



Spain's Alberto Botia consoles teammate Alvaro Dominguez (left) after losing a men's Group D match against Honduras at St. James' Park in Newcastle on Sunday. "All that was lacking today was the goal," coach Luis Milla said in the wake of the 1-0 loss, a rare disappointment for Spain.

NIGEL RODDIS / REUTERS

Settling for everything else

World and Euro champion Spain crashes out of Olympics early

By **AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**
in London

Spain's bid to add an Olympic gold to its world and European titles ended in failure on Sunday with a shocking 1-0 loss to Honduras.



Jerry Bengtson's seventh-minute header at St. James' Park, the striker's third goal in two games, condemned Spain to

an early exit following its opening defeat by Group D leaders Japan.

In a fractious match featuring 13 bookings, Spain's Iker Muniain hit the post and Rodrigo the bar, and a host of Spanish players converged on referee Juan Soto Arevalo after the Venezuelan denied them a late penalty.

Spain coach Luis Milla insisted his side had been unlucky. "All that was lacking today was the goal. I don't want to

say too much, but we feel there should have been a penalty," he said.

Bengtson scored when he rose high to power in Roger Espinoza's driven cross past Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea.

"We played so well to beat Spain," said Bengtson. "It's very nice that we heard the crowd supporting us and shouting 'Honduras, Honduras'."

Gold-medal favorite Brazil came from a goal behind to beat Belarus 3-1 with Neymar turning on the style at a packed Old Trafford on Sunday.

Belarus took a lead in front

of a crowd of more than 66,000 at the home ground of English giant Manchester United, through Renan Bardini Bresnan's eighth-minute header.

But from then on, Brazil, a five-time world champion still seeking its first Olympic gold, saw Neymar take charge.

He crossed for AC Milan star Pato to equalize, before he put Brazil in front with a brilliant 65th minute free-kick and then set up Oscar for the third goal.

Meanwhile, 10-man Senegal opened up Group A with a shock 2-0 win over Uruguay, teenager Moussa Konate scor-

ing twice either side of Abdoulaye Ba's first-half dismissal for a foul on Luis Suarez.

Japan qualified for the quarterfinals with a 1-0 Group D win over Morocco secured by Kensuke Nagai's 84th minute goal.

Asian rival South Korea also enjoyed a 2-1 win over Switzerland to draw level with Group B leader Mexico, which beat Gabon 2-0 thanks to two goals from Tottenham's Giovanni dos Santos.

Egypt's last-eight hopes suffered a setback when it was held to a 1-1 draw by New Zealand.

Giggs asks Welsh not to boo British anthem

By **REUTERS**
in London

Britain's Welsh captain Ryan Giggs hopes fans do not boo the British national anthem when the team plays its decisive group match against Uruguay in Wales on Wednesday.

The anthem could get an icy response in Cardiff because of the Football Association of Wales' opposition to the idea of a British team, which it shares with the Scots and Northern Irish who fear the concept may erode their independence within FIFA, world soccer's governing body.

Many Welsh, Irish and Scottish fans feel the same way. The four parts of the United Kingdom, including England, compete as individual teams in non-Olympic international soccer.

Any snub of the song before the match in Wales would embarrass Britain's Olympic organizers who put Queen Elizabeth at the heart of Friday's opening ceremony with

a virtuoso role as a "Bond girl" alongside James Bond actor Daniel Craig.

Some Welsh players, including Giggs, did not sing *God Save The Queen* before Sunday's game or against Senegal in their opening match on Thursday.

Cardiff-born Giggs, who scored the opening goal in Britain's 3-1 win over the United Arab Emirates on Sunday, hopes Welsh fans don't boo the song even though, in a somewhat convoluted explanation, he said he did not do so for personal reasons.

"It's a personal thing. The British anthem is the same for a Welshman, Scotsman or an Englishman," he said.

"It's difficult, but it's not an issue for us. It might be for other people but, once the game starts, we're all pulling in the same direction and I think that's the main thing."

"I hope it won't get booed and I hope the fans will get behind us as they have in our



Britain's Ryan Giggs celebrates his goal during a first round Group A match against the United Arab Emirates on Sunday.

BEN CURTIS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

first two games."

Giggs, who on Sunday became the oldest player to score in Olympic soccer, was one of five Welsh players in the starting lineup as Britain took a significant step toward the quarterfinals.

They will secure their place in the last eight as long as they avoid defeat against Uruguay, who surprisingly lost 2-0 to Senegal in the first match of Sunday's double-

header at Wembley.

"It will mean a lot to all of the Welsh lads to play in our own stadium, our own backyard, so it will be a great occasion," Giggs said.

The Welshman broke an 88-year-old record by scoring at the age of 38 years and 243 days on Sunday. He also became the oldest man to play in the tournament.

After his goal, the United

Arab Emirates equalized before substitute Scott Sinclair scored with his first touch, and fellow sub Daniel Sturridge made it 3-1 to Britain with a superb chip.

"It was a very important win, especially after the Senegal result and the pressure was on," Giggs said. "I'm still disappointed not to play in a World Cup, a Euros or a major tournament and now this is something I'm relishing."

Manager Stuart Pearce added: "I've been absolutely delighted with the support we've had, certainly in numbers, at Manchester and at Wembley. I think that will continue again in Cardiff."

"I was told this is somewhere in the region of the biggest attendance of an Olympic football match there's ever been. That sends a message out straight away."

"We have to put a performance on that makes the crowds want to come time and time again if we can."

offtrack ...

