

Sports

England and Italy in Nations League draw as Germany held by Hungary

PARIS: England are bottom of their UEFA Nations League group without a win after drawing 0-0 with Italy in a repeat of the Euro 2020 final on Saturday, while Germany settled for a point in a 1-1 stalemate in Hungary. The meeting in Wolverhampton between Gareth Southgate's side and the European champions was played before just 3,000 people, largely school-children, as a punishment for the incidents that marred the Euro 2020 final between the same nations at Wembley last year.

UEFA rules say a match ordered to be played behind closed doors can still be attended by children accompanied by an adult, as happened last weekend when Hungary beat England in Budapest. England followed that reverse by drawing 1-1 in Germany and another draw at Molineux leaves them bottom of League A, Group 3 with just two points from three outings before they host Hungary at the same venue on Tuesday in their final game of a long campaign.

Mason Mount hit the bar early on for England, while Aaron Ramsdale produced a fine save to deny Sandro Tonali for an Italy side featuring just two starters who also lined up in the European Championship final. "We had two or three really good chances we need to score, but just lacked that sharpness in front of goal," said Southgate.

Roberto Mancini's Italy are rebuilding after failing to qualify for the World Cup and are top of the group after Hungary and Germany cancelled each other out in Budapest. Zsolt Nagy gave Hungary an early lead, smashing in after Manuel Neuer had palmed out a Roland Salai header. However, Germany needed just three minutes to draw level as Borussia Moenchengladbach's Jonas Hofmann latched onto a long ball forward and rounded the goalkeeper before slotting in.

"I said beforehand that this was the hardest game you could have after England," Germany coach Hansi Flick told RTL after his side's third consecutive 1-1 draw. "But we are in a development process. We have to see that we learn the lessons from this game."

Depay misses late penalty

The Netherlands are top of League A, Group 4 after coming from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Poland in Rotterdam, but they could have claimed a third win in as many games had Memphis Depay not squandered a late penalty. English-born full-back Matty Cash gave Poland an 18th-minute lead with a fine low strike, and the visitors doubled their advantage five minutes after half-time as Przemyslaw Frankowski squared for Piotr Zielinski to finish.

Yet the home side pulled one back almost immediately when Daley Blind's cross from the left was swept in by Davy Klaassen, and they were level by the 54th minute as Denzel Dumfries made it 2-2. They could have won it in stoppage time when Cash was penalized in the box, but Barcelona forward Depay saw his spot-kick come back off the post. Meanwhile Brennan Johnson - a star for Nottingham Forest as they won promotion to the Premier League this season - came off the bench to score a late leveller as Wales drew 1-1 with Belgium in Cardiff.

Ireland hammer Scotland

Youri Tielemans gave Belgium the lead early in the second half in Cardiff, but Wales earned their first point of the Nations League campaign. Their attention had previously been on their decisive World Cup qualifying play-off against Ukraine, which they won 1-0 last weekend to qualify for the



CARDIFF: Belgium's midfielder Axel Witsel fights for the ball with Wales' midfielder Gareth Bale during the UEFA Nations League - League A Group 4 match at Cardiff City Stadium on June 11, 2022. —AFP

global showpiece for the first time since 1958. Wales now travel to play the Netherlands in Rotterdam on Tuesday.

In League B, the Republic of Ireland got their first win in Group 1 in emphatic fashion, beating hapless Scotland 3-0 in Dublin. Alan Browne and

Troy Parrott netted in the first half for Ireland before Michael Obafemi smashed in an emphatic third early in the second half. In the same group Ukraine got their second win in as many games since losing to Wales, as they beat Armenia 3-0 in a match played in the Polish city of Lodz. —AFP

Kuwait futsal team in final

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait national futsal team reached the final of the 4th West Asia Championship after beating Lebanon 6-3 Saturday. Kuwait players were in control in the first half in both defense and attack, despite the strength of the Lebanese team. Kuwait ended the first half with a lead of three goals scored by Abdelrahman Al-Taweel, Yousuf Al-Khalifa and Hamad Hayat, while Lebanon had one goal by Mustafa Raheem.

