

# Sports

Thurman edges  
Porter to  
retain  
WBA title

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Rain has final  
say as Hales  
goes from hero  
to zero

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LILLE: Germany's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer (back) eyes the ball as Germany's midfielder Joshua Kimmich challenges Slovakia's midfielder Juraj Kucka (front) during the Euro 2016 round of 16 football match between Germany and Slovakia at the Pierre-Mauroy stadium in Villeneuve-d'Ascq near Lille yesterday — AFP

## SLICK GERMANY EASE INTO EURO Q-FINALS

LILLE: Jerome Boateng scored his first international goal to set Germany on their way to a 3-0 win against Slovakia at Euro 2016 yesterday as the world champions cruised into the quarter-finals.

Boateng opened his account eight minutes into his 63rd international appearance and Joachim Loew's side never looked back against outclassed opponents.

Mesut Ozil had a penalty saved soon after but Julian Draxler set up Mario Gomez to double the lead two minutes before half-time and the impressive Draxler then completed the scoring just after the hour mark.

There was never any threat of a repeat of Slovakia's 3-1 win when the teams met in a friendly just four weeks ago and Germany move on to a last-eight tie against either reigning champions Spain or old rivals Italy next weekend. Loew had been unhappy with his team's finishing during the group stage and he opted to drop the underperforming Mario Goetze as Draxler, of Wolfsburg, started in the only change from their 1-0 win against Northern Ireland.

Slovakia have a recent history of pulling off surprise results, from their defeat of Spain in qualifying to the recent friendly victory in Germany and the goalless draw with England that saw them progress from the group stage.

But their hopes of another day to remember were rapidly nipped in the bud by the world champions, who underlined their credentials and sent a clear message to their Euro rivals. Sami Khedira was first to threaten with a header from a Toni Kroos free-kick that was tipped over by Slovakian 'keeper Matus Kozacik, and from the corner that followed Germany were in front.

Kroos' delivery from the German left was headed out by Milan Skriniar but the ball fell for Boateng on the edge of the box and the Bayern Munich stopper met it on the volley, finding the bottom-left corner with the

aid of a small deflection off the unfortunate Skriniar.

### OZIL SQUANDERS PENALTY

Slovakia were overwhelmed and they conceded a penalty in the 13th minute when skipper Martin Skrtel grappled with Gomez as the two went for a high ball in the box. Skrtel was booked for his intervention, but Slovakia were let off the hook as Ozil's kick was well saved by Kozacik diving to his left.

Excluding shoot-outs, it was the first penalty missed by a German player in a European Championship finals match. The miss did nothing to halt Germany's momentum, though, and it remained one-way traffic after that with Ozil fizzing a half-volley inches past as the ball dropped after Gomez and Jan Durica had gone up to contest another cross into the area.

Draxler shot wide on the turn from 18 yards before Jan Kozak's side finally worked Manuel Neuer four minutes prior to the break. Peter Pekarik's cross from the right found AC Milan midfielder Juraj Kucka six yards from goal but his header was tipped over the bar by the Germany captain.

And Germany went on to increase their lead two minutes after that as Draxler combined with Jonas Hector down the left before heading for the byline and cutting the ball back for Gomez to finish at the near post. Any hope of a contest in the second half depended on Slovakia quickly pulling a goal back but a neat 49th-minute move ended with Marek Hamsik - otherwise nullified as a threat-teeing up Kucka for a shot that went straight to Neuer.

And, if there were any lingering doubts about the outcome, Germany put the game to bed on 63 minutes, Mats Hummels heading down a corner for Draxler, who volleyed in at the back post to get the goal his performance deserved. — AFP



INES-CHARPIEU: France's midfielder Paul Pogba (3L) and Ireland's defender Shane Duffy (3R) vie for the ball during the Euro 2016 round of 16 football match between France and Republic of Ireland at the Parc Olympique Lyonnais stadium in Décines-Charpieu, near Lyon, yesterday. — AFP

## GRIEZMANN DOUBLE SENDS FRANCE INTO LAST EIGHT

LYON: Antoine Griezmann scored two goals in quick succession early in the second half yesterday to give host France a 2-1 victory over a spirited Ireland and a spot in the European Championship quarter-finals.

