

Qualifier Samsonova downs Bencic in Berlin to win first WTA title



Harry Kane and Kieran Trippier
AFP | Berlin

Qualifier Liudmila Samsonova capped her breakthrough week yesterday by winning her first WTA title with victory over Belinda Bencic in the final of the Berlin grass court tournament.

Samsonova, 22, made a mockery of her world ranking of 106 to recover from losing the first set to earn a 1-6, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Swiss fifth seed Bencic.

It was another display of power tennis from the Russian who stunned former world

number one Victoria Azarenka in Saturday's semi-final.

Despite having her service broken twice in losing the first set, Samsonova immediately applied pressure at the start of the second.

She racing into a 4-0 lead to serve out the set, which she won by blasting down seven aces without reply.

Bencic, ranked 12th in the world, was broken again at the start of the deciding set and Samsonova applied enough pressure at 5-3 up to convert her second match point.

Today's games

Euro 2020

Group C: North Macedonia vs Netherlands (19:00, Amsterdam)

Group C: Ukraine vs Austria (19:00, Bucharest)

Group B: Russia vs Denmark (22:00, Copenhagen)

Group B: Finland vs Belgium (22:00, St Petersburg)

Tomorrow's games

Copa America

Uruguay vs Chile (00:00, Cuiaba)

Argentina vs Paraguay (03:00, Brasilia)

Results

EURO 2020

	1	0	Wales
Italy			
	3	1	Turkey
Switzerland			

*Scores as of closing

Italy's reserves beat Wales 1-0 at Euro 2020

Matteo Pessina ensures Italy top group as 10-man Wales finish second

● Matteo Pessina struck the winner and Ethan Ampadu was sent off but Wales did enough to seal their last-16 place

AFP | Rome

Italy's reserves really do play as well as its starters. Or just about.

Roberto Mancini has been saying for weeks that all 26 members of his squad are starters. And after beating Wales 1-0 yesterday despite making eight changes to his starting lineup at the European Championship, it's hard to argue with him.

"It's important that the identity of the team remains the same, as changing three or four players shouldn't make any difference. They all know what to do and the end product doesn't change," Mancini said.

"They all proved today that everyone here is a first-choice player," the coach added. "Winning wasn't even necessary, which made it difficult in terms of mentality, but we fought for the win anyway and that shows so much."

The victory extended Italy's unbeaten streak to 30 matches — matching a team record.

Matteo Pessina gave Italy the



Matteo Pessina of Italy controls the ball

lead late in the first half by redirecting a free kick from Marco Verratti on a textbook play.

Wales defender Ethan Ampadu was sent off with a questionable straight red card for stepping on Federico Bernardeschi 10 minutes into the second half.

Italy, which won its opening two matches 3-0, finished Group A with a perfect nine points. Wales came second with four points and qualified for the last 16 at only its second European Championship. The Welsh reached the semifinals at Euro 2016.

"Our focus today was as long

as we qualify we're happy," Wales defender Neco Williams said. "In the changing room it feels like we won the game."

Switzerland ended up third in the group, also with four points, after beating Turkey 3-1 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Chasing only its second European title, Italy will play the second-place team from Group C at Wembley Stadium in London next Saturday. Wales will play the second-place team from Group B in Amsterdam.

The victory also marked Italy's 11th straight win and clean sheet.

The Azzurri first won 30

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ROBERTO MANCINI

straight under coaching great Vittorio Pozzo from 1935-39 with a team that won its second consecutive World Cup.

It's been a remarkable turnaround for this Italy squad, which failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

"Pozzo won many important trophies, too, so we're still far behind that level," Mancini said. "Anyone who goes through to the round of 16 can win the Euros, that's for sure."

On a warm and humid evening at the Stadio Olimpico, Italy controlled from the start and Andrea Belotti and Federico Chiesa both came close to scoring before Pessina put the Azzurri ahead.

Verratti earned a foul that set up a free kick on the right flank and then whipped in a low cross that Pessina flicked into the far corner with his back to the goal.

