



PHOTO: REUTERS

ENGLAND END GERMANY CURSE

AGENCIES

Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane struck as England reached the quarter-finals of the European Championship with a 2-0 win over rivals Germany at Wembley on Tuesday.

The victory was England's first against Germany in a knockout round at a major tournament since the 1966 World Cup final and came after midfielder Jack Grealish was introduced in the 69th minute.

Six minutes later, after a swift passing move, left wing-back Luke Shaw slipped the ball across the face of the goal for Sterling to slide in his third goal in four Euro 2020 games.

But shortly after scoring Sterling almost gifted the Germans a leveller when he gave the ball away on the halfway line and Kai Havertz sent Thomas Mueller through on goal.



The experienced World Cup-winner had only England keeper Jordan Pickford to beat but dragged his shot wide of his right-hand post, leaving Sterling, who watched in anguish on his knees, to leap to his feet in relief.

Grealish was the direct provider

for England's second, crossing from the left for Kane to beat goalkeeper Manuel Neuer with a stooping header.

England's players were celebrating wildly with each other and the exultant, overjoyed Wembley crowd as they embark

on a lap of honour. Coach Gareth Southgate applauded the fans and received a massive cheer in return.

Raheem Sterling paid tribute to an all-round great team performance. "We knew we needed to put a big performance in against a very good German side and I thought we done that today. Scoring for your country is always special and it's definitely a special moment for me. I celebrated and for half a second I thought 'Don't let it be offside'. I'm really happy it went in and I'm really happy we got the win," he said.

"It's a magnificent moment for myself, the team, the fans," said Harry Maguire. "It's been a tough couple of years for everyone in this country so to put smiles back on faces, at home and here in the stadium, is to enjoy a great moment, a feeling. We're not done with it yet, though because we've got another big game on Saturday."

Can Messi go the distance for La Albiceleste?

AGENCIES



With his inauspicious Argentina debut nothing but a distant memory, Lionel Messi became his country's most capped player on Monday in their 4-1 Copa America victory over Bolivia.

A perennial candidate in the 'Greatest of All Time' debate, Messi marked the occasion in style with a virtuoso performance, scoring twice and setting up another in his 148th national team appearance, surpassing Javier Mascherano's record.

It was all a far cry from his debut in 2005 when he was sent off after just 43 seconds.

Argentina's record scorer, Messi's 74th and 75th international goals helped extend the side's unbeaten run to 17 games on Monday and booked a quarter-final tie against Ecuador on Saturday.



PHOTO: AFP

The 34-year-old Barcelona striker is also seeking to break two South American records: Pelé's as the top goal scorer of a national team (scored 77 for Brazil), and Chile's Sergio Livingstone mark of 34 for most Copa

COPA AMERICA KNOCKOUT FIXTURES

QUARTERFINALS

July 3: Peru v Paraguay (3am), Brazil v Chile (6am)
July 4: Uruguay v Colombia (4am), Argentina v Ecuador (7am)

SEMIFINALS

July 6: First Semifinal (5am)
July 7: Second Semifinal (7am)
Third Place: July 10 (6am)

FINAL: JULY 11 (6AM)

**All time are in Bangladesh Standard Time

America appearances (Messi has 31). Diego Maradona scored 32 goals in 87 matches for Argentina, including the 1986 World Cup triumph. Messi, despite his impressive individual statistics, is yet to win a major title for Albiceleste.

Argentina have not won a major title since lifting the Copa America in 1993 and Messi is desperate for some success in a blue and white shirt.

"I've been lucky enough to win everything at club level and individual level and it would be lovely also to win something with the national side," the 34-year-old said on the eve of this year's Copa. "That's my dream."

His Spanish club were among those to send their congratulations for his record-breaking achievement on Monday: "A true legend, Leo! Congratulations".

Messi has appeared in three Copa America finals, as well as the 2014 World Cup final, all of which Argentina lost. However, they are in good form going into the last eight of the Copa and are undefeated since 2019.

As Messi focuses on winning a first major trophy with his country this summer, his future at Barca remains unresolved.

His contract with the club expires on Wednesday and if a new deal is not agreed upon before then, he officially becomes a free agent on Thursday.

However, Barca are working hard to reach an agreement over a new contract and are confident he will extend his 20-year relationship with the club.

Federer survives big scare

REUTERS



Eight-times champion Roger Federer survived a massive scare against Adrian Panatta before advancing to the Wimbledon second round on Tuesday when the Frenchman retired with a knee injury after slipping on court.

The match was poised at 6-4, 6-7(3), 3-6, 6-2 with Federer forcing a fifth set before Panatta, celebrating his 33rd birthday, decided he could not continue.

"It's awful," Federer said in his on-court interview. "It shows that one shot can change the outcome of a match, a season, a career. I wish him all the best and I hope he recovers quickly so we see him back on the courts."

"He could have won the match at the end. Obviously, he was the better player, so I definitely got a bit lucky."

