Laporte: Next time Morata will score three and shut everyone up

Spain defender Aymeric Laporte has leapt to the defense of team-mate Alvaro Morata, backing the striker to provide the goals the team needs going forward.

Morata had a tough day in front of net, as did the rest of Spain, as La Roja settled for a 0-0 draw with Sweden in a game that saw them set possession records.

Despite the fact that the team was booed by the home crowd in Seville for their lack of composure in front of goal, Laporte says that Morata will "shut everyone up" in the coming days and weeks.

"You can't doubt an attacker like Alvaro, who has already shown a lot," Laporta said of his team-mate after the draw.

"Next time he scores three and shuts everyone up."

Laporta's comments were echoed by manager Luis Enrique, who said he believes Morata was simply unlucky.

"I also heard applause for Morata, and I'll focus on that," Enrique said. "Morata is a great player who does a lot of things very well. No luck today, but that's football and that's life.

"It is easier to play with the public in your favor, and I hope that will change."

Morata may have been a frequent target, but he wasn't the only Spain player on the end of boos from the home crowd.

Despite keeping control of the game, Spain lacked that cutting edge as they started the tournament on a mediocre note.

"I don't understand why they boo," said midfielder Dani Olmo. "The fans have to support us all."

Goal

Inter director says Eriksen did not have COVID and was not vaccinated

Inter Milan director Giuseppe Marotta dismissed suggestions that club midfielder Christian Eriksen, who collapsed in Denmark's Euro 2020 opener against Finland on Saturday, had previously contracted COVID-19 while the Italian club's doctor said he had shown no previous signs of a health issue.

Eriksen, 29, collapsed in the 42nd minute of the match near the touchline after a Denmark throw-in and was given life-saving cardiac massage treatment on the pitch, with officials later saying the player was stable and awake in hospital. read more

"In the next few days, he will undergo thorough examinations. The most important thing is that he is well," Inter team doctor Piero Volpi told Gazzetta dello Sport.

"But there has never been an episode that even remotely hinted at a problem, neither when he was at Tottenham nor at Inter. In Italy the checks are very rigorous."

Sanjay Sharma of St. George's University of London, the playmaker's cardiologist at former club Tottenham Hotspur, also said Eriksen had no prior heart issues during his time with the Premier League side.

However, he told the Mail on Sunday that some players may have had sub-clinical COVID-19 infections, which could have resulted in "scarring" of the heart.

Marotta dismissed that suggestion.

"He didn't have COVID and wasn't vaccinated either," he told Rai Sport.

He said Eriksen was under the guidance of the Danish medical staff and it was for them to release information but Inter had been in touch with them.

"I can say the Inter medical staff have been in contact with them from the start."

Sharma said Eriksen had returned normal tests at Spurs since 2013, but the sight of the player falling to the ground had briefly raised concerns that doctors had missed something.

"I thought, 'Oh my God? Is there something there that we didn't see?' But I have looked at all the test results and everything looked perfect," Sharma said.

"From the day we signed him, it was my job to screen him and we tested him every year. So certainly his tests up to 2019 were completely normal, with no obvious underlying cardiac fault. I can vouch for that because I did the tests."

Former Bolton Wanderers midfielder Fabrice Muamba said that Eriksen's collapse brought back painful memories of his cardiac arrest on the pitch in an FA Cup match in 2012. The ex-England under-21 midfielder had to retire soon after at the age of 24.

"It brought back stuff that I have put down in me, this emotion that's down there. To watch it from that distance and not know what was going to happen," Muamba told the BBC.

"It was scary, but credit to the medical staff. They have done an amazing job on Christian. I like how his team mates got together to protect him.

"I hope things turn out to be okay for him. I hope he'll come through."

reuters

Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder face to face on Tuesday – trilogy fight will begin with mind games

"What I did last time wasn't good enough so I'm changing it up, and we'll look for the knockout," Fury said. "It's a bold move to fight fire with fire."

But there it was, not so much a clue but a clear and obvious declaration from Fury that he intended to perform a 180-degree about-turn with his tactics. Sure enough, he rampaged through a startled Wilder in seven dominant rounds of their rematch.

They will come head to head for the first time since Wilder was left bloodied and floored, his unbeaten record and fearsome aura in tatters, on Tuesday at 9pm to officially announce a trilogy match for July 24 in Las Vegas.

It will be more than an obligatory media event, it is the first chance for warfare to resume, an opportunity for jousting before business picks up.

Their second WBC championship fight seems a lifetime ago in the twisting and turning world of heavyweight boxing - both Fury and Wilder are changed men, we don't yet know if this is for better or worse.

Wilder, feted as the hardest punching boxer ever before he was shellacked by Fury, responded to his first loss with a series of increasingly bizarre conspiracy theories. More worryingly, over a year later he repeated many of the same theories. Time had now mellowed him.

His ring-walk costume was too heavy so tired his legs, Fury illegally tampered with his gloves (shot down strongly by the WBC), his trainer was "disloyal" for throwing in the towel.

Mark Breland has since lost his job in Wilder's corner. Jay Deas, then the head trainer, blamed Breland in the moments after the fight and has retained a role in Wilder's corner. But Malik Scott, once knocked out by Wilder, is his new trainer.

