

19-year-old's reputation soars in Cup

Rise of Jude gives England hope

MATT DICKINSON

Doha: In an enormous Arabian tent, tears of World Cup defeat flowing in a desert, we were left with plenty of questions — has Harry Kane ever struck a penalty so wildly in his life? Will Gareth Southgate stay on? — but the continued elevation of Jude Bellingham was never in doubt.

As soon as minds can turn to the future — and this tournament inquest does not have to be long and fraught if the manager agrees to continue — plans can be made in the reassuring knowledge that England have young players to drive them forward with hope — and one special talent, in particular.

In the composite England-France teams in the build-up to this World Cup quarter final, all inevitably featured Kylian Mbappé. That Bellingham also was a must-pick at 19 had already revealed that he must be a leading contender for the outstanding young player of the tournament.

Mbappé's sprint-duel against Kyle Walker was the razzle dazzle of this match but England know from so many big contests that midfield is where, all too often, the biggest games are resolved; that control of the ball is essential to survive when the air becomes rarified in the latter stages.

On Saturday night, England had to grapple in that area with Antoine Griezmann whose reinvention as France's playmaking midfielder has shown that Didier Deschamps has more imagination as a coach than he did in his playing days as the famous water-carrier of the great French team.

Griezmann was the game's defining force; if not quite flawless then so close as seemed beyond quibbling. As France settled much quicker than England, it was Griezmann who took it upon himself to put the ball on the tee for Aurélien Tchouameni to strike from 26 metres. Heck of a time to score a first goal of



England's Jude Bellingham (left) reacts to referee Wilton Sampaio's decision during their quarter final against France at Al Bayt Stadium on Saturday. (Getty Images)

the season. Heck of a finish, too. It was Griezmann who put the ball on Olivier Giroud's head for the winning goal.

On this display, Griezmann would be the first name into that composite XI but you could be sure that he would love Bellingham's boundless energy and range alongside him. It is Bellingham, by a distance even if Bukayo Saka gamely made an alternative case, who leaves this tournament with his reputation most enhanced of Southgate's squad.

You can measure it in statistics — most duels won, most tackles made, most take-ons completed of England's players, plus a goal and a couple of assists — or, even more impressively, in the sight of the teenager being the first to console a stricken captain after Kane's rare rush of blood from that spot-kick that will haunt the squad for a while.

You could see it in the way that Bellingham was the England player most vocally rousing his teammates as they chased an equaliser in those

desperate closing stages; as summing the responsibilities of leadership. To repeat, Bellingham is 19.

Of course, not everything went his way as it never would against world champions. It was Bellingham's legs that Tchouameni's shot flew through to give France their early lead. But if it was a blow to England, it also acted as a jolt, liberating Southgate's men from their early inhibitions.

If England have a regret, one that seems eternal, it is that they lacked a player of Griezmann's exquisite passing poise and perception.

It was Bellingham straining to drag England back into this game, illustrating why his coach at Borussia Dortmund, Edin Terzic, describes him as "the oldest 19-year-old I have ever seen". Retiring his Birmingham City shirt in 2020 — when he was 17 — has looked less daft and more like smart foresight with every appearance in Qatar. The speed of his progress had surprised even Southgate.

The Times, London

'Heart & guts' drive France

Al Khor: Coach Didier Deschamps feels France beat a good England side with their "heart and guts" on Saturday to move into the World Cup semi-finals and keep alive their hopes of back-to-back titles.

An Olivier Giroud header 12 minutes from time kept alive French hopes of becoming the first team in 60 years to retain the World Cup after a 2-1 win over England in the quarter-final clash.

"It's fabulous. It was a big game," Deschamps stated.

"We played a superb England team who are strong technically and physically. It's brilliant for the players to be in the last-four stage again. In these moments, you kind of wish time could stop for a while.

"But we certainly enjoyed and savoured this win. We got a bit lucky as well, as we gave away two penalties. Nonethe-

less, we maintained our lead with our hearts and our guts, which seem to be powering and driving us."

Deschamps added: "I've watched all the quarter finals. No team that has qualified for the semi-finals was in control of its game right through, or maybe even the majority of the time.

"I would've preferred if we hadn't given England some gifts, but they were at a really high level."

England captain Harry Kane equalised with a penalty in the 54th minute but sent the second one half an hour later over the crosspiece.

Giroud, who passed Thierry Henry to become France's all-time top goal-scorer earlier in the tournament, said Les Bleus had to be at their best to beat England. "My goal, the 53rd, is even better (than equalling Henry). I had a



Didier Deschamps. (Reuters)

chance just before that, which I feel I should have shot harder and scored," Giroud said.

"I thought I might get another chance and when it came to me, it was an unbelievable feeling to score. You need to keep believing.

"We knew the potential of this young England team. They have everything, but we played a solid game and we tried to hurt them on the break. We went for it with all

our mental strength."

France will be the obvious favourites when they play Morocco, the first African team ever to reach the semi-final after their 1-0 win over Portugal, on Wednesday looking to reach a third World Cup final after winning the title in 1998 and 2018.

"We will prepare for the next game thoroughly. Morocco deserve praise," Deschamps said.

"Maybe they were not expected here (in the last four), but they conceded only one goal and then, seeing them here is not a surprise at all."

