



## REAL DID what Real do best: Win

NABID YEASIN

"When you don't kill Real Madrid, Real Madrid kill you," Xavi Hernandez, who had to come up against Real Madrid a number of times in his career both as a Barcelona player and manager, had said just last year.

Borussia Dortmund became the latest side to be stung harshly by this aforementioned reality as they conceded two goals to see Real Madrid do what they do best – win the Champions League for a record-extending 15th time at Wembley on Saturday.

Dortmund had caught the Spanish giants napping in the first half of the final. Edin Terzic's men were tactically superior, creating the most chances – with Dortmund's seven attempts to Real's two during that phase – and did everything right, except for killing the giants when they had them on the ropes.

"We missed out on scoring and then conceded the goal. That's how they [Real Madrid] always do it," said Dortmund defender Mats Hummels, who, along with Marco Reus, also had his heart broken in another Champions League final 11 years ago against Bayern Munich at the same venue.

Real Madrid did not look near their best in the first 45 minutes, with Toni Kroos unable to set the tempo, Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo not finding a clear

way through – and the sole credit for cornering Los Blancos must be given to Dortmund.

With the way Vinicius was attempting to manoeuvre his way past right-back Julian Ryerson, Terzic realised Dortmund needed to change things within the first 20 minutes of the game. He then had his players line up in a three-man backline – Hummels and Nico Schlotterbeck playing a bit wider with Emre Can coming in between to do the dirty work. That helped Ryerson play up the field with the other full-back Ian Maatsen playing more as a playmaker, making the midfield heavy in numbers and closing the gaps to diminish any chance of Real Madrid exploiting while moving forward.

Owing to this tactical genius, Dortmund saw three clear-cut goal-mouth chances. Having been found through Real's defence, Niclas Fullkrug hit the bar before Karim Adeyemi wasted two golden opportunities.

One of those Adeyemi attempts was parried out by Los Blancos' goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois – a player who had missed most of the season due to injuries but was backed strongly by Real manager Carlo Ancelotti to start the final. But the best of the lot was when Adeyemi had slipped past Dani Carvajal, went around Courtois, and still was not able to put it into the net with Carvajal running back and amending for his mistake with a sliding block.

Terzic was reduced to saying that his side "deserved a little bit more" but lacked "killer instinct".

That missing 'killer instinct' came back to haunt them, as it so often happens to the opponents of Real Madrid, once Ancelotti's men came back into the game with much more purpose in the second half.

Ironically, it was Carvajal who put Real ahead from a masterful Toni Kroos corner in the 74th minute, redeeming himself to the point of becoming the first defender

to score in a final since Sergio Ramos in 2016 against Atletico Madrid.

What happened next is something very typical – a repeat of the old script of Real killing the game in just a few minutes. Within nine minutes of the first goal, a misplaced pass from Maatsen – perhaps still recounting how they missed those open chances and were a goal down – saw former Dortmund man Jude Bellingham receive the ball and feed it to Vinicius as Real put the final nail in the coffin.

Even Vinicius' finish was not a clean one, getting bumped off the ground before going past Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel. But the important part is that Real did what Dortmund could not – they killed the game when they had the chance.

Hummels credited Real's quality of being clinical when needed but also said that "it took them a bit of luck today". But maybe it is time for Dortmund, Hummels, and all the other clubs including Manchester City, Bayern, PSG, and Chelsea who at least had once to be at the wrong end of a similar storyline that 'luck' has very little to do as this is what Real Madrid do – somehow or someway, they win.



**This squad leaves me very satisfied because we don't always play our best but we never give up. Tomorrow this club will enjoy another fantastic, then to rest, the players will go to the Euros, Copa America, then we will return with same desire. We're a family. Working in a family is a lot better than working in an industry.**

Carlo Ancelotti, Real Madrid coach

## Hasaranga & Co face fearless Proteas

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka will rely on their exceptionally varied bowling attack to tame the unrestrained batting power of South Africa in their Group D T20 World Cup opener in New York on Monday.

