

Chelsea book final against Man United

FA Cup



Olivier Giroud celebrates after scoring the opening goal at Wembley (Pic courtesy: AFP)

Wembley

Olivier Giroud proved the scourge of Southampton once again, setting Chelsea on course for FA Cup semifinal success and a mouth-watering clash with Manchester United.

A week after coming off the bench to net a brace and inspire a remarkable comeback win at embattled Saints in the Premier League, the 31-year-old returned to haunt Mark Hughes' side at Wembley.

Southampton's first FA Cup semifinal appearance since 2003 ended in disappointment as Giroud showed impressive composure to slot home a goal added to by substitute Alvaro Morata as Chelsea ran out 2-0 victors.

Ex-Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho lies in wait for Antonio Conte's men on May 19, when they can atone for last year's shock FA Cup final defeat to Arsenal -- and perhaps give their manager a victorious send-off as speculation continues over his future.

Chelsea were firm favourites to win this semifinal and Willian hit the crossbar early in a one-sided first half, yet Saints managed to batten down the hatches.

But just seconds after half-time that hard work was undone as Giroud was all too easily allowed to jink through and turn home a smart individual goal.

Southampton rallied as

substitute Nathan Redmond came close, but Morata headed the Blues through to a second successive FA Cup final as Saints' dreams of adding to their 1976 triumph died.

There were plenty of empty seats in the Southampton end on Sunday -- although perhaps that is no surprise when you factor in the terrible football that leaves them 18th in the Premier League and facing the drop.

Such dreadful form led last year's EFL Cup finalists to be gripped by apprehension early on as Chelsea flew out of the blocks, with Eden Hazard flashing just wide before Willian struck the crossbar after cutting inside.

Maya Yoshida produced

an outstanding last-ditch challenge to deny man-of-the-match Hazard after meek defending from Ryan Bertrand, with Willian then lifting a well-placed free kick over the bar.

Mario Lemina's tame effort 25 minutes in was Southampton's first shot on target, but by now they had at least looked to have found a modicum of composure.

Still, Saints' midfield was being too easily bypassed and Giroud came close with an acrobatic hooked effort as half-time approached.

Chelsea surprisingly failed to get a shot on target in the first half, yet seconds into the second half they managed it. And it put them ahead. (PA Sport)

Arsenal beat West Ham



Lacazette celebrates scoring the fourth for The Gunners (Pic courtesy: theguardian)

London

A late flurry of goals saw Arsenal secure a 4-1 win over West Ham in their first game since Arsene Wenger revealed he is stepping down as boss.

It took the Gunners 51 minutes to open the scoring on a day of high emotion at the Emirates as Nacho Monreal fired in his sixth goal of the season in all competitions.

Marko Arnautovic drew the Hammers level with a fine strike in the 64th minute but after a defensive error saw Aaron Ramsey put Arsenal back in front, a late Alexandre Lacazette brace made sure of the points.

Wenger made the surprise announcement on Friday morning that he will bring the curtain down on his Gunners tenure at the end of the season after almost 22 years in charge.

Arsenal did not put on a vintage display for their boss

in the first half but they had the game's first real chance as Laurent Koscielny headed narrowly wide from Granit Xhaka's corner.

Arnautovic latched onto West Ham goalkeeper Joe Hart's punt forward before bursting into the box a few minutes later, only to be dispossessed by Shkodran Mustafi before he could get a shot away.

The Austrian went close again in the 15th minute as his fierce angled shot was beaten away by Gunners goalkeeper David Ospina after some shaky defending from the hosts.

Cheikhou Kouyate then headed onto the top of the bar as West Ham began to dominate. (PA Sport)

OTHER SCORES

Man City	5	Swansea City	0
Stoke City	1	Burnley	1

Barcelona lift Copa del Rey trophy



FC Barcelona's players and team members celebrate (Pic courtesy: Xinhua)

Madrid

Barcelona won their fourth successive Copa del Rey with a merciless 5-0 thrashing of Sevilla as departing hero Andres Iniesta joined the usual suspects on the scoresheet.

Luis Suarez netted twice in the first half, Lionel Messi grabbed his 40th of the season and Philippe Coutinho marked his first final for the club with a successful penalty, but it was a

rare strike from Iniesta which drew the broadest smiles in a one-sided romp at the Wanda Metropolitano.

The Spanish great is set to depart for China at the end of the campaign and he showed characteristic timing by popping up with a delicate effort before tearing up following an emotional tribute from the Barca faithful. (Espan)