

# Germany, Italy, Belgium Stay Perfect in Euro 2020 Qualifying



Germany's midfielder Leroy Sane (2nd left) celebrates scoring the 8-0 goal with his teammates during the UEFA Euro 2020 qualifier Group C football match Germany against Estonia on June 11, 2019 in Mainz.

BERLIN (AP) - European heavyweights Germany, Italy and Belgium have maintained their perfect records in qualifying for the 2020 European Championship, while world champion France bounced back from a surprising loss.

Germany flexed their muscle with an 8-0 rout of Estonia, Italy scored a late winner to beat Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-1 and Belgium eased to a 3-0 win over Scotland.

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Germany's rout of Estonia capped a good week for interim coach Markus Sorg, who took charge of the side for two games while Joachim Löw recovers from an injury he sustained in the gym.

Marco Reus and Serge Gnabry both scored twice, while Leon Goretzka, Ilkay Gündogan, Timo Werner and Leroy Sané added the other goals.

Reus opened the scoring in the 10th minute before Gnabry, Goretzka and a penalty from Gündogan had Germany four goals up inside the first 26 minutes - for the first time since its 7-1 win over Brazil in the 2014 World Cup semifinals.

Despite their third win from three games, Germany are behind Northern Ireland, which stayed perfect thanks to Paddy McNair's late goal for a 1-0 win in Belarus.

Germany next play the Netherlands in September.

Marco Verratti scored Italy's late winner against Bosnia-Herzegovina to keep the Azzuri top of Group J, three points clear of second-place Finland, which won 2-0 in Liechtenstein. Armenia are third, six points behind Italy, after stunning Greece 3-2 in Athens.

Edin Dzeko's first-half opener for Bosnia were the first goal Italy have conceded in their four qualifying matches.

New Real Madrid signing Eden Hazard led Belgium to another win, setting up Romelu Lukaku for the team's opener after he had combined with his brother Thorgan.

Lukaku grabbed his second after the break before Kevin de Bruyne sealed the win late.

Scotland keeper David Marshall helped keep the score down for the visitors.

Belgium lead Group I with 12 points, three more than Russia and six more than both Kazakhstan and Scotland.

France, which also scored four goals in each of their first two wins in Group H, got back on track after their loss in Turkey.

Star forward Kylian Mbappé got the visitors off the mark before Wissam Ben Yedder, Florian Thauvin and Kurt Zouma each got their first international goals for France.

"We reacted well after not playing to our usual level on Saturday," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "I think the players enjoyed themselves."

## Messi Highest Paid Athlete in World



Messi has scored 603 goals in 687 games for Barcelona

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Barcelona and Argentina forward Lionel Messi is the world's highest paid athlete, earning \$127 million in the past 12 months, according to the Forbes top 100 ranking.

Juventus's Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo is second on \$109mn with Paris St-Germain's Brazil forward Neymar in third on \$105mn.

Last year's highest earner, boxer Floyd Mayweather, has dropped off the list.

Serena Williams is the only woman in the top 100, earning \$29.2mn.

Five-time Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton and former heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua are the highest earning British athletes, sitting at 13th on \$55mn.

The American business magazine calculated the athletes' earnings by adding up their prize money, salaries and endorsements between June 2018 and June 2019.

The top 100 includes athletes from 25 countries and their \$4bn combined earnings are up 5% from the previous year, when Mayweather was first with \$285m.

The American boxer's only fight since August 2017 was an exhibition boxing bout against Japanese kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa in December.

Athletes had to earn a minimum of \$25mn to make this year's list.

Messi is only the second footballer to top the rankings after Ronaldo, and only the eighth different athlete to take the number one spot since the rankings began in 1990.

It is also the first time that footballers have ranked as the top three earners in sports.

Messi is one of 38 non-American athletes on the list, with 62 U.S. stars in the top 100.

The NBA accounted for the most athletes with 35, with LA Lakers' LeBron James the sport's highest paid athlete in eighth on \$89mn ahead of Golden State Warriors pair Stephen Curry (9th on \$79.8mn) and Kevin Durant (10th on \$65.4mn).

Manchester United's Paul Pogba is the highest earning Premier League player in 44th place with \$33mn.

Top 10

1. Lionel Messi \$127mn
2. Cristiano Ronaldo \$109mn
3. Neymar \$105mn
4. Canelo Alvarez \$94mn
5. Roger Federer \$93.4mn
6. Russell Wilson \$89.5mn
7. Aaron Rodgers \$89.3mn
8. LeBron James \$89m (£69.9m)
9. Stephen Curry \$79.8mn
10. Kevin Durant \$65.4mn

## Froome Crashes, Out of Key Tour de France Prep Race

ROANNE, France (AP) - Chris Froome has crashed in training and is out of the main preparation race for the Tour de France.