They will be eager to get onto the points table at the earliest too as some tricky teams like Netherlands, Bangladesh and Nepal are clubbed with them in the group.

South Africa have spread all their cards on the table as the team selection indicated the most likely route they would take in this ICC showpiece.

A batting line-up consisting of captain Aiden Markram, wicketkeeper-batter Heinrich Klaasen, Quinton de Kock, David Miller and Tristan Stubbs could be a nightmare for any bowling attack.

Klaasen and Stubbs have been in roaring form of late. In this World Cup cycle, the right-hander has averaged 41 and struck runs at 182.

In the IPL 2024 too, Klaasen made 471 runs from 16 matches at a strike rate of 171 for the Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Stubbs has been equally impressive for the Delhi Capitals, amassing 378 runs from 14 matches and he made them at a strike-rate of 190.

Both these gifted power-strikers come in the middle order when the spinners are in operation, and to add to Lanka's worries, they are phenomenal against the tweekers, especially Klaasen.

In the run-up to the World Cup, the 32-year-old from Transvaal has averaged 59 against spin and made runs at an eye-watering strike rate of 191.

It will certainly worry a set of Lankan spinners such as captain Wanindu Hasaranga (economy 7.42) and Maheesh Theekshana (6.71), both of whom had to battle injuries in the recent past.

So, Sri Lanka, who have not reached the knockouts of a T20 WC after their triumph in 2014, will be eager to try a couple of overs



from pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madhushanka in that phase when Klaasen and Stubbs are looking for acceleration.

However, Lanka might take heart from the fact that the Proteas went down 0-3 to the West Indies in a recent T20I series at Kingston.

Lanka will also hope that the New York pitch will continue to offer some help to the bowlers as it had happened in Saturday's warm-up match between India and Bangladesh, where a few deliveries did not rise above the ankle and knee level.

Beyond that, the Lankans are also one of the teams that have played a good number of T20Is this year. In 2024, they have a series wins over Zimbabwe and Afghanistan at home and Bangladesh away.

In fact, they have won six of the last nine T20Is.

But those external factors will not have much bearing on a fresh day and Lanka know that their batters too will have to come good against the African rival.

They have the experienced Angelo Mathews, the explosive Kusal Mendis and the rock-solid

Dhananjaya de Silva to bank on while the former captain Dasun Shanaka can make a few quick runs down the order.

The SA attack does not have that much variety in their bowling unit as it largely revolves around pacer Kagiso Rabada and left-arm wrist-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi.

Anrich Nortje is still finding his range after coming back from an injury and had an underwhelming IPL, where he conceded more than 11 runs an over.

The SA management will hope that the pacer will regain his rhythm on the biggest stage and that will have a major say in avoiding another below-par outing in a World Cup.

Oman face Namibia  
In a Group B clash at Bridgetown, Namibia, a dominant force in the African Qualifiers, will be hoping for a winning start against Oman.

However, it would not be that easy for Namibia as Oman had run it close in April, before conceding the five-match series 2-1.

Hence, Oman, who are making their third appearance in a T20 WC, will be hoping for a better outcome this time.

স্ট্যাভার্ড ব্যাংক-এর ১৫ বছর

শুভতার শ্রেষ্ঠত্বে শরি'আহুর আলোকে

পূর্ণাঙ্গ ইসলামি ব্যাংক হিসাবে আমরা আছি আপনার পাশে

প্রতিষ্ঠাবার্ষিকীর এই দিনে সকল গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীকে স্ট্যাভার্ড ব্যাংক পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও কৃতজ্ঞতা। পূর্ণাঙ্গ ইসলামি ব্যাংক হিসাবে সমন্বয়পযোগী ব্যাংকিং চাহিদা পূরণে আমরা সর্বদাই প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ।

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