

Brutal Bavarians steamroll Barcelona en route to semifinals

‘Better than beating Brazil’

Record-breaking Thomas Mueller said Bayern Munich's 8-2 thrashing of Barcelona in the Champions League quarter-final on Friday topped the 7-1 hammering Germany handed Brazil at the 2014 World Cup as he stole the limelight from Robert Lewandowski and Lionel Messi.

"When we (Germany) played against Brazil we were not as in control as we were tonight," insisted Mueller, who also scored in the historic World Cup semifinal. "You can never completely turn Barcelona off, but we gave their midfield practically no room, we did what we wanted to do."

The 30-year-old Mueller capped an outstanding display by passing Philipp Lahm's record to become the German with the most Champions League appearances with 113 games.

"We need to stop talking about the record, it's just a statistic. There were a lot of nicer things to say about the game. Our team spirit is extremely good and the main thing is we are doing what we want to do on the pitch, everyone is torturing themselves to put the work in. It was a special evening: from the result alone and the way it felt on the pitch.

"We can go to bed with a smile and enjoy the atmosphere, but we want to stay in the tournament."



BARCELONA 2 - 8 BAYERN MUNICH
ALABA (OG) 7'
SUAREZ 57'

MUELLER 4', 31';
PERISIC 21'; GNABRY 27';
KIMMICH 63';
LEWANDOWSKI 82';
COUTINHO 85', 89'

BARCELONA'S FIVE WORST DEBACLES

Sevilla 11 - Barcelona 1 (La Liga, 1940)

Real Madrid 8 - Barcelona 2 (La Liga, 1935)

Bayern Munich 8 - Barcelona 2 (Champions League quarter-final, 2020)

Liverpool 4 Barcelona 0 (Champions League 2019 semi-final)

AC Milan 4 - Barcelona 0 (Champions League final 1994)



Serge Gnabry sets off on celebration after scoring Bayern Munich's fourth goal in the 27th minute of their Champions League quarterfinal against Barcelona, whose players were shellshocked. The Bavarians would add four more and walk away with an incredible 8-2 victory.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AGENCIES, Lisbon



German champions Bayern Munich utterly humiliated Barcelona with an extraordinary 8-2 demolition job on Friday that sent them through into the semifinals of the Champions League.

Thomas Mueller scored twice for a rampant Bayern, who led 4-1 after 31 minutes, as Lionel Messi's team were condemned to a thrashing that felt like the end of an era for the Catalan club.

"We feel devastated, although shame is the real word I'm looking for," said Barca defender Gerard Pique, adding that the historic defeat called for urgent changes across the club. "We need to take stock and changes are needed at the club. I'm not talking about the players or the coaching staff, but something more structural. We have to change the direction we've been headed in for a number of years now. We've hit rock bottom."

Pique was not alone in his take on Barça's predicament. The Blaugrana's major dressing-room figures are fully on board with his comments, including a suggestion that some of the team's old guard may need to be sacrificed and fresh blood brought in.

"Nobody is untouchable. If new blood has to come and change this dynamic, I will be the first to pack up and leave," Pique added.

The players were swift to assume their own culpability for their mauling by Bayern, acknowledging that they were

Historic humiliation!



Barcelona's destruction by Bayern Munich in the quarterfinal of the Champions League resulted in a rare occasion for media in Catalonia and the rest of Spain echoing the same sentiment. "Historical humiliation," "Shame" and "End of a shameful cycle" were some of the headlines on the front page of the Spanish sports newspapers yesterday. MARCA headlined: "A historical humiliation for Barcelona. No Spanish team in the Champions League semifinal for the first time in 13 years." Diario AS wrote that "a disaster for Barcelona and the defeat could provoke a reaction within the club that would affect every level of the Catalan giants", while Mundo Deportivo called it "The end of an embarrassing cycle as Bayern humiliated Barcelona in incredible fashion."

outplayed and outfought, but they also believe that years of erratic off-the-field decision-making led to the humiliation. They feel they weren't well prepared enough tactically, and were undermined by what is an unbalanced squad.

Pique and others also expect club president, Josep Maria Bartomeu, to be brave enough to do what is best for

"a tremendously painful defeat".

Bayern coach Hansi Flick hailed an "outstanding" display from his side but stressed that they were firmly focused on the semifinal, which will be against Manchester City or Olympique Lyonnais.

Mueller added: "We had so much fun today. Of course, Barcelona are special, so we had to be even more aggressive and come back again and again. You can imagine we feel good after this match but we have to be quiet and regenerate."

The scoreline recalled Germany's 7-1 semifinal win over Brazil in the 2014 World Cup, a game where Flick was on the bench as the national team's assistant coach. Now, Flick warned that his players would let their stunning win sink in for a day but if they are to win the title they still need to work hard.

"You know that I do not look back because only the here and now matters," Flick said when asked about comparisons to Germany's 2014 win. "Yes, we played an outstanding game and we can be happy but we all know we still have hard work to do if we are to stand in the end where we want to stand," he added.

"We know how quickly it can happen in football. We must recharge from tomorrow for the semifinals," Flick said.

"It is a win and we wanted to reach semifinals. OK, it is impressive, we set a small marker but the experienced players know that the next game awaits and we will need the same performance. Let it sink in, analyse and then prepare for the semifinal," Flick said.