Team INEOS says on Twitter that the four-time Tour champion is "currently on his way to a local hospital and won't start today's fourth stage" of the Criterium du Dauphine in France.

The time-trial stage was

a key target for Froome during the eight-day Dauphine race. He took the Dauphine title in three of his four Tour-winning years.

The 26-kilometer (16-mile) stage would have been the British rider's first time-trial test this season.

Froome was eighth in the Dauphine standings, 24 seconds behind leader Dylan Teuns of Belgium.



Team Sky leaders Geraint Thomas and Chris Froome battled their way to strong finishes during an action-packed stage nine at the Tour de France.

er Dylan Teuns of Belgium.

## Swedish Regions Show Support for 2026 Winter Olympics

STOCKHOLM (AP) — All three regions proposing to stage events at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Sweden have committed their backing for the bid for the first time.

With less than two weeks to go

before the vote, the leaders of the executive councils in Stockholm, Jämtland and Dalarna have published a joint letter underlining their support for a bid that has struggled for political approval.

The regions highlight the

"uniquely sustainable way" that an Olympics in Sweden would be delivered as well as providing an "opportunity to show the breadth and beauty of our magnificent country — and to increase awareness and interest in Sweden."

The vote on June 24 is between bids from Italy, centered on Milan, and Sweden, which is using one Latvian sports venue. Both candidates were given extra time to secure elusive government backing.

## Anthony Joshua Is 'Finished', Says Tyson Fury

LONDON (AFP) - Tyson Fury believes former world champion Anthony Joshua is "finished" after the British heavyweight's shock defeat to Andy Ruiz Jr in New York.

Joshua lost his IBF, WBA and WBO titles on June 1 in one of the biggest upsets in the history of the division.

After the fight, Fury sent a message on Twitter that urged his fellow Briton to "rest up, recover, regroup and come again".

But this week he told BBC Sport: "When a man doesn't want to be there once, he will always do it and it's hard to come back from."

"It's been done many different times by many different fighters. He did it that night and I don't think he will come back from it. Finished. Ask any top trainer who has been around the sport a lifetime. When he got to the ring I saw he didn't want to be there."

Joshua, 29, whose defeat against Ruiz was the first of his career, had previously made Fury an offer to fight.

"Everybody thought that man could beat me," said Fury. "In what world



Anthony Joshua suffered a shock defeat to Andy Ruiz Jr

could he ever beat me? What were people seeing?"

"I don't know what people were looking at as I don't know in what world he could have beaten me."

Joshua's seventh-round stoppage by Ruiz came as a huge surprise as his opponent had been given barely one month's notice for the fight and weighed in at more than 20 pounds (nine kilograms) heavier than the

Briton.

But unbeaten Fury, who shed around 10 stone (64 kilograms) in a bid to re-establish himself in the heavyweight division after a battle with mental health and drugs issues, said body shape was no indicator of success.

"Physically Joshua could out-train everyone," said the 30-year-old, who is preparing to fight Germany's Tom Schwarz in Las Vegas on Saturday.

"He would break every heart monitor, has probably worn out every treadmill in the gym, smashes the bag, it's all very unimportant."

"Boxing isn't rocket science and today people are trying to make it a scientist thing. If you can fight you can fight, if you can't you can forget about it."

World Boxing Council heavyweight world champion Deontay Wilder said last month that he had lined up a highly anticipated rematch with Fury, to take place after Wilder's rematch with Luis Ortiz, which will reportedly take place in September.

Wilder and Fury fought to a draw in Los Angeles in December after an epic 12-round battle at the Staples Center.

"If I was a match-fit fighter and some fat man comes off drugs and alcohol and done that to me I'd never look at the sport again," said Fury.

"Does Deontay Wilder have anything to bother me? Nothing at all. I've been hurt 1,000 times but Wilder didn't hurt me once."

## Andy Murray Aims for Singles Return in 2019



Britain's Andy Murray

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's Andy Murray hopes to return to the singles court before the end of the year, but thinks he is unlikely to be ready in time for August's U.S. Open.

The former world number one, who had his hip resurfaced in January, is due to play doubles at Queen's Club next week.

Murray will partner Feliciano Lopez at the Fever-Tree Cham-

pionships in London.

But the 32-year-old says he still has "quite a lot of work to do" before he can be competitive in singles again.

"It's baby steps just now," Murray said.

Murray has not played competitively since losing to Roberto Bautista Agutin the first round of January's Australian Open.