

SPORTS  
sports

# Spain survive Norway scare

● **Barella, Kean get Italy off the mark in Euro 2020 qualifiers**

● **Sergio Ramos scores decisive penalty for Spain**

AFP | Paris

Sergio Ramos scored a second-half penalty to help Spain beat a spirited Norway 2-1 on Saturday in their opening Euro 2020 qualifier, while teenage striker Moise Kean netted in Italy's win over Finland.

Spain were not at their clinical best in Valencia, but got their Group F campaign off to a solid start despite Norway threatening an upset.

The 2010 World Cup winners have been unpredictable of late, having been dumped out by Russia in the last 16 of the World Cup and then missing out on the Nations League finals after a home loss to England.

"The team responded well to their equaliser. You always have the dream and aim of achieving something important," Ramos told Spanish television channel TVE.

"We're in a new stage with a coach who has a fantastic style of play. We'll take things game by game. We'll pick up more confidence from winning."

Coach Luis Enrique named an attacking line-up, with Marco Asensio, Alvaro Morata and



Sergio Ramos chips the ball past Norway's goalkeeper from the penalty spot

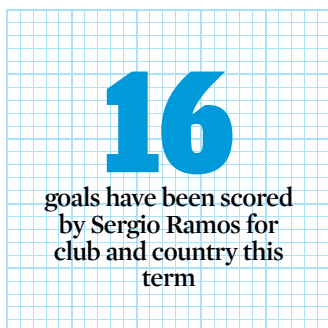
Rodrigo all starting, and it was the latter who volleyed home the opener from Jordi Alba's cross in the 16th minute.

Winger Jesus Navas created several other early chances for his teammates on his first Spain appearance since March 2014, but Rodrigo headed over and Morata was denied by away goalkeeper Rune Jarstein.

Norway started to grow into the game and were handed a chance to draw level in the 65th minute when Inigo Martinez grabbed Bjorn Johnsen, and Bournemouth striker Joshua King stepped up to slot past David de Gea.

Spain wasted little time in getting their noses back in front, though, as Jarstein felled Morata to concede a 71st-minute penalty.

Centre-back Ramos stepped up and confidently dispatched a 'Panenka' spot-kick down the middle to score his 16th goal of the season for club and country.



**Kean makes his mark**

Juventus youngster Kean, 19, became the youngest striker to start for Italy in more than a

century as Roberto Mancini's men saw off Finland 2-0.

Italy got off to a flying start in Udine, as Nicolo Barella gave them a seventh-minute lead with his maiden international goal.

The 22-year-old Cagliari midfielder hammered home a low volley after a free-kick was only half-cleared by the Finnish defence.

The day belonged to Kean, though, as he slotted in the second with 16 minutes to play to mark his full debut in style.

"To become part of Azzurri history is an added incentive to keep working," said Kean.

"There are many goals ahead of me and my aim is to achieve them. I wanted to show that I deserved this chance from Mancini."

## F1 Fanzone to bring fun-filled challenges



Race-goers engage in activities at BIC's F1 Fanzone

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit's (BIC) off-track entertainment at this weekend's Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2019 would not be complete without a series of activities that give race fans a first-hand taste of life in motorsport. The F1 Fanzone provides just that.

A staple at BIC's Formula 1 Village vending area each year, the F1 Fanzone is the central place where Formula 1 aims to break down the barriers between the sport and race enthusiasts. It offers a variety of engagement activities that are similar to what is experienced by drivers, team personnel, and others involved in the world's leading racing championship.

These F1 Fanzone activities include F1 Esports, a Reaction Challenge, a Pitstop Challenge and a TV Challenge, plus an appearance of driver Bobble Heads. Each offers its own unique thrills, and they all add to the "Limitless" fun and excitement this Thursday to Sunday at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East" in Sakhir.

F1 Esports is where fans can race against 15 other competitors in the official Formula 1 video game. Battles are held throughout the day on the virtual Bahrain Grand Prix race track and the 10 quickest of each day get to go on an F1 Paddock tour with an accom-

panying guest of their choice.

Meanwhile, Formula 1 drivers have some of the quickest reaction speeds in the world, and the Reaction Challenge gives fans a chance to test their own such abilities.

This family activity calls on teams of four to press as many of the flashing lights as possible on an F1 steering wheel in the space of one minute. The fastest participants get to win a prize along with the ultimate bragging rights.

The Pit-stop Challenge gives fans an insight into what it takes to be a part of a world-class pit crew. This activity gives three teams of six the chance to compete against each other in a knockout competition changing Pirelli tyres on a Formula 1 car.

A contest for the top three teams are held daily, with an F1 Paddock tour awaiting the entire winning team. Formula 1 will bring a pitstop crew from one of the top flight's teams to do a pitstop demonstration for the fans, and even compete against some of them.

The F1 TV Challenge lets participants experience what life is like as a Formula 1 commentator.

Those who take part can choose between three top moments from a Grand Prix and receive those clip to share on social media after activation. The clip with the most likes during the day will receive a prize from Formula 1.

### BIC's luxurious Corporate Lounges sold

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) announced today that all 34 of its Corporate Lounges have completely sold out for this weekend's Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2019.

Strategically located at the upper-most level of the Main Grandstand, the Corporate Lounges offer an exclusive, first-class setting from where to enjoy the region's biggest sporting and entertainment spectacle, scheduled for this Thursday to Sunday in Sakhir.

Each lounge delivers a stunning view of the most crucial parts of the circuit, including the start and finish lines, the main straight, the Formula 1 Pit Lane and the winners' podium.

## Brazil denied victory by determined Panama

AFP | Porto, Portugal

Brazil were held to a 1-1 draw against Panama in an international friendly played at Porto's Dragao Stadium on Saturday.

AC Milan's Lucas Paqueta claimed his first international goal for the five-time World Cup winners before captain Adol-



**Brazil's Lucas Paqueta scored his first international goal against Panama**



Brazil's Lucas Paqueta shoots to score

fo Machado responded for the side in 76th place in the world rankings.

Injured Paris Saint-Germain forward Neymar watched the game from the stands as he recovers from a fractured right foot.

"The performance wasn't brilliant but it wasn't below par either," coach Tite said.

"When we go to the Copa America we will make more accurate choices to be more efficient."

The Selecao opened the

scoring just after the half-hour mark.

Midfielder Paqueta was on the end of a deep Casemiro cross to volley home at the back post.

Skipper Machado brought the teams level four minutes later.

Erick Davis' central free-kick found the centre-back near the penalty spot who lobbed his long-distance header over a stunned Ederson who appealed for offside.

Everton attacker Richarlison came close to bagging his side's second as his effort smashed the crossbar five minutes after the break.

Real Madrid's Casemiro had two chances to win the game for Tite's outfit with a header and a powerful shot with quarter of an hour remaining.

Both teams made a wave of substitutions in the closing moments and Eder Militao went close with an injury-time header.

### Title race will go down to the wire - Beckenbauer

AFP | Berlin

Germany legend Franz Beckenbauer has warned former club Bayern Munich they will have to fight until the very last day of the season in a nail-biting Bundesliga title race.

With eight games to go, Bayern are level on points with Borussia Dortmund at the top of the table as they chase a seventh successive league crown.

In recent months, champions Bayern have overturned what was once a nine-point deficit to nose ahead of Dortmund on goal difference.

Yet Beckenbauer has said on Sunday that the title race is a long way from being over.