



Spain KO Croatia in EIGHT-GOAL THRILLER

REUTERS



Spain striker Alvaro Morata enjoyed sweet redemption by helping fire his side to a 5-3 win over Croatia after extra time on Monday to reach the quarter-finals of Euro 2020 in an enthralling match laced with drama and storylines.

Spain fell behind in the first half to a Pedri own goal from near the halfway line after an incredible error from keeper Unai Simon but they looked on their way to a comfortable victory with

goals from Pablo Sarabia, Cesar Azpilicueta and Ferran Torres. Yet Croatia staged an unthinkable comeback with goals from Mislav Orsic in the 85th minute and a Mario Pasalic header in added time to force the extra period. Spain showed tremendous character though and prevailed thanks to Morata's superb strike in the 100th minute and a goal from Mikel Oyarzabal in the 103rd. Spain celebrated a first knockout win in a major tournament since winning Euro 2012 to set up a quarter-final

against France or Switzerland in St Petersburg on Friday. Croatia head home with their heads held high but are still waiting to win a knockout game at a Euros. Morata has been the centre of attention of Spain's campaign amid inconsistent performances and criticism from his own supporters, which took an ugly turn during last week's 5-0 win over Slovakia. His wife and children were threatened by supporters in Seville and he complained of facing death threats before the game, prompting coach Luis

Enrique to urge police action. Morata has been accused of having a fragile disposition but showed real leadership when Spain's confidence was on the floor, controlling a Dani Olmo cross with one foot before blasting into the roof of the net. His team mate Simon also compensated for his first-half howler, making a superb save to thwart Andrej Kramaric early in extra-time. Substitute Oyarzabal struck moments later to increase Spain's lead and this time Croatia had no response.

Own goals keep flying in at calamitous Euros

Spanish midfielder Pedri's back pass that ended up in his own net against Croatia on Monday ensured that this year's European Championship has seen as many own goals as all previous editions of the competition combined. Pedri knocked a pass back to goalkeeper Unai Simon, who misjudged his touch at the final moment and ended up only faintly clipping the ball which as it sped towards the net in the two sides' last-16 match in Copenhagen. That made it nine own goals so far at Euro 2020 - already six more than the tournament record of three set at Euro 2016.



GERMANY V ENGLAND

Old foes England and Germany face off in the last 16 of Euro 2020 on Tuesday with the victors knowing they will then be favourites to go on and reach the final thanks to a kind-looking draw. Neither side has hit top form during the tournament so far, but England are confident of beating the Germans in the knockout stage of a major tournament for the first time since 1966 in front of 45,000 fans at Wembley.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

At Euro: Played-4, England won-1, Germany won-1, Drawn-2
Overall: Played-32, England won-13, Germany won-13, Drawn-6

PLAYERS TO WATCH



Kai Havertz
3
2
0
9
84%



Raheem Sterling
Matches 3
Goals 2
Assists 0
Attempts 5
Passing Accuracy 82%

SWEDEN V UKRAINE

Sweden's free-scoring winger Emil Forsberg has declared himself fit and ready to go for Tuesday's Euro 2020 last-16 clash with Ukraine. Swedes opened with a scoreless draw against Spain before edging Slovakia 1-0 thanks to Forsberg's penalty and finishing with a dramatic 3-2 win over Poland. They will face a fired-up Ukraine side led by Andriy Shevchenko that is receiving a great deal of support from high places after going through as the third-placed team in Group C.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

At Euro: Played-1, Ukraine won-1, Sweden won-0, Drawn-0
Overall: Played-4, Ukraine won-2, Sweden won-1, Drawn-1

PLAYERS TO WATCH



Emil Forsberg
3
3
0
8
78%



Andriy Yarmolenko
Matches 3
Goals 2
Assists 1
Attempts 8
Passing Accuracy 79%

'We shall return stronger'

AFP, LISBON

Captain Cristiano Ronaldo said on Monday he was "proud" of holders Portugal's efforts despite bowing out of Euro 2020 after the weekend's 1-0 last 16 loss to Belgium.

"We did not get the result we wanted and we leave the competition sooner than expected," the 36-year-old Juventus star and five-time Ballon d'or winner admitted as his side failed to match their 2016 exploits.

"But we are proud of our showing. We did everything we could to retain the title of European champions and this group proved it could still give the Portuguese people much joy," the former Manchester United and Real Madrid attacker posted on social media after Sunday's loss.

"Congratulations to Belgium and good luck to all the teams left in. As for



'As a coach I couldn't be prouder'

REUTERS, Seville



Belgium coach Roberto Martinez hailed his team's strong mentality after they ended Portugal's reign at the European Championship with a 1-0 win in a bruising last-16 encounter in Seville on Sunday.