Federer, seeded sixth, was serving with a 4-2 lead in the fourth set when the 41st-ranked Panatta slipped while attempting a return and twisted his right knee.

The Frenchman received medical attention on Centre Court and limped back to complete the set before shaking hands with Federer, who now has a 7-0 head-to-head record against him.

"You don't get many walkovers throughout a career and you try also not to have it happen to yourself," Federer added. "It's a reminder how quickly it goes. But of course, I'm obviously happy I can get another chance for another match here."

"I worked very hard and at the end I enjoyed myself out here today. It was great fun until the end, obviously."

The 20-times Grand Slam winner came into Tuesday's match having lost just one set in his six previous meetings against the left-hander, including three on the manicured grass at Wimbledon.



The night of high footballing drama started with a Spanish own goal, result of a bizarre blunder by goalkeeper Unai Simon, who would only go on to make a point-blank save in extra time that proved key to Spain's eventual 5-3 victory over Croatia. The next sequence of play would see Spain go ahead by two goals only to spark a late comeback by current world runners-up before heavily criticised Spanish forward Alvaro Morata earned redemption through a brilliant goal in the 100th minute of an epic match at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen. That only completed half of the night's heightened drama as the next knockout game would see Switzerland stun world champions France 5-4 on penalties in a game that saw the Swiss score twice in the final five minutes of normal time before the crazy night was capped off by Kylian Mbappe's decisive spot-kick miss during a thrilling shootout.

PHOTO: REUTERS/TWITTER

The beauty of chaos

SAMAMA RAHMAN



A frenetic night that featured 14 goals across just two games set the tone for the rest of Euro 2020 as both 2018 World Cup finalists, France and Croatia, joined reigning European champions Portugal by the wayside.

A calm take on the chest from Alvaro Morata before lashing into the net for the winner against Croatia in extra-time, Karim Benzema's scrumptious touch before lifting the ball over France's equalizer against Switzerland and Paul Pogba's homing rocket to give the world champions a 3-1 lead were some of the most beautiful moments of the night, but they paled in comparison to the sheer chaos that unfolded in the 90 minutes around them.

In one way, the chaos was systemic. The same scoring pattern was followed in both games: 0-1, 1-1, 2-1, 3-1, 3-2, 3-3. That is how it went for the first 90 minutes at least, with trailing teams scoring twice after the 85th minute on both occasions. But while Spain went on to win 5-3 in extra time against Croatia in Copenhagen, France fell short on penalties against Switzerland, with Kylian Mbappe suffering his first international heartbreak after missing the all-important fifth spot-kick.

He left the field in tears, as did some of the bravest Croatians, who had pulled Spain back to reality with two goals from substitutes Mislav Orsic and Mario Pasalic in the final five minutes and stoppage time. The tournament's leading scorer also made an appearance on the night, Own Goal finding the net for the ninth time, as many



'We are dreaming now'

AGENCIES

"We are dreaming now," said Granit Xhaka after the Nat's remarkable win against France, capturing the mood of his team - and an entire nation.

The biggest night in Swiss football arrived when it was least expected. The Nati had never won a EURO knockout tie, nor had they ever beaten France in a competitive match. And this was not just any France side; these were the world champions.

as in all of the previous editions of the competition combined.

But it was not the heartbreak, joy or any consequence from the games that should

"What a match! What an evening of football," said the hero, Yann Sommer, who saved Kylian Mbappe's penalty to begin the Swiss celebrations.

Captain Granit Xhaka was crowned Star of the Match after a tireless performance in midfield, and the significance of the triumph was not lost on him either. "We wrote the history of this footballing nation," he said.

"It's the most beautiful of nights," said Seferovic.

draw headlines, but the entertainment value of the matches themselves.

Many feared that fatigue would be a significant factor and deter from the

quality of football on show. After all, the players returned to the international stage following two gruelling seasons in the face of the pandemic separated by one shortened break.

But perhaps that fatigue has added even more excitement to the mix. The best players in the world play week in, week out, but others are prone to rest and rotation. That must also play on the minds of players and managers of teams such as Austria, Croatia and Switzerland, who were insistent on applying numbing pressure to teams such as Italy, Spain and France respectively, perhaps in hope that tired minds and legs would be prone to making mistakes. If so, they were not mistaken.

Both games last night swung wildly, like a pendulum from one side to the other. They were tense, raucous affairs and perhaps that tension was amplified for viewers by the chants, celebrations and audible anguish of fans, for many of whom the tournament provided a first chance to return to venues.

The defining image of the night was that of one Swiss fan, who has since become an internet sensation. In the 87th minute, the telecast panned to him with tears welling in his eyes. Resolve was slowly giving way to thoughts that the game was well and truly beyond his side's reach. Four minutes later, he was up in the air, shirtless, celebrating Switzerland's stoppage-time equaliser.

Enthralling, encapsulating a roller coaster of emotions and the full range of chaos. For half the teams and fans, it was cruel. For the other half, it was football, lay bare in all its beauty.