



England's Raheem Sterling reacts after scoring his team's first goal during the Euro 2020 soccer championship Group D match between England and Croatia at Wembley Stadium in London. (AP)

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Lukaku sends message to Eriksen as Belgium dominate Russia

## England begin Euro 2020 with victory

LONDON, June 13, (AP) — Raheem Sterling grew up in the shadow of Wembley Stadium as it was being rebuilt, even getting a tattoo of its famous arch on his left forearm.

Now playing for his country at the iconic venue, he used his right foot to give England the start they had been longing for at the European Championship.

The winger's goal - his first in a tournament in his 13th match through four competitions - gave England a 1-0 win over Croatia on Sunday in their opening Euro 2020 game.

"I always said to myself ... growing up two minutes down the road, I've got to score," Sterling said. "It's a great feeling doing it."

Never before had England made a winning start to the continental tournament in nine previous tries.

Far more comfortable than in the loss to Croatia in the 2018 World Cup semifinals, this was an England side packed with youthful debutants and with Sterling, still only 26, the team's most experienced tournament player.

Sterling, who has struggled for game time at Manchester City in recent months, found the breakthrough for England in the 57th minute. It was the vision of Calvin Phillips, one of five England starters making their tournament debut, that created the opening. The Leeds midfielder shook of challenges before releasing Sterling, who slipped a shot into the net via a touch off Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic.

The sparkling moment for Sterling came two days after he was named in the queen's birthday honors list for his campaigning against racial injustice.

But at the first England game at Wembley with fans since 2019, there was a sour start when players taking a knee were jeered by their own fans. That was despite pleas from the England team to respect the anti-racism gesture.

There was a more unified atmosphere among the crowd of about 20,000 at the end as fans sang the team's "Three Lions" anthem while the players applauded them.

England's next game in Group D is against Scotland on Friday at Wembley. Croatia will play the Czech Republic in Glasgow.

### Belgium 3, Russia 0

In St. Petersburg, Romelu Lukaku's first thought after scoring at the European Championship wasn't to celebrate with his Belgium teammates.

Instead, the striker wanted to send a heartfelt message to a close friend Christian Eriksen who was in the hospital.

### SOCCER

Lukaku had taken the field in Belgium's 3-0 win over Russia only a short time after seeing Eriksen, his teammate at Italian champions Inter Milan, fall to the ground and require urgent medical attention during Denmark's game against Finland in Copenhagen.

Lukaku was watching the match with the rest of the Belgium squad. He said he cried.

"I was scared, obviously," he said. "You live strong moments together. It was all the more impressive given the Belgians were without playmaker Kevin De Bruyne, who wasn't deemed ready after a minor operation on a fractured nose and eye socket, and with captain Eden Hazard only playing the final 19 minutes as a substitute."

Belgium also had to deal with the withdrawal of right wing back Timothy Castagne in the 26th minute after he clashed heads with Russia midfielder Daler Kuzyaev. Belgium coach Roberto Martinez said Castagne had sustained a double fracture of his eye socket and has been ruled out of the rest of the tournament.

Castagne's replacement, Thomas Meunier, scored Belgium's second goal in the 34th minute.

Up to Lukaku's opening goal in the 10th minute, it had been a celebratory atmosphere among the heavily pro-Russian crowd of 26,264 spectators. Aside, that is, from just before kickoff when there were loud jeers around the stadium as Belgium's players took a knee.

Lacking his ideal supporting cast, Lukaku still managed to score in each half, though he was given a helping hand by Russia's defense.

Another mistake, this time by goalkeeper Anton Shunin, allowed Meunier to double the lead. Thorgan Hazard's in-swinging cross was parried weakly by Shunin and Meunier slid his shot from the rebound into an unguarded net.

Kuzyaev initially played on after

## South Korea advance in Asian WC qualifying

SEOUL, June 13, (AP) — Son Heung-min sent a message of support to former Tottenham Hotspur teammate Christian Eriksen on Sunday after his second-half penalty gave South Korea a 2-1 win over Lebanon in Asia's second round of World Cup qualifying.

Sonny Saad gave Lebanon a surprise lead in Goyang after just 12 minutes but it was erased early in the second half by a Song Min-kyu header.

Son converted a penalty in the 66th minute and appeared to say "Chris, stay strong" to television cameras in a message of support for Eriksen who collapsed on the field while playing for Denmark in a European championship game against Finland on Saturday.

