

EURO 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



PHOTO: REUTERS

'We rate Gosens very highly'

AGENCIES

Germany coach Joachim Loew praised Robin Gosens for his dominant display in Saturday's 4-2 Euro 2020 win over Portugal, saying he knew very early in the left back's time with the national team that he had all the qualities to succeed.

Atalanta defender Gosens, who has played his professional career outside Germany and has unusually not come out of the country's youth system, won his first cap in September in a Nations League match against Spain.

The 26-year-old excelled in his ninth game for the country on Saturday, causing problems for the Portugal defence with his blistering pace and power as he set up two goals and scored another in the Group F clash.

"We scouted him a couple of years ago and he managed to adapt real quick and integrate very well into the team," Loew told a news conference.

"After the first match that he played with us, he had no problems... he communicates a lot with all the other players. So it was clear after the first match that he would be with us."

Loew said he was particularly impressed with the player's discipline and communication skills on the pitch.

"As a personality, as a character, we rate him very highly because he's very open minded, active in communicating. He has a good relationship with all the players," Loew added.

"He's really clear in his head. He's like how he plays on the pitch: very strict, direct, puts in a lot of commitment. That's the way he fights. "These are things that are important to him."

Excitement intensifies as knockout stages take shape

STAR SPORT DESK

Euro 2020 has delivered plenty of drama so far, albeit a year late, but there promises to be plenty more in store as the continent's biggest teams enter the tournament-defining games in the third and final round of group stage matches.

Only three teams have secured a place in the next round so far: Italy from Group A and the Netherlands from Group C – both of whom are looking to make a point to prove after failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup – and Belgium from Group B.

There would be a far larger scope for disappointments and early exits were the round of 16 to be made up of only first and second-placed teams at the conclusion of the group stages. However, 'wildcard' entries for the four best third-place finishers means that most big teams can reasonably expect to hang on and make it through to the next round. Goal difference then becomes a bone of contention, although getting points on the board is still a prerequisite.

A re-match of the 2016 Euro final between France and Portugal in Group F could prove to be one of the most

crucial fixtures of the group stages. A draw would perhaps be enough for both teams to advance, but a heavy loss one way or another could knock one of 2016's finalists out at the first hurdle.

Fernando Santos' side looked lost against Germany in a 4-2 defeat on Sunday, the 66-year-old completely flummoxed by Joachim Loew's 3-4-3. Then again, world champions France did themselves no favours as they followed up their win against Germany with a rescue mission during a 1-1 draw against Hungary.

At the least that kept things interesting in the group of death, but Hungary coach Marco Rossi would not rule out the possibility of his side springing a surprise. "We are fighting tooth and nail for our place in the sun. The mother of idiots is always pregnant," he said, referring presumably to those who continue to doubt Hungary despite credible performances.

England, who were especially toothless against their oldest rivals Scotland, will be especially desperate to get off the mark. The self-anointed favourites have lacked that spark in both games as Gareth Southgate's

underwhelming team selection and tactics gelled perfectly with the indifferent attitude of his players.

Spain also find themselves in a spot of bother following their second consecutive draw in the tournament after being let down again by their forwards, chiefly Alvaro Morata, whose shooting boots are yet to re-appear since vanishing during an ill-fated flight to London. Coach Luis Enrique must surely also shoulder some of the blame for some awkward decisions, but everything now hinges on their final game against Slovakia. Nothing less than a win will guarantee La Furia Roja's continuation.

Another interesting twist is that the teams that are scheduled to play later will have a much clearer idea of who their opponents could be in the next round. Some hugely optimistic England fans even went so far as to suggest that Southgate intentionally drew the match versus Scotland so that he would have a window to finish second in the group if that would set them up against relatively weaker opponents. That sort of mindset does not really invoke winning mentality, but teams will certainly be looking for any edge that they can get.