Griezmann, who had a chance for a hat trick late in the match, equalized with a powerful header from near the penalty spot in the 58th minute following a cross from right back Bacary Sagna. Three minutes later, he collected a headed knockdown from striker Olivier Giroud, took one touch to move the ball inside the area and then composed himself before slotting the ball inside the right post. It was his third goal of the tournament and his 10th for Les Bleus. The goals came with France trailing 1-0 after Ireland midfielder Robbie Brady's second-minute penalty.

"We screamed at each other at halftime," Griezmann said. "We were chasing the game and that's the most difficult thing. But we have a strong mentality."

The goals were a boost for Griezmann, who missed a penalty for Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final loss to Real Madrid last month.

"I know myself well," Griezmann said. "I know that I show up in the big moments." Griezmann nearly got a third goal in injury time but Ireland goalkeeper Darren Randolph made the save. A few minutes later, Ireland slumped to the ground in exhaustion as France celebrated. "The fans were unbelievable and we'd have loved to have gone a bit further for them. I hope we did them proud," Ireland defender Seamus Coleman said. "We only had a little corner of the ground and they were so loud and positive at the end." The Irish finished the match with 10 men following

defender Shane Duffy's red card in the 66th minute for tripping Griezmann.

France will face either England or Iceland on Sunday in Saint-Denis. "We can relax on our sofas and see who we're playing next," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "We were a bit tense and the Irish played very well." It was the first meeting between the two sides since Ireland lost a World Cup playoff to France in November 2009 following a blatant handball by forward Thierry Henry.

Relieved French fans inside the 58,000-seat Stade de Lyon broke out into a rendition of "La Marseillaise" - the national anthem - after the match, but they were not quite so vocal in a tense first half. On Ireland's first foray forward, France center half Adil Rami was hesitant and then caught out of position, slipping as he failed to deal with a cross from the left aimed for striker Daryl Murphy. As the

loose ball caused confusion, France midfielder Paul Pogba came across striker Shane Long and knocked him over. Brady, who scored late in Ireland's win over Italy, stroked home the penalty off the inside of the right post for the second fastest goal in the history of the competition.

It was the second penalty France has conceded at Euro 2016, and the tension seemed to be getting to the players.

Midfielder N'Golo Kante picked up a yellow card for tripping midfielder James McClean, center half Laurent Koscielny collided into the back of Kante as he went for a header, and Pogba tried to rally his team but ended up catching Ireland midfielder Jeff Hendrick on the knee. — AP

## COLOMBIA DOWN US TO GRAB COPA THIRD SPOT

GLENDALE: AC Milan striker Carlos Bacca scored the only goal as Colombia defeated the United States 1-0 to clinch third place in the Copa America Centenario here Saturday.

Bacca, 29, bundled home the winner on 31 minutes, nudging in from close range to settle a hard-fought contest. The US, beaten 4-0 by Argentina in the semi-finals on Tuesday, rallied desperately to get back into the game but ultimately were frustrated by some superb goalkeeping from David Ospina. It was the second time the US had been beaten by Colombia in this tournament. The Colombians also defeated them 2-0 in the tournament's opening match. US coach Jurgen Klinsmann had blamed his side for being "too nice" against Argentina in the semi-finals, when they failed to register a single shot either on or off target.

However they were unlucky not to score during an entertaining game in Arizona. Colombia had gone closest to scoring first, Real Madrid star James Rodriguez being denied by a fine Tim Howard save on 12 minutes.

Rodriguez was the architect for Colombia's goal just after the half hour mark, chipping a wonderful pass into the path of Santiago Arias, who headed across the six yard box for Bacca to score. The US responded gamely to the setback however, with Jermaine Jones almost equalising when his low shot deflected off Arias and just missed the target. Seattle Sounders veteran Clint Dempsey, arguably the best US player of the tournament, had another good game but was unable to add to his Copa tally of three goals and three assists.

Dempsey almost laid on a goal for Hamburg's Bobby Wood, but the Bundesliga-based striker was unable to get his shot away cleanly. Dempsey produced the best American chance of the second half, with his long-range curling free-kick drawing a brilliant save from Ospina, clawing the ball away one-handed as it rocketed towards the top corner. The final of the Copa America takes place on Sunday, with Argentina facing Chile in East Rutherford, New Jersey. — AFP