Son's goal, his first for his country since 2019, means that South Korea are one of the eight group winners who will progress automatically to the third round, scheduled to start in September. Lebanon will have to wait until the second round ends on Tuesday to find out if they go into the next stage as one of the best four runners-up.

Advancing a one of the top runners-up is also the only

way China can add to their sole World Cup appearance in 2002. A win over Group A leaders Syria on Tuesday will be enough but a draw will leave the team needing results in other groups to go its way.

"We know what we have to do," said China coach Li Tie after his team's 5-0 thrashing of the Maldives on Friday, their third successive win. "We know that Syria are strong team but the players are looking forward to the challenge. Everything is going as planned."

### SOCCER

Iran, seeking a third successive World Cup appearance, are also in second place and need a win over Group C leaders Iraq or Bahrain to be sure of advancing. After losing to Iraq and Bahrain in November 2019, Iran have returned to form with three comfortable wins this month, the most recent a 10-0 beatdown of Cambodia on Friday.



Belgium's Timothy Castagne, (left) and Russia's Artem Dzyuba challenge for the ball during the Euro 2020 soccer championship Group B match between Russia and Belgium at Gazprom arena stadium in St. Petersburg, Russia. (AP)

## Resilient Djokovic edges Tsitsipas in Paris for 19th Grand Slam title



Serbia's Novak Djokovic kisses the Cup after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece in their final match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros Stadium in Paris. Djokovic won 6-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4. (AP)

### Serb closes in on Federer, Nadal

PARIS, June 13, (AP) — Talented and tenacious as they come, Novak Djokovic was not about to concede a thing after dropping the first two sets of the French Open final against his younger, fresher foe, Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Djokovic looked diminished and depleted at the outset Sunday. By the end, he was at his imperious best.



Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece reaches for the ball to Serbia's Novak Djokovic during their final match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros Stadium in Paris. (AP)

The top-seeded Djokovic came all the way back to beat the fifth-seeded Tsitsipas 6-7 (6), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 for his second championship at Roland Garros and 19th Grand Slam title overall.

Djokovic is now just one major trophy away from tying the men's record of 20 shared by Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer. And reigning Australian Open champion Djokovic now stands halfway to a calendar-year Grand Slam, something no man has accomplished since Rod Laver in 1969.

The 34-year-old Djokovic eliminated 13-time French Open champion Nadal - a challenge the Serb likened to scaling Mt. Everest - in a semifinal that lasted more than four hours Friday night.

That was only Nadal's third career loss in 108 matches at the clay-court major tournament.

Djokovic also defeated Nadal in Paris in 2015 before losing that year's final, and it appeared as if the same fate was waiting Sunday.

Djokovic looked drained early, and the 22-year-old Tsitsipas had the upper hand for two sets.

"It was not easy for me, both physically and mentally," Djokovic said, "especially over the past two or three days."

### TENNIS

Eventually, though, Djokovic started making fewer mistakes, got his best-in-the-game returning on track and served so flawlessly down the stretch that he did not face a single break point over the last three sets.

That enabled him to complete his sixth career comeback from two sets down - and second of the past week.

Indeed, the International Tennis Federation said Djokovic - who trailed 19-year-old Lorenzo Musetti

two sets to none in the fourth round - is the first man in the professional era to win a Grand Slam tournament after twice facing a 2-0 deficit in sets. Experience could have been a factor, too.

This was the first major final for Tsitsipas and 29th for Djokovic, who also won the French Open in 2016, along with nine titles at the Australian Open, five at Wimbledon and three at the U.S. Open.

Of just as much, if not more, significance to the ultimate outcome Sunday: Djokovic entered the day with a 34-10 record in five-setters - including a men's-record 31 wins in Grand Slam matches of that length - while Tsitsipas was 5-4.

On a sunny and breezy afternoon, with the temperature approaching 80 degrees Fahrenheit (over 25 degrees Celsius), Tsitsipas needed just over 100 minutes to grab a big lead Sunday.

A supreme returner and imposer of his will, Djokovic grabbed early breaks of serve in each of the third, fourth and fifth sets.

Shadows were spreading across the court as the sun descended in the early evening and, though Djokovic complained that the artificial lights were switched on, he shined when it mattered the most.

This was another match that lasted more than four hours, and Djokovic was up to the task again.