

Euro 2016 qualifiers



Germany, Poland clinch Euro berth

Germany's midfielder Thomas Mueller (centre) and Georgia's defender Solomon Kverkvelia (right) vie for the ball

World champions Germany secured their place at Euro 2016 despite labouring to a 2-1 win at home to Georgia on Sunday, while Poland also qualified for next summer's finals after beating the Republic of Ireland 2-1.

Germany needed just a point against Georgia in Leipzig to guarantee themselves a top-two finish in Group D but Max Kruse's 79th-minute winner ensured Joachim Loew's men progressed as group winners.

Thomas Mueller had given Germany the lead shortly after half-time, converting a penalty for his ninth goal in the qualifiers, before it was cancelled out almost immediately by Jaba Kankava.

"We're happy on the whole to have secured qualification but displeased with our last two matches," said Loew, who had seen his team lose 1-0 to

Ireland on Thursday. "This is not our standard, there's still a lot of work ahead of us," he added.

Robert Lewandowski equalled former Northern Ireland striker David Healy's 13-goal record for a single European Championship qualifying campaign as Poland claimed second place in Group D. Grzegorz Krychowiak netted a 13th-minute opener for the Poles in Warsaw before Jon Walters levelled from the penalty spot shortly after.

But Lewandowski's 15th goal in his last six matches won it for the home side, consigning the Irish, who saw John O'Shea sent off late on, to November's play-offs.

"We are all disappointed after doing brilliantly against Germany (last time out). We let ourselves down. We had the confidence and expected

to win," said Ireland defender Seamus Coleman.

"We have a big month now in November and we have to get going again."

In the group's other game, Steven Fletcher scored a hat-trick as Scotland finished their unsuccessful campaign with a 6-0 mauling of Gibraltar in Portugal.

Albania make history

Earlier, Albania qualified for their first major international tournament as they beat Armenia 3-0, while Romania also booked their place at the finals after a 3-0 win in the Faroe Islands.

Defeat at home to Serbia on Thursday had left Albania needing three points in Yerevan to edge ahead of Denmark to claim second place in Group I and they made the most of

their second chance.

Kamo Hovhannisyanyan turned into his own net to give Albania a ninth-minute lead before Berat Xhimshiti made it 2-0 midway through the first half.

Substitute Armando Sadiku then added a third 14 minutes

from time as Gianni De Biasi's side secured their spot at next summer's tournament in France.

Portugal, already through as group winners, registered their seventh successive qualifying victory as they overcame Serbia 2-1 in Belgrade. The

visitors were without the rested Cristiano Ronaldo but took a fifth-minute lead through stand-in skipper Nani as the ex-Manchester United winger converted the rebound after Danny's shot was saved by Vladimir Stojkovic. (AFP)



Germany's forward Max Kruse (centre) celebrates