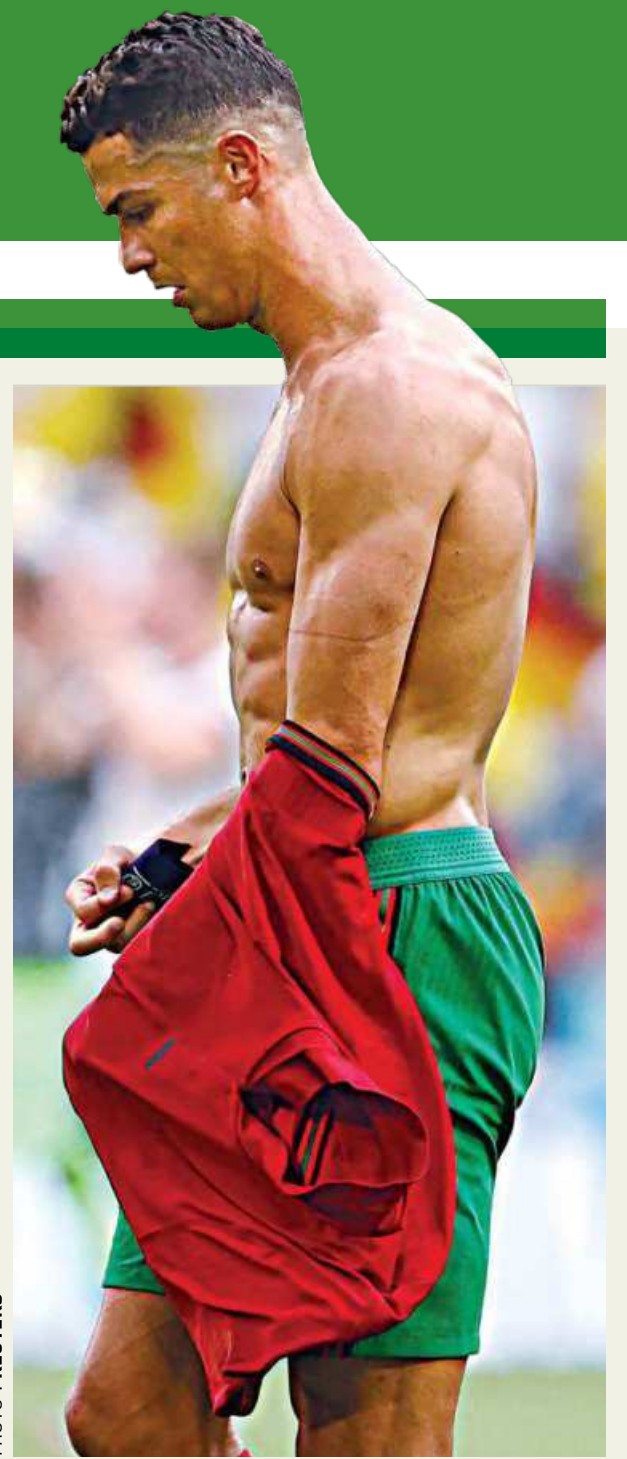


PHOTO: REUTERS

Lewy's leadership provides ray of light for Poland



PHOTO: REUTERS

AGENCIES

Poland coach Paulo Sousa praised their 32-year-old Bayern Munich striker Lewandowski for his performance and leadership skills during a 1-1 draw against Spain in their Euro 2020 Group E match on Saturday. "Seeing a leader like Robert winning all the challenges, interacting with team mates, shows the right mentality and could lead (to us) advancing to the knockout stage," he said.

Lewandowski has scored only three times for Poland in major tournaments including Saturday's goal against Spain. The Lewandowski with Poland is a little different to the free-scoring one at Bayern Munich. While his scoring rate in the Bundesliga for Bayern was a ridiculous 41 goals in 29, it's a little different in Poland colours. He doesn't have the same level of service, but his ruthless opportunism and ability to make a nuisance of himself is just the same. "It's a boy who always works in training to make sure he has this feeling with the goal but he understands that in our national team he doesn't have the same dynamics and the same players as at Bayern Munich," said Sousa.

"Lewandowski makes the team stronger as a collective."

