

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangladesh Premier League
Mohammedan SC vs Bashundhara Kings
Live from 4:30 pm
Bangladesh Police vs Brothers Union
Live from 6:45 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2
Wimbledon 2021
First Round
Live from 4:00 pm



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 for 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

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



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 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

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.

'We are dreaming now'

AGENCIES

"We are dreaming now," said Granit Xhaka after the Nati'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.

"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.

HIGHLIGHTS

Monday's dramatic round of 16 games tipped the EURO 2020 goals tally and goals per game ratio into record territory. EURO 2020 has set a new record for final tournament goals after Mislav Orsic's strike for Croatia against Spain took the tally to 109 - surpassing the previous best, set in 2016 (108 goals). There was still time for nine more goals on Monday alone.



PHOTO: BCB

Mominul and Co leave for Zimbabwe

SPORTS REPORTER



With an aim to better their away records against Zimbabwe, the Bangladesh Test squad left for the African nation in the early hours of Tuesday for a full series which will begin with the lone Test, starting from July 7, followed by three ODIs and as many T20s.

Bangladesh do not possess a record worthy of boasting while playing away to Zimbabwe as the Tigers suffered a 2-1 defeat in ODIs while drawing both the Test and T20 series 1-1 during their last visit in the country for a full series back in 2013. That series also included a humiliating 355-run thumping of the Tigers in the first Test in Harare, venue of all the fixtures of the upcoming series.

The Mominul Haque-led side was the first of the three contingents to leave the country for Zimbabwe with the players of the ODI side scheduled to leave on July 9 while the T20 players will leave

on July 16.

Bangladesh had made a sudden last-minute inclusion to their previously announced 17-member Test squad. Bangladesh T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, who last played the longer version 16 months ago and was dropped due to poor performance, returned to the squad with experienced cricketers Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim having some injury concerns.

However, a 17-member contingent left Dhaka for Zimbabwe with premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan set to join the team straight from the USA. Tigers' coaching staff members will also join the squad from their respective countries. Head coach Russel Domingo will be accompanied by newly-appointed batting consultant Ashwell Prince as the duo will join from South Africa. Spin consultant Rangana Herath will join the squad in Doha, Qatar, during their flight's transit while pace bowling coach Otis Gibson will head directly to Zimbabwe from England.

Can Messi go the distance for La Albiceleste?

AGENCIES



CONMEBOL
COPA AMERICA
2021

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

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.

Oman and UAE to host T20 WC

REUTERS, NEW DELHI

This year's Twenty20 World Cup, originally scheduled in India, will be played in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman from Oct. 17, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Tuesday, as India struggles to curb a surge in coronavirus infections.

"The first round of the tournament, comprising the eight qualifying teams, will now be split between Oman and UAE," the ICC said in a statement.

"Four of these teams will then progress to the Super 12s round where they'll join the eight automatic qualifiers."

The matches in the UAE will be played in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, while the Oman Cricket Academy Ground is the fourth venue.

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland, Namibia, Oman and Papua New Guinea will vie to grab the four spots and join the top eight teams in the Supers 12s stage.

"Whilst we are incredibly disappointed not to be hosting the event in India, the decision gives us the certainty we need to stage the event in a country that is a proven international host of multi-team events in a bio-secure environment," said ICC acting CEO Geoff Allardice.

The UAE hosted the entire 2020 edition of the Indian Premier League and will also be the venue for the final phase of this year's IPL which was suspended last month due to the COVID-19 crisis in India.

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

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.

The 34-year-old Barcelona striker is also seeking to break two South American records: Pele'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 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



PHOTO: AFP