Deschamps refused to look beyond the semi-final against Morocco when asked about his future with France. "I will be the manager for the semi-final game and after that, we will see.

"I don't know everything in advance. We will tackle that

later," he said.

According to reports in the French media, France are open to continuing with Didier Deschamps as the manager of the national team until at least the 2024 European Championship. As per *Les Parisien*, Deschamps has revealed in private his aspirations of continuing to coach France beyond this year, but only if Les Bleus reach the final.

Noel Le Graet, the French Football Federation president, had announced before this World Cup that Deschamps could decide on his future if France qualified for the semi-finals.

If Deschamps continues even after the ongoing World Cup, that would come as a blow to any immediate aspirations that the legendary Zinedine Zidane may hold of becoming France's manager.

Written with Reuters inputs

Southgate stands by team

Al Khor: England coach Gareth Southgate cut a disconsolate figure after losing to France in the World Cup quarter final on Saturday but said he would not make any decision about his future in the heat of the moment.

"Whenever I finish these tournaments, you need time to make the correct decision. Emotionally, you're going through many different feelings," Southgate told reporters.

"The energy that it takes in these tournaments is enormous. I want to take the right decision, whatever that is, for the team."

However, Southgate said he was still proud of his squad after they went "toe-to-toe" with the reigning champions.

"They know how close they've come, they know they pushed a top nation all the way, they had more possession, more attempts on goal, I'm very proud of how they've been — not only tonight but whole tournament," he said.

"Young players have announced themselves on the world stage, we showed a different side of ourselves in the way we played, we showed character to come back from going behind tonight." Reuters

Support for a shared cause

TARIQ PANJA

Al Rayyan: In the tumult, in those minutes of unrestrained joy after Morocco became the first Arab team to reach the quarter finals of the World Cup, the players took a moment to come together after their famous victory and huddle for a photograph to capture the moment.

Together on the turf where they had laboured for more than two hours to outlast Spain, cheering and smiling and with the throng of red-clad Moroccan fans roaring behind them, the players and their coaches pressed together and waited as a flag was unfurled.

It wasn't Morocco's flag. Stretched out so it could be displayed in all its glory, was the Palestinian banner. Morocco, the best Arab team at the first Arab World Cup, had set off celebrations across North Africa and beyond with its win.

"Palestine is the 33rd country in the World Cup," said Abdullah Mansouri, a Moroccan fan trying to make himself heard above the horns and drums that accompanied his



Morocco players with the Palestine flag after defeating Portugal in Doha. (Getty Images)

country's win. "Palestine is our cause, our struggle in the Arab world, in all the Arab world."

One of the features of the first World Cup to be played in the Muslim world has been the ubiquitous presence of the red, white, green and black colors of a team that is a member of Fifa but whose homeland is not a full member of the United Nations.

The tournament has offered a rare moment of Arab solidarity, with fans from different countries cheering on one another's teams — and expressing support for

the Palestinian cause — even as some Arab governments, including Morocco's, have recently normalized relations with Israel.

That kind of normalization is not mirrored on the Arab street, as it is known, revealing a disconnect with the Arab leadership, and a sense that the Palestinian cause still resonates widely with people across the Arab world and the Arab diaspora.

On the ground and in the stadiums in Qatar, for example, Palestinian flags, Palestinian armbands and even black-and-white headresses, or *kaf-*

*fiyehs*, featuring the Palestinian flag have all been on display throughout the month-long tournament.

"To see Palestinians cheering for Morocco and Moroccans cheering for Palestine is one of the most significant Arab popular rejections of normalization with Israel," the Palestinian journalist and editor Ramzy Baroud told *Days of Palestine*. "This moment will live in the minds of several generations of Arabs forever."

On Tuesday, thousands of fans arrived at Morocco's game dressed with similar emblems of support, something the hosts have done little to stop. In the V.I.P. seats, and even the V.V.I.P. seats, guests have paired their traditional crisp white thobes with armbands in small black-and-white checks, an approximation of the Palestinian *kaffiyeh* after Germany's interior minister attended her country's opening game wearing a rainbow-colored armband.

The fans, and their flags, were back on Saturday, when Morocco faced and defeated Portugal in the quarter finals.

New York Times News Service

Government of West Bengal advertisement for FPS (Ration) Dealership. Includes table with columns for S.No., Notification No. and Date, District, Sub-Division, Bank/Municipality/Municipal Corporation, CRP/Ward No., and Location of vacancy. Lists 30 vacancies across various districts.

IndianOil advertisement for ERPL/HALDIA/LAND/CGS. Includes details about the bid system, technical bid, and price bid. Contact information for General Manager (C), Construction Office, Kolkata.

Dear Weekly Lottery advertisement. Features a photo of Mr. Madhav Sutradhar, a Kolkata resident who won Rs. 1 Crore as the first prize in the Dear Weekly Lottery draw held on 01.11.2022.

Advertisement for CIMA Gallery. Promotes an art exhibition from Dec 12, 2022 to Jan 28, 2023. Features works by Pareesh Maity, Jogen Chowdhury, Sirshendu Mukherjee, Anuradha Lohia, Prasenjit Chatterjee, and Moonmoon Sen.

Government of West Bengal advertisement for recruitment of Food Safety Officer. Includes details about the recruitment process, eligibility criteria, and application procedure.