Sheikh Jamal's super start to super league

SPORTS REPORTER



Blistering knocks from Shykat Ali and skipper Nurul Hasan guided Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club to kick-start their super league campaign in style with a seven wicket win over Prime Bank Cricket Club in the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League T20 competition yesterday.

Chasing a challenging 165 runs, Sheikh Jamal registered a comfortable win in the end with eleven balls to spare, losing only three wickets.

Despite Mohammad Ashraful having departed cheaply on five, opener Shykat steadied the ship with Imrul Kayes, coming in at number three, and the second-wicket partnership had laid the foundation for the victory, adding 100



Abahani skipper Mushfiqur Rahim led from the front with an unbeaten 32-ball 57 to secure a 60-run victory against Mohammedan in Mirpur yesterday. Mohammedan scored 133 for 7 in 20 overs in reply to Abahani's 193 for 7.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

runs. Imrul however, was dismissed after scoring 44 off forty balls but Shykat was joined by Nurul who kept the momentum in favour of the batting side.

Having reached his half-century off just 28 balls, Shykat was eventually dismissed on sixty off 36 balls, laced with three sixes and six fours, while Nurul remained unbeaten on 44 off just 17

balls, his cameo composed of four sixes and two fours, helped seal a comfortable victory in the end.

Earlier, Prime posted a fighting 164 for 3 in 20 overs after being sent to bat where Mohammad Mithun top-scored with an unbeaten 67 while Raqibul Hasan too, remained unbeaten on 34. Left arm spinner Elias Sunny bagged two wickets for the bowling side.

Previously, the first game of the day between Gazi Group and Prime Doleshwar was postponed for the reserve day after rain halted the proceedings. Gazi scored 73 for 4 after 12 overs before the rain had interfered. Mominul Haque (23) and skipper Mahmudullah Riyad (2) is set to resume the innings today, from where they had left off.

Meanwhile, rain also forced yesterday's relegation match between Legends of Rugganj and Partex Sporting Club to take place on the reserve day today.



Sabina eases to historic 100-goal milestone

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings captain Sabina Khatun yesterday crossed the 100-goal landmark as the striker slotted home a hat-trick in a 5-0 win over Soddopushkuruni SC in the Women's Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The 27-year-old, also captain of the Bangladesh national women's team, needed just three-and-a-half seasons to claim a milestone no Bangladeshi woman has before. The Sathkhira native scored 25 and 28 goals for Sheikh Jamal and Mohammedan in 2011 and 2013 respectively before significantly upping gears as she netted an incredible 35 times in the last edition for Sheikh Jamal earlier this year. In the ongoing league, she has scored 13 goals at the midway point.

HOLDERS Bashundhara King celebrated the occasion by handing over a commemorative crest to Sabina while other players sported jerseys that had 'Sabina 100 goals' emblazoned across the back.

WHAT TO WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1

WTC Final (Day 4)
India vs New Zealand
Live from 3:30 pm

SONY SIX & TEN 2

EURO 2020
Ukraine vs Austria
Live from 10:00 pm
North Macedonia vs Netherlands
Live from 10:00 pm

T SPORTS & GAZI TV

Dhaka Premier Division T20
Prime Doleshwar vs Sheikh Jamal
Live from 9:00 am
Abahani Limited vs Gazi Group Cricketers
Live from 2:00 pm
Prime Bank vs Mohammedan Sporting
Live from 6:30 pm



JAMIESON RIPS INDIA APART

New Zealand fast bowler Kyle Jamieson appeals successfully for the wicket of India captain Virat Kohli during the third day of the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) at the Ageas Bowl yesterday. Jamieson was the pick of New Zealand's all-seam attack claiming 5-31. India were all out for 217 in their first innings as they added only 71 runs to their overnight score of 146-3 before collapsing 25 minutes after the lunch break. Ajinkya Rahane top-scored with 49 and Kohli made 44. New Zealand scored 65 for no loss in 32 overs.

PHOTO: ICC