

First Actuarial Monkey European Championships 2012

Bulletin 1 - 12 June 2012

Welcome to our first bulletin of the 2012 European Championships! We will be giving you daily updates on the latest happenings in the tournament and the current standings in our competition to ensure everyone can keep their fingers on the pulse.

The tournament got under way on Friday as co-hosts Poland took on the 2004 champions Greece in Group A. It was an eventful opening match to the Championships which ended in a 1-1 draw, with both teams having a man sent off. Greece also missed a penalty after Wojciech Szczesny brought a man down in the box, and were lucky to claim a point following a poor first half showing.

Russia, semi-finalists in 2008 under Guus Hiddink, are going to take some stopping as they showed they mean business in their opening Group A match. They produced a powerful performance and two goals from Alan Dzagoev helped dismantle the Czech Republic 4-1.

The shock of the tournament so far came in Saturday's Group B game between the Netherlands and Denmark. The Netherlands, one of the pre-tournament favourites, used their undoubted guile, creativity, pace and attacking quality to generate twenty-nine attempts on goal. But Denmark's Michael Krohn-Dehli's expertly taken first-half strike earned them a shock win. Netherlands now need a decent result against tournament favourites Germany to stand a chance of getting out of the group.

The other Group B game was between Germany and Portugal. This match was billed as one of the most eagerly awaited contests of the group stages. But Euro 96 champions Germany and Euro 2004 runners-up Portugal struggled to entertain despite the wealth of talent on display. Germany dominated possession but struggled to create many chances until Gomez broke the deadlock from Sami Khedira's cross in the 72nd minute to win 1 - 0.

Spain's run of fourteen successive victories in competitive matches, dating back to their defeat by Switzerland in the opening match of the 2010 World Cup came to an end on Sunday with a 1 - 1 draw against Italy in Group C. Substitute Antonio Di Natale had given Italy a deserved lead on the hour mark but Cesc Fabregas salvaged a point for Spain as the champions began the defence of their European title in a pulsating encounter in Gdansk. Spain might have snatched all three points but Fernando Torres spurned a succession of late chances in typical Torres style.

It was a disastrous start for the Republic of Ireland in Group C, who have consistently been accused of being negative and unadventurous under their veteran manager Giovanni Trapattoni. Tottenham playmaker Luka Modric was the instigator, orchestrating play from increasingly advanced positions and picking passes at will to help Croatia to a 3 - 1 win.

Group D kicked off last night, with England meeting France in Donetsk. England took the lead through Joleon Lescott, but could only hang on for nine minutes as Samir Nasri smashed in an equaliser. It was a strong, albeit defensive, performance from England and they held their own against one of the pre-tournament favourites.

Elsewhere in the group co-hosts Ukraine beat Sweden 2-1 thanks to two fantastic headers from veteran striker Andriy Shevchenko. Zlatan Ibrahimovic largely went missing but put Sweden ahead in the second half. However Ukraine were roared over the line by their home fans in what was one of the games of the tournament so far.

These results mean the early leader in the Monkey European Championships is Alan Smith with an impressive 46 points. Darren Wilkie is in second place and with an impressive points total of 42. Commiserations go to Robin Holderness who finds himself languishing at the bottom on -22. It's not been a good start for the Lockyer family either with their three entries for Catherine, Toby, and Colin & Frank Lockyer finding themselves in the bottom four.

The full results can be found [here](#)



Quote of the day: "People laugh and maybe they want England to play more football, but if they win the tournament playing like that, they will be happy." **Patrice Evra**