HIGHLIGHTS

For the first time in the history of the UEFA Champions League, a club scored eight goals in a knockout match in the form of Bayern Munich as they thrashed Barcelona 8-2.

The last team to score eight or more goals in this competition were Real Madrid when they hammered FC Wacker Innsbruck 9-1 in the last 16 of 1990-91 season of the then European Cup.

Barcelona suffered defeat by a six-goal margin for the first time since April 1951 when the Catalan side were beaten 6-0 in a La Liga match by Espanyol.

The Spanish giants conceded eight goals for the first time in 74 years when they were embarrassed 8-0 by Sevilla in Copa del Rey in 1946.

German powerhouse Bayern have engraved their name in the semi-final of the Champions League for the 12th time, and they are bettered by only Real Madrid (13).

Bayern's star striker Robert Lewandowski became the first player to put himself on the score-sheet in eight or more consecutive Champions League matches since Cristiano Ronaldo in April 2018 (11 goals).

WHAT THEY SAID

"We knew it is never easy against Barcelona, but this is an unbelievable result. It's hard to comprehend."
-- Joshua Kimmich, who scored Bayern's fifth goal

"No, it didn't hurt, it was fun actually"
-- Bayern midfielder Leon Goretzka when asked if it hurt embarrassing his childhood idol Lionel Messi

"We have hit rock bottom. This is not the first, nor the second, nor the third time. We are not on the right path.... Tonight was unacceptable for Barcelona. It was a disgrace" -- Barcelona defender Gerard Pique

"It's a very difficult night, the defeat is very hard for the supporters, the players... We are sorry for everyone. We have not lived up to the club that we are. It was a disaster." -- Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu

"Obviously it's a great result for us, but you don't want your national team colleagues to experience something like that," Bayern keeper Manuel Neuer about his opposite number Marc-Andre Ter Stegen

"In the end, I really must pay the team a huge compliment as the way they played, the attitude is top. To maintain this spirit for 90 minutes is impressive."
-- Bayern coach Hansi Flick

No cricket at home this year?

Shakib likely to join Tigers in SL, says Hassan

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan informed that if the current coronavirus situation in Bangladesh does not improve and until a vaccine is invented, he does not see any logical reason to resume the Dhaka Premier League or stage the Bangladesh Premier League.

A total of five bilateral series for the Tigers have been postponed since the coronavirus outbreak. Hassan informed that apart from the series against Australia, BCB has already rescheduled the four other series.

"We have already missed quite a few series where Australia and New Zealand were scheduled to tour Bangladesh.

"We also have a Test remaining against Pakistan along with the Ireland tour and we have almost prepared the re-scheduling of those series and none of the matches will be missed except for one. We are yet to confirm the series against Australia as the timings of the two boards are not matching," said

Hassan.

There was some good news as Hassan seemed hopeful that ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, whose one-year ban from all sorts of cricket by the ICC which will be lifted on October 29, will join the Tigers' camp during their tour of Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh are scheduled to play three Test matches in Sri Lanka, with the first Test expected to start in mid-October. According to Hassan, the star all-rounder will have to go through fitness tests and other processes before joining the team.

However, the BCB boss, during a briefing at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, urged media not to put too much focus on Shakib as it may work against the cricketer if found to be breaching any clause of the suspension.

"I had a chat with him but I am not going to disclose that. Once Shakib's ban gets lifted, only then he can play for us. He will be available once his suspension ends and we are all eagerly waiting for his return. But this is also related to his fitness and preparation and



for that he will practise on his own and he is expected to return to the country this month before starting training. We are hoping that he remains fit and everything remains fine and he will join us in Sri Lanka and play, if he is able to," Hassan told media.

"Don't try to do much news on Shakib as it is also part of the condition [set by the ICC] that he wouldn't be playing [anything] that comes to media. He is not

allowed to be with us until his ban gets lifted although he can play cricket in the neighbourhoods if he wants," Hassan added.

The BCB boss also spoke about the national teams' training camp and suggested on minimising the risk of arranging the camp in Bangladesh and focusing on spending more time in Sri Lanka which is comparatively safe from the corona virus in the recent times. He also added that the cricketers will have to go through three Covid-19 tests before joining the residential camp.

"At the moment they are doing individual training as we provided all the facilities by following safety measures upon their request. There are groundsman and support staff and players themselves, none of whom have gone through tests, so we can't say they are safe. There will be risks but we have to minimise that and that is the reason I have suggested to shift training more to Sri Lanka and get prepared there as much as possible as we assume Sri Lanka's situation is much better than here. We will try to follow proper isolation process during our camp in the country," he said.



Rain swept through again, washing out the first session on the third day of the second Test. Mohammad Rizwan remained unbeaten on an impressive 60 the previous day, with Pakistan on 223 for nine in their first innings.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Rain continues to disrupt play

REUTERS, Southampton



Bad weather continued to dog the second Test between England and Pakistan on Saturday as a combination of bad light and drizzle wiped out the morning session on the third day at the Rose Bowl.

There was no word of if, or when, it would be possible for play to restart. Only 86 of a possible 180 overs were

bowled in the first two days as Pakistan, batting first, reached 223-9. With more bad weather forecast, a draw was quickly emerging as the most likely result. England lead 1-0 in the three-match series.

"We are a bit disappointed we have not bowled Pakistan out – they have played really nicely at times and we have missed a few chances and maybe not been as ruthless with the ball as we could have been," said England bowler Stuart Broad.