The past 14 months for Fury has been dominated by talk of a fight with Anthony Joshua to crown an undisputed champion which fell at the final hurdle. That inevitable disappointment must be quickly turned into motivation rather than complacency.

"The most dangerous person to be around is the one who has nothing to lose," he has warned.

There is optimism from those around Wilder. His co-manager Shelly Finkel told Sky Sports: "He is definitely capable. Again, no excuses, he wasn't the Deontay we know in that second fight and we'll be looking to surprise the world.

"We're not really that surprised if it happens, but everyone else will and I honestly believe Deontay is going to stop him this time."

Neither Fury nor Wilder have ever looked into the eyes of a man who has beaten them before. On Tuesday evening that will change, and as a result, so will the complexion of the trilogy fight in this compelling rivalry.

Skysport

Ripley softball stands a win from Class AAA state tournament

RIPLEY — Cabell Midland senior first baseman Rielly Lucas launched a moon shot in the fourth inning here Monday evening in game one of the Class AAA, Region IV championship best-of-the three series, but it proved to be the only run for the Knights as host Ripley secured a 4-1 victory.

The 22-5 Vikings, who will try to punch their ticket to next week's state tournament with a win today in Ona, got a two-run double down the left-field line in the first from Ellie Hershey, a solo bomb by catcher Grace Walsh in the second as well as a run-scoring infield single by Cassidy Cummings in the fifth.

"I guess that happens sometimes," quipped Viking right-hander Chloe Shinn, who tossed a three-hitter with a trio of punchouts, of Lucas' 12th round-tripper of the campaign. "It's been great to be able to play and get to play with all these girls who work so hard and are all skilled.

"When Grace got that hit it really got us going and gave us our boost to win. I think tomorrow (6 p.m. first pitch) we'll go in with the same thing but work harder and try to fix the things we messed up today." Leadoff hitter Jess Terry, who allowed seven hits, four earned runs with one base on balls and seven strikeouts, opened the top of the first with an infield single, but was erased when Jenna Dorsey hit into a fielder's choice.

The Vikings then turned a 4-6-3 double play on Lucas thanks to Kaitlyn Swisher, Mckennan Hall and Aalayi Baldwin.

Swisher's double to center was followed by the first of two Belle Carte sacrifices. After Cummings coaxed a walk, Hershey came through with a spinning hard shot over the bag at third to make it 2-0.

400 take part in BMX state qualifier

NEW ULM — Over 400 BMX riders took part in Sunday's State Qualifier races at River Valley BMX.

The state qualifier drew a large crowd from across Minnesota. Many of the race participants and spectators spent the weekend in New Ulm. Camping was allowed in South German Park for the event. A state qualifier race was held in Mankato on Saturday. Many of Sunday's racers had traveled to that event before racing in New Ulm.

Brent Frederick said each BMX track in Minnesota hosts a state qualifier. Riders gain points to determine who can compete in the State Finale in August. It was exciting to hold a qualifier in New Ulm this year. In 2020, the COVID pandemic forced New Ulm's qualifier tournament to be held in Brainerd.

Frederick said this was an example of "Minnesota Strong". BMX tracks across the state came together to support each other last year and continue to do so this year.

Riders came from all over the state to take part in the qualifier, but many were local riders. Cole Frederickson of New Ulm was a celebrity rider at the qualifier. In 2020, he competed in the USA BMX Grand Nationals in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Cole Frederick earned the most points of any amateur male in BMX last season. This means he holds the title National No. 1 Amateur Boy. Cole signed several BMX shirts for fans over the weekend.

Frederick has been riding BMX for nine years, ever since he was 4-years-old. He credits his title to a lot of training. Asked what he liked best about BMX, Frederick said he liked chasing people on the bike. The sport also allows him to travel around the country and bike.

"What could be better than that," he said.

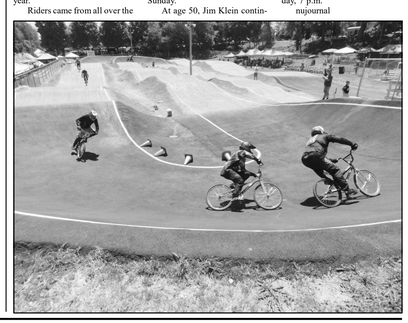
The BMX tournament was not only for youths. The sport allows a wide range of competitors. Riders as young as 2 and as old as 70 were riding Sunday. Several veteran motos were run on Sunday.

At age 50, Jim Klein continues to compete in the veterans expert BMX class. Klein said started competing back in 2014. He originally got into the sport through his sons, who also compete in the sport. It is not unusual for parents and their children to ride in the same tournament.

River Valley BMX's recently saw new upgrades. The starting hill and bank turn on the track were reconstructed and paved. This was a significant improvement as the track no longer needs as much pavement and it improves track safety.

Cole Frederick said he loved the new improvements. It made riding the track better and it decreased the chance of slipping in the turns.

A special open house and ribbon-cutting event will be held to celebrate the improvements at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 17. After the ribbon-cutting registration for a free race will begin. The race will start at 7 p.m.

River Valley BMX holds district qualifying races every Monday. 7 p.m.

nujournal