



World Cup's greatest upsets

AFP, Doha

Saudi Arabia produced one of the greatest World Cup upsets in history on Tuesday, stunning South American giants Argentina in a 2-1 group stage victory in Doha.

Here, let's look at five other famous upsets in World Cup history.

1950: USA 1-0 ENGLAND

England arrived in Brazil as one of the tournament favourites after electing to play in the World Cup for the first time. But England's status as one of football's superpowers was destroyed by a rag-tag band of players representing the United States, Joe Gaetjens scoring the winning goal that sealed victory in Belo Horizonte.

1966: NORTH KOREA 1-0 ITALY

Pak Doo-Ik wrote his name into World Cup folklore with the goal that stunned a powerful Italy team and sent the Azzurri crashing out of the tournament.

The Italian squad returned to Rome to be pelted with tomatoes by disgruntled fans. North Korea's run ended in the quarter-finals with a 5-3 defeat to a Eusebio-inspired Portugal.

1982: ALGERIA 2-1 WEST GERMANY

Algeria arrived at the World Cup finals in Spain as rank outsiders, the north African side playing in its first ever World Cup. But goals from Rabah Madjer and Lakhdar Belloumi either side of a Karl Heinz Rummenigge goal secured a famous victory. Algeria's tournament would end in heartbreak however with the infamous "Disgrace of Gijon", when West Germany beat Austria 1-0 in a mutually beneficial result that sent both teams through to the



Salem Al-Dawsari of Saudi Arabia curled in a scorching strike from the edge of the penalty area in the 53rd minute to complete a stunning comeback, leaving Argentina and Lionel Messi utterly shell-shocked in their Group C opener at the Lusail Stadium on Tuesday. [Inset] It was the Saudi stopper Mohammed Alowais who took it upon himself to protect that 2-1 lead with fantastic saves till the referee blew the final whistle.



Saudis script 'totally crazy' game

AGENCIES

Saudi Arabia scripted a 'totally crazy' game of football during their famous 2-1 win over World Cup favourites Argentina at the Lusail Stadium on Tuesday, leaving Lionel Messi and Co ruing the mistakes.

For Saudi Arabia, the hero was forward Salem Al-Dawsari and their stopper Mohammed Alowais. Al-Dawsari grabbed the world's attention with his match-winning wonder strike against Argentina but the winger has been a star in his home country for years.

After Saleh Al Shehri's strike in the 48th minute levelled the score, the 31-year-old Al-Dawsari helped the Saudis to a stunning victory over the twice world champions when he took out two defenders with a clever turn before rifling the ball into the net in the 53rd minute. That helped his side to a stunning comeback after going 1-0 down in the first half from a Messi penalty.

It was a typical piece of brilliance from a player who has long been known as one of Asia's best.

Argentina could not make a comeback after that, thanks to the heroics of their keeper Alowais, who made as many as five saves to keep Saudi Arabia on course for a sensational victory.

Talking about the loss, Messi said it was a "very heavy blow" but vowed the South American champions would bounce back from the defeat.

"It's a very heavy blow, a defeat that hurts, but we must continue to have confidence in ourselves," Messi said after their shocking defeat.

"This group is not going to give up. We will try to beat Mexico," he added.

Messi also rued 'five minutes' of brilliance from Saudi Arabia that took the game away from the heavily tipped favourites for lifting the trophy of this edition of the World Cup.

In the second half, "in five minutes of mistakes that we made, we went 2-1 down and then it was really tough and we lost organization and started punting the ball," Messi said in comments broadcast by Todo Noticias.

While Messi and Co were left ruing the mistakes, Saudi Arabia's French coach Herve Renard focused in keeping the celebrations in check and prepare for the upcoming matches.

"This is football, sometimes totally crazy things can happen," said the French coach, who previously led Zambia and the Ivory Coast to Africa Cup of Nations glory.

As for enjoying the moment, Renard was eager to look ahead to the Saudis' next Group C matches against Poland and Mexico.

"(We can) just have a good celebration during 20 minutes and that's all, there are still two more games.

However, Renard said he was not entirely happy with his team, despite the stunning

upset.

He added: "Some people don't understand but you can imagine that when you're playing against Saudi Arabia, the motivation is not the same as playing against Brazil."

However, Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni insisted otherwise, saying his side never took Saudi Arabia lightly. "We fully respect Saudi Arabia as we do with other teams, that's not the reason for our defeat," said Scaloni, whose team had not lost since July 2019.



second round.