The second half witnessed Kuwaiti players at their best mentally and physically along with excellent performance by goalkeeper Mohammad Al-Hazeem. Kuwait scored three more goals by Saleh Al-Fadhel, Khalifa and Hamad Al-Awadhi. Raheem scored two goals for Lebanon. Kuwait will play the final on Monday.



Football lawmakers to discuss semi-automated offside

DOHA: A semi-automated offside system could be used at this year's World Cup with the International Football Association Board, the guardian of the laws of the game, set to discuss the introduction of the technology in Doha on Monday. The optical tracking system was trialled at the FIFA Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi earlier this year and had also been tested at the Arab Cup in Qatar last December.

The IFAB will not itself decide whether the technology should be in place at the World Cup but if it offers

approval then world football's governing body could go ahead with its introduction. "The semi-automated offside system still needs to be evaluated before a final decision is taken," FIFA told AFP, adding that it was simply "an additional tool to help the VAR".

Pierluigi Collina, chairman of FIFA's referees committee, said earlier this year that the introduction of Video Assistant Referees - first used at the World Cup in 2018 - had been "very successful" but that making offside decisions semi-automated would mean greater accuracy and greater speed. "It's important the video officials get an accurate decision, but we are aware we need to reduce the time, particularly with offside," Collina said in February during the trials at the Club World Cup.

The data-driven, limb-tracking technology uses both dedicated and broadcast cameras around the stadium to give the exact position of players on the pitch, offering referees precise information within seconds. The aim is for

the system to generate 29 data points per player - tracking the various parts of the body to create a skeletal, three-dimensional model.

Once a final decision is made, the artificial-intelligence driven technology turns the images into a 3D animation that can be displayed on the big screen at grounds. The term "semi-automated" is used because FIFA insist that match officials will still make the final call, with a dedicated VAR assistant in place to monitor offside. "I know that someone called it 'robot offside'; it's not. The technology is simply a tool used by human beings," said Collina. Monday's meeting will also discuss the topic of concussion substitutes, which the IFAB approved in late 2020 on a trial basis for any league wishing to take part until August of this year. The English Premier League was one of the leagues to begin trialing the use of concussion substitutes in response to growing concerns about the damage caused by head injuries in football. —AFP

Australia, NZ, Peru, Costa Rica fight for 2 World Cup places

DOHA: The last two places at the World Cup finals will be decided this week, with Australia, New Zealand, Peru and Costa Rica digging into their stamina reserves for do-or-die battles. Both international playoffs are single-leg showdowns in the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium in Doha, a 40,000 capacity venue that will host matches in the World Cup finals in the autumn. Australia take on Peru on Monday. New Zealand face Costa Rica 24-hours later.

All four nations are used to the last-chance scrap for a World Cup place. Four years ago Peru beat New Zealand 2-0 to clinch a slot at Russia 2018 where they beat Australia in the first round group - their first World Cup win in four decades. Graham Arnold's Australia are looking for a fifth straight appearance at the finals, but they needed playoffs for two of the past four and in 2006 that meant a penalty shootout against Uruguay.

Peru are ranked 22 in the world, 20 places above Australia, who beat United Arab Emirates 2-1 in the Doha stadium last week to reach the final playoff.

But Arnold plays up the Socceroos' "underdog" status and says he has driven a never-say-die psyche into the team. "We like people saying that we have no chance and we cannot achieve anything," he said after the UAE win secured with an 84th minute Ajdin Hrustic goal.

"You know sometimes you don't play well but you can still win by fighting and running, and chasing and being aggressive and that also can be a success. "Fight, scratch and do whatever you have got to do to win the game. However we win it, who cares? Just win it," said Arnold, who will be without injured key striker Adam Taggart. —AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

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Maternity Hospital	24843100			Shamiya	24848913	Shaab	22518752
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700			Shuwaikh	24814507	Qibla	22459381
Chest Hospital	24849400			Abdullah Salem	22549134	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Kaizen center	25716707	Nuzha	22526804	Mirqab	22456536
Adan Hospital	23940620	Rawda	22517733	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764	Sharq	22465401
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