It was a display, he said, that highlighted not only Belgium's attacking talent but their ability to defend and tough it out.

"It wasn't just about how good we can be but how we could adapt to what Portugal do best: They do exactly what they need to win -- that's why they are the current European champions. They know how to take those moments that can hurt you, but I think we had incredible concentration and defended really well," a beaming Martinez told the post-match news conference.

"We played a really good game in the first half, controlling and scoring a very good goal." Belgium went ahead thanks to a long range bullet from Thorgan

Hazard.

"But then in the second half, more of the momentum went to Portugal and we had to show an incredible mentality. It was about those aspects of being disciplined, very tactically astute and we never lost concentration.

"There were difficult moments as Portugal tried to get back in the closing minutes, but this result gives me an incredible satisfaction because this is what a winning team needs.

"We all know the talent we have and the good football we can play, but today we showed all the other elements also needed. As a coach I couldn't be prouder."

Martinez will, however, have to sweat over injuries during the match to key players Eden Hazard and Kevin de Bruyne, who he said would undergo scans on Monday and rest up for the next 48 hours.

He said he had no idea what their chances were of playing on Friday, when Belgium meet Italy in the quarter-final in Munich.

Gaping holes in potential leadership roles

MAZHAR UDDIN



Dark clouds concerning the relatively less younger players to assume the leadership role in future has hovered over Bangladesh cricket in the recent years as the four horsemen, the most experienced players — Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, and Mahmudullah Riyad — approaches the tail-end of their respective careers.

Considering the likes of — Soumya Sarkar, Mohammad Mithun, and even Najmul Hossain Shanto — who has been in the national set-up for the past four-five years as of now and yet failed to perform on a consistent basis, helped cast an ominous shadow over the likelihood of which next crop of cricketers, and if any for that matter, would step up to fill the void when the seniors finally draw the curtain.

Looking back, there was hardly ever a doubt over the talent and potential from the aforementioned players but their inability to meet the optimum expectations has been the most disappointing feature of Bangladesh cricket, to say the least.

Primarily due to the alarming lack

of consistency, the selectors shied away despite having given them enough opportunities. Mithun, for instance, who previously was part of all three formats for the Tigers, finds himself only in the ODI side after being dropped from the Test and T20 side for the upcoming Zimbabwe tour.

Similarly, Soumya was also dropped from the ODI team and is considered only for the T20 side while Najmul was included in the Test format and was dropped from the T20 side due to his poor run of performances of late.

For someone like Najmul who is rated highly by the Tigers think tank for all three formats, the young left-hander failed to prove his worth, especially in the limited-overs formats after a string of failures, both home and away.

The 22-year-old, who scored his maiden Test hundred in Sri Lanka back in April this year, will surely look to overcome his weakness by showcasing his talent laced with consistency, in the one-off Test against Zimbabwe.

"At the moment my focus is fully on the lone Test in Zimbabwe. My aim is to remain consistent and score runs in whatever format I play so that I gain more confidence," said Najmul before leaving for Zimbabwe yesterday.

Soumya, arguably remains the standout player who arrived at the international circuit with a massive potential for his natural free-flowing batting style. Yet the left-hander, despite possessing all the ingredients, lacks necessary confidence and is still far off from cementing a place in all three formats.

"As I am only in the T20 format for the Zimbabwe tour, my aim will be to play well and make a comeback to the other two formats for Bangladesh. Obviously, Zimbabwe is a tough opponent on their home soil but I plan to work on my own game and gain confidence for the road ahead," said Soumya.

For the 30-year-old Mithun, the upcoming Zimbabwe tour could be his decisive mission for survival in the Bangladesh team since he too is under heavy scrutiny, for his lack of consistency, from the team management.

"International cricket is always full of pressure and as a player, you have to absorb all that and perform. I always had to fight for my place so I look forward to maintaining consistent performance for the team," said Mithun.

➤ Novak Djokovic's 19 Grand Slam titles have been built on precision groundstrokes, elastic-limbed movement and an iron will, but worryingly for those hoping to snatch away his Wimbledon crown, he now has another weapon in his armoury. The 34-year-old's serve has sometimes been overlooked when analysing what makes Djokovic one of the all-time greats, but when he found himself in a spot of bother against British teenager Jack Draper on Monday, it was the serve that carried him clear of danger in a 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win. "I think I probably had one of the best serving performances that I can recall on any surface," Djokovic told reporters after opening his quest to draw level on a record 20 Grand Slam titles with Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer.

➤ American Frances Tiafoe caused the first big upset of the Wimbledon men's singles tournament by beating third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-4, 6-3. "It sounds pretty damn good. Definitely one of my best (matches). From start to finish it was pretty clean," Tiafoe told the cheering 6,000 strong Court One crowd, sheltered by a roof from the drizzle outside, as the result was read out.

