

SPORTS

sports

Algeria claim second African crown

● Algeria sink Senegal to claim 'incredible' second Africa Cup of Nations title

● Baghdad Bounedjah's early deflected strike was enough to give Algerians 1-0 win in Cairo

AFP | Cairo

Baghdad Bounedjah's early goal propelled Algeria to a first Africa Cup of Nations title in 29 years after a fiery 1-0 victory over Sadio Mane's Senegal in Friday's final in Cairo.

Bounedjah gave Algeria a dream start in the second minute when his deflected shot looped over Senegal goalkeeper Alfred Gomis, and it proved enough for the 1990 champions to lift the trophy on foreign soil for the first time.

"It's incredible. The win is for the whole country," Algeria goalkeeper Rais M'Bolhi told beIN Sports. "We have to thank (coach) Djamel Belmadi. The situation was tricky in the past before he arrived."

"It's a bit hard to soak in right now but I think we'll realise what we've done when we return home," he added.

For Senegal, who lost to Algeria by the same scoreline in the group stage, the long wait for a first continental crown goes on as coach Aliou Cisse, the captain of the 2002 runners-up, again fell short in the final.

"We conceded the goal very early and on the whole I think we deserved to equalise but it didn't happen," said Cisse.

"I want to congratulate my players. We've been working together a long time for this Cup of Nations and we wanted it but tonight it didn't go our



Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez lifts the trophy as his team celebrate

way."

It was the first title-decider to feature two African coaches since 1998, with Algeria boss Djamel Belmadi completing a whirlwind 12 months at the helm after inheriting a side that failed to make it out of the group stage two years ago.

"Without the players I am nothing. They are the main ones. I suppose the staff played its part in guiding the players but they applied the instructions incredibly well," said Belmadi.

With defensive rock Kalidou Koulibaly suspended for Senegal, Salif Sane deputised at the back and Ismaila Sarr was recalled in attack, while Belmadi kept faith in the same side that overcame Nigeria with an injury-time free-kick from Riyad Mahrez.

Gomis finally beaten

Senegal had understandably feared the absence of Napoli star Koulibaly, banned after two bookings in the knockout rounds, although the towering Sane was desperately unlucky as Algeria grabbed the lead with scarcely

a minute played.

As Bounedjah took aim from 20 yards his effort smacked off Sane and arced high into the air before dropping underneath the crossbar and beyond a static Gomis, sparking delirious celebrations from both players and fans, some of whom arrived for the final on military planes provided by the Algerian government.

It was the first time Gomis had conceded in almost 400 minutes in Egypt having replaced the injured Edouard Mendy ahead of Senegal's final group

game.

Henri Saivet, who missed a penalty in the 1-0 victory over Tunisia, tried to catch M'Bolhi out with a free-kick while Mbaye Niang fizzed a powerful drive just over as Senegal gradually showed signs of life before the half ended with both sets of players embroiled in a scuffle as they headed for the tunnel.

Senegal thought they had won a penalty on the hour when Cameroonian referee Alioum Alioum pointed to the spot for a suspected handball by Adlene Guedioura, but the official reversed his decision after a VAR review.

Niang rounded an advancing M'Bolhi after a searching ball through from Cheikhou Kouyate but the forward sliced wide of the target from a tough angle, with the Algeria 'keeper then acrobatically tipping over a rasping drive from Youssouf Sabaly.

The Desert Foxes started to look jaded as Senegal brought on fresh legs in Krepin Diatta and Mbaye Diagne, but Youcef Belaïli nearly made it 2-0 when his cross brushed the head of a defender and skimmed the roof of the net.

Sarr blazed over on the volley as Algeria clung on to their advantage in the closing minutes, the final whistle greeted by an outpouring of raw emotion as the North Africans emerged worthy winners of the expanded 24-team event.

Wolves edge City on penalties to win Asia Trophy

AFP | Shanghai, China

Goalkeeper Rui Patricio was the hero for Wolves, saving three spot-kicks after their Asia Trophy final against Manchester City went to penalties yesterday in Shanghai.

Wolves won the exhibition tournament 3-2 on penalties after the game against the Premier League champions ended 0-0 after 90 minutes.

It was a story of missed penalties for Pep Guardiola's City.

Raheem Sterling missed a first-half penalty for City, who dominated at a full Hongkou Stadium but were blunt in attack without Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus.

Pre-season games are notori-

ously poor barometers for the season to come, especially when played in stifling heat like in Shanghai.

But both sides fielded close to their full-strength sides and Guardiola and counterpart Nuno Espírito Santo will be glad to escape without any serious injuries to their squads.

Leroy Sane, the German wing-winger wanted by Bayern Munich, started for City and won the Sterling penalty, but otherwise had a quiet game before being substituted on the hour.

Kevin De Bruyne was Guardiola's captain for the night -- the City armband is up for grabs following the departure of talisman Vincent Kompany.

Sterling should have put City



Conor Coady and Ruben Neves celebrate with Wolves after winning the Premier League Asia Trophy

in the lead but instead blasted forward, playing through the his 20th minute penalty over middle, then fluffed a golden chance from close range with Wolves off the hook.

The England international

Charity auction one of the high-points of BRAVE 24

TDT | Manama

A charity auction will be one of the highlights of BRAVE 24: London, a mixed martial arts event set to connect the sport to the highest level of dignitaries around the world.

The once-in-a-lifetime, exclusive experience will take place at the Copper Box Arena, on July 25th, and will be a luxurious, invite-only show to more than 300 celebrities, influencers, politicians, and business-men.

And the top personalities in attendance will have the chance to bid on exclusive items, with all the proceeds going to the Royal British Legion, a charity which provides financial, social and emotional support to veterans of the British Armed Forces (Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force) and their families and dependants. It is the largest Armed Forces Charity

in Great Britain, with 235,000 members, 110,000 volunteers and a vast network of other charities and partners.

"When we have the world coming together, we're going to make sure that MMA is not

only a sport to be developed, to be empowered. We also think of what MMA can give back to the community. We always have a charity aspect to every event we host. But this is going to be one of the biggest things we've done at BRAVE Combat Federation. The auction is fully focused on how

much MMA can contribute to the community. And this is one of the most important aspects of BRAVE CF", says president Mohammed Shahid.

The auction will take place between the preliminary and main cards, giving a chance for the VIP attendees to bid on exclusive items that will be announced in the coming days.

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MOHAMMED SHAHID

Greenwood strike earns United victory over Inter

AFP | Singapore

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær praised striker Mason Greenwood after the 17-year-old came off the bench to score a brilliant winning goal in a 1-0 friendly victory yesterday over Inter Milan.

"He's learning everyday, training with the first team and he's been with us for the last few months. He has grown in confidence and stature," Solskjær told reporters after



Mason Greenwood (C) of Manchester United in action

United secured a third straight pre-season triumph without conceding a goal.

"As I have said before, when you have a player who performs, it's difficult to keep him out."

The Premier League side dominated from start to finish and Solskjær was delighted with a sharp performance that deserved to be rewarded by a bigger margin of victory against a team still finding their feet under new manager Antonio Conte.