I was expecting more, admits Spain coach Luis Enrique after another draw

● Lewandowski saves Poland as Spain's Morata misses rebound of redemption

AFP | Madrid

Luis Enrique admitted he expected more from Spain at Euro 2020 after a 1-1 draw with Poland on Saturday left his team facing a fight to reach the last 16.

Gerard Moreno missed a penalty and Alvaro Morata squandered the rebound as Spain's scoring woes struck again, with Robert Lewandowski's header earning Poland a valuable point in Seville.

After starting with a stalemate against Sweden, Spain sit third in Group E and may well now have to beat Slovakia in their final game on Wednesday to avoid an embarrassing early exit.

"I was expecting more," said Luis Enrique. "I was expecting six points and zero goals conceded. But this is the situation.

"We're coming into the crunch match now and if we want to progress we need to win. If we win, we'll go through. If not, we'll be out. That's the reality."

Morata poked in from close range to put Spain in front but Lewandowski's 60th goal of the season pulled Poland level before Moreno's penalty hit the post.

The rebound came quickly



Poland's Robert Lewandowski scores their equaliser

60

goals have been scored by Robert Lewandowski this season

to Morata but with Wojciech Szczesny committed down to his right, the goal was open for the striker to score his second.

Instead, the whistles that accompanied Morata against Sweden last week were saved for the whole Spanish team at the final whistle.

Poland, meanwhile, formed a huddle on the pitch before going to over to salute their supporters, after the deadly Lewandowski came up trumps again to keep his own team's

hopes of progress alive.

"If it was a boxing match we would have won on points but Poland could have won too," said Luis Enrique. "They had chances, they caused us problems."

Luis Enrique had launched a passionate and prepared defence of Morata on Friday as he said the team would be "Morata and 10 others".

But he also replaced Ferran Torres in the starting line-up with Moreno, the Villarreal striker whose 23 goals was second only to Lionel Messi last season in La Liga.

Dangerous Poland

Morata almost gave away an early penalty with an overly-zealous challenge in the box, while Mateusz Klich rippled the top of the net with an effort from distance soon after.

Spain were the better side in possession, with Morata at-

tempting a delicate chip when power might have been better, but Poland were dangerous on the break, Lewandowski tearing away after a poor pass by Rodri only to be marshalled out by Jordi Alba.

Morata's best moment came in the 25th minute and it could hardly have been easier, even if a little shuffle put him in the right position to poke in Moreno's shot from the right.

The offside flag went up and Spain's players appeared to expect the cancellation but instead the goal stood, prompting Alba to fling his arms around Morata, who then dashed over to his coach, a show of thanks for the faith placed in him.

Poland came again though and twice went close before half-time, Karol Swiderski hitting the post with a curling shot that came back for Lewandowski, but he smashed at Unai Simon, who saved.

Humbert stuns Rublev to claim Halle title



France's Ugo Humbert poses with a trophy as he celebrates after winning the final against Russia's Andrey Rublev

AFP | Halle

France's Ugo Humbert pulled off an upset win over fourth seed Andrey Rublev yesterday to claim the biggest title of his career in the final of the Halle grass court tournament.

Humbert, ranked 31 in the world, earned a 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) victory over world number seven Russia's Rublev in one hour, 24 minutes.

Having won two ATP 250 titles in his career, this was the first tournament win at 500 level for the 22-year-old, who has won all three finals he has reached on the tour.

After breaking Rublev to go 5-3 up in the opening set,

in which he powered down five aces, Humbert converted his fourth set point in a hard fought game.

Rublev made precious few mistakes in the second set until losing his serve at 5-4 in the tie-break, when Humbert held his serve to convert his first match point.

Humbert had already thrown down a marker earlier in the week in Halle when he knocked out French Open semi-finalist Alexander Zverev in the second round.

Rublev had been the last remaining seed in the draw from the quarter-finals onwards after top players like Roger Federer and world number two Daniil Medvedev crashed out in the early rounds.