1990 CAMEROON 1-0 ARGENTINA

Argentina began the finals in Italy as defending champions after their Diego Maradona-inspired victory at the 1986 tournament in Mexico. But not even Maradona was able to prevent Cameroon's 'Indomitable Lions' from pulling off a huge upset with Francois Omam-Biyik scoring the winner at the San Siro in Milan. Cameroon, who finished the game with nine men, would go on to reach the quarterfinals. Lionel Messi's Argentina could, however, take a leaf out of that edition of the World Cup as the Albiceleste went on to play the final even after the upsetting defeat in the opener.

2002: SENEGAL 1-0 FRANCE

The 1998 World Cup champions and Euro 2000 winners France were expected to once again make a deep run at the World Cup in South Korea and Japan. But Senegal, playing in their first World Cup, derailed French hopes with Papa Bouba Diop scoring the only goal in another tournament-opening upset. France would go on to be eliminated in the first round.



Kasper Schmeichel of Denmark makes a crucial save to deny Tunisia's Issam Jabeli late in the first half of their World Cup Group D encounter at the Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan on Tuesday. The game ended in a goalless draw.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Lewy misses penalty in Mexico stalemate

AFP, Doha

Robert Lewandowski suffered fresh World Cup misery as the Poland striker's penalty was saved by Guillermo Ochoa in a 0-0 draw against Mexico on Tuesday.

Lewandowski has never scored at a World Cup and the Barcelona striker had admitted it would be a "huge dream" to finally get off the mark on the global stage.

Instead, the 34-year-old's dream turned into a nightmare when he won a second-half penalty, only to see Ochoa deny him from the spot.

Lewandowski, Poland's record scorer with 76 goals, has netted 18 times in 19 appearances for Barcelona, the club he joined in the close-season after bagging 344 goals in eight trophy-filled years at Bayern Munich.

Yet the World Cup has proved hellish for Lewandowski, with this latest goalless outing coming after he failed to score in Poland's three games when they bowed out in the group stage four years ago.

Saudi Arabia's stunning 2-1 win over Argentina earlier on Tuesday had blown open the race to progress to the last 16 from Group C.

But this was a frustrating draw for both teams, with Lewandowski wasting the best chance of a cagey game and Mexico ruing their failure to turn territorial dominance into goals.

Mexico boss Gerardo Martino had endured stinging criticism from fans and media following some poor pre-tournament performances, prompting him to dub himself "public enemy number one".



That didn't stop thousands of Mexico supporters making the long journey to support 'El Tri' in Qatar.

As the main threat to their team's hopes, Lewandowski was immediately subjected to ear-splitting jeers from the Mexico fans.

Lewandowski tried to silence the din with an early header but his effort deflected harmlessly wide.

With Poland curiously content to sit back for long periods and Mexico's energy levels almost matching their raucous fans, it was Martino's side who carried the greater threat.

Alexis Vega looped his header inches past the far post from Hector Herrera's cross.

Mexico followed that close shave with another incisive move that ended with Jesus Gallardo's shot being palmed away by Wojciech Szczesny.

Jorge Sanchez's deflected effort whistled just over Szczesny's crossbar as Mexico kept up the pressure.

Isolated by Poland's conservative tactics, Lewandowski mustered just one touch in the Mexico area and completed only three passes in the first half.

Lewandowski couldn't be contained forever and his tenacity earned the 57th-minute penalty when he barged into the Mexico area, forcing a crude challenge from Hector Moreno that was ruled a spot-kick after VAR intervened.

But Lewandowski's World Cup woe wasn't over as the 37-year-old Ochoa plunged to his left to make a fine save, leaving the striker holding his head in despair.

It was Lewandowski's second successive penalty miss after he failed to score for Barcelona against Almeria earlier this month.

Henry Martin's glancing header drew a good stop from Szczesny as Mexico tried in vain to make the most of their escape.

Feisty Tunisia hold Eriksen's Denmark

AFP, Doha

Tunisia held Denmark to a goalless draw in their World Cup opener on Tuesday, kicking off their Group D campaign with a strong performance against one of the pre-tournament dark horses.

Tunisia have never reached the World Cup knockouts in five previous attempts but Jalel Kadri's side will be encouraged both with a point at Education City Stadium and with how they performed against the fancied Danes.

Since Kadri took charge of the team in January Tunisia have only lost to Brazil and they frustrated Denmark in front of thousands of noisy North Africans.

Christian Eriksen was largely anonymous on his return to major tournament football after nearly dying on the pitch at the European Championship last year, wilting in the face of ferocious defending.