

Swedes end 24 year wait

Forsberg scores the winner in the 66th minute

● **Emil Forsberg ousts Switzerland and sends Sweden into World Cup last eight**

● **Sweden advances to a World Cup quarterfinal for the first time since 1994**

AFP | Saint Petersburg

Sweden reached the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time in 24 years after Emil Forsberg's deflected shot earned a scrappy 1-0 win over Switzerland yesterday.

Switzerland's Michael Lang was sent off in injury-time for a last-ditch push on Martin Olsson and referee Damir Skomina downgraded his penalty to a free-kick on the edge of the area. But the game was already up.

Forsberg's second-half strike, which deflected off the unfortunate Manuel Akanji, means Sweden are through to the World Cup last eight for the first time since 1994 in the United States.

Their route to the quarters has not been easy and, what they have lost in the individual brilliance of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, they appear to have gained in grit, determination and collective spirit.

Their next opponents would be foolish to take them lightly.

The one blemish on the victory was a yellow card for defender Mikael Lustig, who will now be suspended for the quarter-final in Samara on Saturday.

Sweden's midfielder Emil Forsberg celebrates scoring during the Russia 2018 World Cup round of 16 football match between Sweden and Switzerland at the Saint Petersburg Stadium in Saint Petersburg



It was a surreal feeling to stand at the side of pitch hearing fans calling out my name, but football is a team sport and this team, for me, personifies that

SWEDEN COACH JANNE ANDERSSON

SWEDEN 1 0 SWITZERLAND

66' Forsberg



12	Shots	18
3	On target	4
11	Fouls	13

Victor Lindelof slipped on the ball in the first 10 seconds and that set the tone for the first half, which was largely a collection of mishit passes, heavy touches and skewed shots.

There were chances and Sweden had most of them. Marcus Berg blasted over when set free early on and then saw his finish blocked following a poor clearance by Swiss goalkeeper Yann Sommer.

After a slow start, and Lustig's foul on Josip Drmic, Switzerland grew in confidence and should have scored when Blirim Dzemaili snatched at Steven Zuber's pull-back.

At the other end, Albin Ekdal was even closer, and completely free, when he sidefooted Lustig's cross over.

Rather than let loose, both teams tightened after the interval, and Forsberg's goal came out of the blue. With space on the edge of the box, his dummy did for Granit Xhaka before the shot was helped in by the out-

stretched foot of Akanji.

Switzerland twice went close to grabbing an equaliser, as Djourou's header dribbled agonisingly across the goal-line and substitute Haris Seferovic drew a late save from close range.

What next?

Sweden will face England in the quarter-finals

Quarter final

Quarter-final match-ups

July 6

At Nizhny Novgorod
Uruguay v France
At Kazan
Brazil v Belgium

July 7

At Sochi
Russia v Croatia
At Samara
Sweden v England

Real Madrid deny Neymar bid

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid have denied a report that they have offered a world-record 310 million euros (\$360.59 million) for Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) forward Neymar.

Spanish television channel TVE reported on Monday that the Champions League winners had submitted the bid for the player who left Barcelona last year for a record 222 million euros.

"In light of information broadcast tonight by TVE regarding an alleged Real Madrid offer to PSG and their player Neymar, Real Madrid C. F. wishes to state that this information is absolutely untrue," the club said in statement on their website.

"Real Madrid has made no offer of any kind to PSG or the player."

WORLD CUP PREDICT AND WIN lucky winner is Francis Pereira. Winner will be contacted

Ronaldo-to-Juventus rumours heating up

ESPN | Madrid

Rumours of a potential transfer that would send Cristiano Ronaldo from Real Madrid to Italian champions Juventus led the front pages of multiple daily sport newspapers in Europe on Tuesday.

Marca in Spain and A Bola in Ronaldo's native Portugal were discussing a report on Spanish TV station La Sexta's "Jugones" show on Monday night that claimed Real Madrid had agreed to sell Ronaldo to Juventus for 100 million euros.

The newspapers cited the TV report in their own discussions of a po-



Cristiano Ronaldo

tential transfer, but did not confirm the claim that the deal has already been agreed.

Meanwhile, the story on the front of Italy's Tuttosport on

Tuesday said Juventus are still preparing an offer of nearly 120m euros for Ronaldo.

Sources told ESPN Deportes' Paola Nunez that the "Jugones"

story means that Real Madrid are at least considering the possibility of negotiations with Juventus.

Spanish newspaper AS reported that Ronaldo's camp had confirmed the existence of an offer from Juventus -- and that more could follow in the coming days -- but insisted that no deal was completed.

Juventus CEO Giuseppe Marotta met with Ronaldo's agent Jorge Mendes last week while finalising the signing of another client, Portugal full-back Joao Cancelo.

Any transfer would still require Ronaldo to agree personal terms on a new contract. The "Jugones" report said Juventus would offer to make Ronaldo the highest-paid player in their history at 30m euros a year.