

Fernandes penalty sends United into Europa semis

Extra-time penalty lifted Manchester United past dogged Copenhagen

● **Man United will meet Sevilla or Wolverhampton on Sunday for a berth in the final**

AFP | Berlin

Bruno Fernandes scored a penalty in extra time as Manchester United scraped past FC Copenhagen 1-0 on Monday in the quarter-finals of the Europa League, reshaped into an eight-team straight knockout tournament in Germany due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Portugal international notched his competition-best seventh goal of the season as United set up a semi-final clash against Sevilla or Wolves, joining Inter Milan in the last four.

“Third time this season we’ve been to the semis, every competition we’ve been in. Delighted we’ve gone through, we deserved to win tonight,” United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer told BT Sport.

“Their keeper was fantastic, unbelievable. We hit the post a few times, there were a couple of VAR decisions against us. It could have been one of those nights that you end up with penalty shoot outs. They made it hard for us.”

All games from the quarter-finals onwards in this season’s Europa League are being played behind closed doors as one-off ties across four venues -- Cologne, Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Gelsenkirchen -- in a unique format following a five-month interruption.

Solskjaer recalled Fernandes, Paul Pogba, Marcus Rashford, Mason Greenwood and Anthony Martial but the 2017 compe-



Manchester United’s Portuguese midfielder Bruno Fernandes scores a penalty

tition winners struggled early, and 18-year-old Copenhagen forward Mohamed Daramy was twice involved as the Danish underdogs threatened a creaking United backline.

Eric Bailly intervened just as Daramy attempted to stab home a bouncing cross, and the Ivorian defender was then played into trouble by Fred with Jens Stage’s subsequent effort blocked.

Rashford finally tested Karl-Johan Johnsson just before the interval with a long-range shot -- the first of a multitude of saves for Copenhagen’s outstanding Swedish goalkeeper.

Greenwood looked to have put United ahead as he drilled in via the far post moments later only for the teenager to be ruled offside following a VAR review.

He again went close early in the second half when he slammed against the upright, with Fernandes promptly

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All games from the quarter-finals onwards in this season’s Europa League are being played behind closed doors as one-off ties in a unique format

smacking the opposite post with a dipping 20-yard drive.

The Portugal international, who scored five times in the group stage with Sporting,

Europa League quarter-finals				
Manchester United	1		0	FC Copenhagen
Inter Milan	2		1	Bayer Leverkusen

Lukaku leads Inter past Leverkusen



Inter Milan’s Romelu Lukaku (C) tries to score past Leverkusen’s Edmond Tapsoba (L) and Exequiel Palacios

Reuters | Dusseldorf

Inter Milan striker Romelu Lukaku scored the winner in a 2-1 victory over Bayer Leverkusen as he tormented the Germans to lead his side into the Europa League semi-finals on Monday.

Nicolo Barella put Inter ahead after 15 minutes, driving the ball home after Lukaku’s shot was blocked, and six minutes later the Belgian got on the scoresheet when he displayed his strength by holding off defender Edmond Tapsoba before firing home.

Leverkusen winger Kai Havertz, reported to be a transfer target of Premier League club Chelsea, pulled a goal back for the Germans but it was goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky who kept them in the game with a string of fine saves.

The win sets up a semi-final against Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk or FC Basel of Switzerland, who meet on Tuesday

After scoring what proved to be the winner, Lukaku could have had a second goal when Inter were awarded a penalty for handball, but that harsh decision against Leverkusen was overturned by the Video Assistant Referee (VAR).

Tapsoba struggled all night to contain the physicality of 27-year-old Lukaku, who set

3

Europa League titles have been won by Inter Milan

a record by scoring in nine straight Europa League games, and in the second half the centre-back resorted to hacking the striker down on a number of occasions.

Seeking their first trophy since a 2011 Coppa Italia triumph, Inter sent on Alexis Sanchez in the second half and he had two excellent efforts blocked by last-ditch defending.

Lukaku was again denied a spot kick by VAR after an Inter player was discovered to have handled just before Christian Eriksen was bundled over in the box, and he fired a late shot wide under pressure from Tapsoba as Inter held on for victory.

Lukaku showed plenty of humility after his dominant performance, saying: “To me, the man of the match is Nicolo Barella. The way he plays football is simply incredible - maturity, quality. He is truly a great player.”

Liverpool sign Greece defender Tsimikas from Olympiakos

Reuters | London

Premier League champions Liverpool signed Greece defender Kostas Tsimikas from Olympiakos for a reported fee of £11.7 million (\$15 million).

Tsimikas agreed a five-year contract with Liverpool and is expected to provide back-up for first choice left-back Andy Robertson at Anfield.

Reds boss Jurgen Klopp moved for the 24-year-old after opting not to pay Norwich’s asking price for their Northern Ireland left-back Jamal Lewis.

Tsimikas is Liverpool’s first close-season signing and he told the club’s website: “I’m very happy, I’m very proud to be here. For me, (it is) the biggest club in the world.

“The league here, I like a lot. I watch it on the TV and it was always one dream I had from when I was a kid to come to play in this league.

“(I want) to achieve (our) goals. To win the league again and also to win the Champions



Kostas Tsimikas

League.”

Tsimikas, capped three times by Greece, made 86 appearances for Olympiakos in all competitions and has also had loan spells with Danish club Esbjerg and Dutch team Willem II.

He played 27 times in the league last season, winning the first major honour of his career as Olympiakos clinched the Greek title.

“We have watched Kostas for a long time and are really happy that he has joined us. It’s the perfect news before we come back together very soon,” Klopp said.

Konta suffers heart scare in Lexington exit

Reuters | London

Britain’s Johanna Konta suffered a health scare as she crashed out of the opening round of the WTA Top Seed Open in Lexington on Monday with a straight-sets defeat to the Czech Republic’s Marie Bouzkova.

Third seed Konta requested medical attention just a few minutes into her 6-4, 6-4 first round loss to the unseeded Bouzkova.

The 29-year-old Briton looked uncomfortable and kept holding two fingers to her neck to check her pulse before eventually resuming play.

Konta later explained that she is prone to sudden palpitations that can send her heart rate soaring.

“My heart rate shoots up for no reason, we didn’t have a long point, I wasn’t gassing in any way in my lungs,” Konta said.

“It makes me a bit lightheaded, I just had to see the doctor and the physio.

“I was having all the checks.



Johanna Konta of Great Britain plays a backhand during a match

I am as fit as a fiddle but it can happen. It took a while to settle down until about 4-3 in the first set, but then it did settle down and I was able to concentrate on the tennis.”

Konta said it was the fourth time she had been affected by the problem during tournament play or practice.

“We don’t know why it happens, it’s in stressful situations, in non-stressful situations. It’s been sporadic and we haven’t been able to capture it. I get very

lightheaded and I can’t function for the first few seconds,” she said.

“I am worried. It’s not ideal. I am going to have another EKG (electrocardiography) test, and hopefully measure it. But probably now it won’t happen again for another year or something.”

Konta, the world number 15, was the highest profile casualty on Monday in the opening round of the inaugural WTA event in Kentucky.

Other seeded players in ac-

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JOHANNA KONTA

tion made it safely into the second round, with Polish sixth seed Magda Linette beating the United States’ Lauren Davis 6-2, 6-2, and Tunisia’s Ons Jabeur, seeded eight, downing another American, Caty McNally, 6-2, 6-4.

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus was taken to three sets by Madison Brengle before claiming a 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2 win.

This week’s event is the first WTA tournament to be held in the United States following a five-month hiatus caused by the coronavirus pandemic.