

Bulletin 14 – 14 December 2022

Argentina 3 – 0 Croatia

The first semi-final of this World Cup took place in a noisy Lusail Stadium, featuring players sharing eight Ballon d'Ors between them. The first 30 minutes went by with both teams looking evenly matched, and a slight concern over a hamstring problem for the player bringing seven of the Ballon d'Ors to the table.

The game changed when Argentina were awarded a penalty just after the half hour mark, when Croatian penalty shootout hero Dominik Livakovic clashed with Manchester City's Julián Alvarez. The ITV commentary crew all agreed it was a clear penalty, whilst the ITV half-time pundits were convinced it was never a penalty... Regardless of whether it was or whether it wasn't, up stepped Lionel Messi to put any injury concerns to bed and blasted the ball into the roof of the net.

Argentina in the ascendancy, doubled their lead only 5 minutes later. Alvarez again causing problems for the Croatians, waltzing through the defence and, thanks to a couple of fortunate bounces, able to lift the ball over Livakovic.

Croatia will have been glad to see half time arrive, hoping to reset and launch one of their characteristic come-backs in the second half. But it wasn't to be, and Lionel Messi tormented Croatia's new hot prospect Gvardiol, and linking up again with Alvarez to tap home his third goal of the tournament, and putting the game well and truly out of reach, sending Argentina through to Sunday's World Cup final

Argentina's last World Cup final was in 2014 against Germany, when Mario Götze grabbed the only goal of the game in added time. All eyes will be on the Al Bayt Stadium tonight to find out if they will be facing pre-tournament favourites France or the surprise package of the tournament in Morocco.

Going out on a high?

Lionel Messi has confirmed that Sunday's final will be his final World Cup game.

Messi has however previously retired from international football (in 2016), before reversing his decision, so could there be another U-turn on the cards?

Results

With 25 points up for grabs for a correctly predicted finalist, 31 of you correctly picked Argentina to reach the final. That results has seen plenty of change in the table, with long time leader **Matthew Allen** slipping to third place, with **Gary Symons** taking the reigns.

William Rose benefitted most from the Argentina victory, climbing 24 places up to 40th place. **Paul Marriott** and **Ross Bennett** suffered the most, both falling 9 places since yesterday.

James Allen

Ranking	Player	Points	Daily Ranking Change	Daily Points Change
1	Gary Symons	353	+2	+25
2	Andrew Pritchard	349	+3	+25
3	Matthew Allen	346	-2	-
4	Dan Jinks	343	+2	+25
5	Mark Warnes	342	+2	+25
6	Neil Kennedy	333	+3	+25
7	Oliver Nicholls	331	-5	-
8	Bailey Coe	330	+2	+25
9	James Gardner	325	-5	-
10	Rob Walker	323	+3	+25
11	Andrew Hall	320	+5	+25
12	Mara Aleixo	316	+7	+25
13	Steve Higginbottom	313	-5	-
13	Stephen Kilgannon	313	+9	+25
15	Jasper Ellis	304	+14	+25
16	Emma Robinson	301	-5	-
17	Daniel Sirl	300	-5	-
17	James Saxton	300	+17	+25
19	Luke Vickers	298	+19	+25
19	Michael Johnson	298	+19	+25
19	Usman Asif	298	-6	-
22	Ashraf Mitha	297	-7	-
23	Richard Stoddart	296	+17	+25
24	Tim Jones	295	-8	-
25	Craig Moran	294	-7	-
26	John Small	291	-7	-
27	Darren Goodall	290	+19	+25
27	Olly Roper	290	-6	-
29	Eesha Savani	287	+20	+25
30	Ed Winstanley	286	-7	-
30	Talha Gulzar	286	-7	-
32	Amrita Dasgupta	284	-7	-
33	Duncan Carter	283	-7	-
33	Ian Metcalf	283	+20	+25
33	Mel Wilson	283	-7	-
33	Stan Hutchinson	283	-7	-
37	John McLeod	279	-8	-
37	Peter Norman	279	+22	+25
39	Dan Chapman	278	-8	-
40	John Stock	277	-8	-
40	Tim Poil	277	-8	-
40	William Rose	277	+24	+25
43	Paul Marriott	275	-9	-
43	Ross Bennett	275	-9	-
45	Larisa Wood	274	-8	-
46	Chris Williams	270	-5	-
47	James Allen	269	+20	+25
47	Sharon Royston	269	-5	-
49	Eddie Hopkin	268	-6	-
50	George Kennedy	267	-6	-



Ranking	Player	Points	Daily Ranking Change	Daily Points Change
50	Marcus Johansson	267	-6	-
52	Jonathan Hugh	264	-5	-
52	Mike Common	264	+18	+25
54	Ivan Taylor	263	+18	+25
54	Wendy Ludman	263	-6	-
56	Katie Sutton	262	-7	-
57	George Bilsby	260	-6	-
57	Graham Edmonds	260	+16	+25
59	Nick Saxton	259	-7	-
60	Charlotte Adshead	258	-7	-
61	Josh Titley	257	-6	-
62	Mark Rowlinson	256	-6	-
63	George Hinkley	255	-6	-
63	George Metcalf	255	-6	-
65	James Milligan	254	-6	-
65	Sean Delaney	254	-6	-
65	Tim Barlow	254	-6	-
68	Chris Marson	253	-5	-
69	Derek Allen	252	-5	-
69	Katie Morgan	252	+8	+25
71	Jamie McLeod	250	-5	-
72	Sam Ashworth	244	-5	-
73	Michael Garland	241	+10	+25
74	Stuart Briely	240	-5	-
75	Richard Noutch	239	-5	-
76	Hilary Salt	234	+9	+25
77	Charlotte White	232	-3	-
77	Dale Walmsley	232	+9	+25
79	Rob Young	229	-4	-
80	Joe Bronstein	228	-4	-
81	Zoe Sadler	226	+6	+25
82	Max Mauchline	225	-4	-
83	Bex Thompson	224	-4	-
84	Benjamin Robinson	222	+4	+25
85	Phil Mann	221	-5	-
86	Toni Johnson	220	-5	-
87	Henry Tapper	218	-5	-
88	Chas Goddard	210	-4	-
89	Lance Havell	192	-	-
89	Owen Adams	192	-	-
91	Claire Herbert	186	-	-
92	Kieran Armstrong	185	-	-
93	Michael O'Donnell	177	-	+25
94	Andy Wyatt	137	-	-