POLICE LOSE KEY

Police guarding Wembley Stadium, where the Olympic soccer matches are being played, revealed on Monday that they have lost a set of keys to the venue.

Officers searching the stadium in London ahead of the start of the Games misplaced the keys, prompting an investigation by Scotland Yard, but organizers insisted security has not been compromised.

Organizers stressed the keys were for internal doors and the relevant locks have now been changed.

Scotland Yard is not treating the incident as a criminal matter.

A Metropolitan Police spokeswoman said: "On the morning of Tuesday July 24, officers on Olympic police operations at Wembley Stadium reported that internal security keys, being used by them as part of searches, were missing."

CAULDRON LIT AGAIN

The elaborate cauldron at the Olympics opening ceremony, which had been extinguished while it was relocated to another part of the stadium on Sunday, was relit on Monday morning.

The Olympic cauldron — which traditionally burns for the entirety of each Games — was seen unlit within the Olympic Stadium late Sunday.

Jackie Brock-Doyle, director of communications for the London Olympics organizers confirmed to AFP the cauldron had been put out in order to allow it to be moved to a different part of the venue.

CHINESE FOOD HELPS

At 50 years old, Spanish table tennis player He Zhiwen has a simple mantra for staying at the top of a sport reliant on reflexes, speed and agility.

"I take care of myself, I eat Chinese food and I get good rest," the world No 41 said after bowing out of the Olympics in the third round on Monday.

"I lack the speed, but I am really good at serving and the tactical side of things."

The Chinese-born He took up the sport in 1971, 17 years before current world No 1 and Olympic favorite Zhang Jike was born, and competed in Athens and Beijing.

Playing with a particularly awkward-looking pen-hold grip, he nips around the table with cat-like reflexes that belie his age.

His London Olympic campaign ended in disappointment when he was beaten 4-2 by the higher-ranked Adrian Crisan from Romania.



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

REPORTER'S LOG | FU JING

Just like the Games, only much smaller and very far away

While reporting on the London Olympics, I've often found my mind preoccupied with the "Mini Games" recently organized by a Londoner in a poor and remote village in Northwest China's Gansu province.

Days before the London Games opened, my friend Laragh Widdess flew to Gansu as a volunteer English teacher with a group of Chinese university students.

The 27-year-old organized dozens of village children to compete in relay races, sprints and other sports during the seven-day training.

Part of her inspiration, she said, was dealing with her feelings about being away from her hometown while it was hosting the Olympics.

Hosting such a tournament in one of China's poorest provinces is, certainly, largely symbolic. The only facility in the village on the outskirts of Gansu's Baiyin city is an uneven, dusty playground.

"Luckily enough, there is a two-level flagpole base on the playground, and we used it as medal-awarding stage," Widdess said.

Ten days ago, while I was on holiday in Beijing, I attended a meeting, where I heard about the volunteers' experiences.

They told me they had staged an award ceremony with medals after the races.

Standing on the ground, first and top levels of the flagpole base — their makeshift medals podium — the children beamed with pride that seemed to match that of the London Olympics' first winners.

As Widdess showed their

photos and told their stories, the faces of these children — thousands of miles away, and worlds apart, from London — became ingrained in my heart.

Widdess says the children were very excited about doing their own Olympics. They enjoyed the competitive dimension very much and are fond of sports. Some knew the Olympics were happening in London and were interested in the Games but didn't know where London is — or even the United Kingdom, for that matter.

When I asked her if the Mini Games brought the children closer to London, she candidly replied: "I don't think the kids felt closer to London because of our Olympics, since we focused more on the language and culture of sports rather than on London itself. If anything, it was probably talking with me that made them feel closer to London."

Widdess believed that if the 2008 Games hadn't been staged in Beijing, the children might not know about the Olympics, and her Mini Games might not have worked out.

"It may have made them feel closer to Beijing in this sense," she said.

For the children of such a poor village, the memories of a beautiful London girl teaching and awarding medals in this special summer of 2012 will be long lasting.

And these experiences will likely encourage some of those someday to visit London when they grow up.

That's why I encouraged Widdess to teach in Gansu this summer.

Contact the writer at fujing@chinadaily.com.cn.

Is it really Wimbledon if it's noisy and purple?

By **REUTERS** in London

Players do not have to wear white uniforms, the traditional dark-green color scheme on court has been replaced by bright pink and purple, music blares from speakers around the grounds and the crowds are raucous.



Welcome to new-look Wimbledon, the British insti-

tution steeped in traditions the world's top players were very familiar with — until the Olympics rolled into town.

"Wimbledon is so quiet. You don't hear much talking. But here you do hear talking. It's a really big crowd. It's exciting," said Serena Williams, returning to Center Court less than a month after winning her fifth Wimbledon title.

Since the tournament ended, the All-England club

grounds have undergone a complete transformation. As well as the bright colors, Olympic rings now adorn the courts, even hanging from the nets.

"It's just like being in Wimbledon but not being in Wimbledon," mused Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova.

With spectators sporting their country flags, chatting, cheering and clapping at every pause of play, the atmosphere

on court is very different from the usually sedate Wimbledon crowd and more like the US Open in New York.

Not everyone is finding it easy to get used to, with crying babies being asked for "quiet please" by the umpire and spectators shushing the raised voices of international media commentating animatedly from the back of the stands.

"The Wimbledon crowd is

(normally) very mellow and traditional but you go out today and everyone's representing their country, shouting and screaming with flags all over the place," said former Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova who made her Olympic debut on Monday after missing the 2008 Games through injury.

"It's a completely different atmosphere but it's really magical."