number one admitted to a loss of focus in a 7-5, 4-6, 6-1 victory over spirited Federico Delbonis which booked his place in the last 16.

Djokovic is hoping to eclipse Andre Agassi's six ATP crowns in South Florida over the next week



Novak Djokovic celebrates his victory against Federico Delbonis in the Miami Open at the Hard Rock Stadium on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

and although the 31-year-old endured some shaky moments at Hard Rock Stadium, he still possessed enough quality during the key moments to see off the battling Delbonis.

The Serbian, though, wasn't happy with letting a 5-2 advantage slip in the first set and became furious with himself as the second squirmed from his grasp.

He will need to tighten up his game if he is to reach next Sunday's final with Roberto Bautista Agut waiting in the fourth round after the Spaniard defeated Italian Fabio Fognini 6-4, 6-4. --AFP

Zorc dismisses rumours linking Sancho to United

Borussia Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc has dismissed rumours that 19-year-old rising star Jadon Sancho is set for a move back to Manchester.

English youngster Sancho has flourished since joining Dortmund from Manchester City two years ago, and recently signed a contract extension which keeps him at the German club until 2022.

Yet Sancho, who picked up an assist in England's 5-0 thrashing of the Czech Republic on Friday, has been repeatedly linked with a return to the Premier League.

A recent report in The Sun alleged that Sancho's agent was in talks with Manchester United, but Dortmund boss Zorc dismissed the rumours as "irrelevant".

"I have no knowledge (of the talks), but it is also completely irrelevant," Zorc told Bild. --AFP

Tigers' WC jersey set to hit market on April 25

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced 'Sports and Sportz' as the official merchandiser for the Bangladesh team jersey for the upcoming World Cup during a press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury informed that Bangladesh's official World Cup jersey is set to hit the market on April 25. --SPORTS REPORTER

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