



Belgium 2-0 Italy as Godts and Lukebakio spoil Manciniâ??s Nations League return

Description

Belgium beat **Italy 2-0** at Stadio Olimpico in Rome on Friday, 25 September 2026, as Mika Godts and Dodi Lukebakio spoiled Roberto Manciniâ??s first Nations League night back in charge and handed Mark van Bommel a winning Belgium debut.



Belgium press Italy's box during the Nations League opener in Rome. Photo: FIGC

The Azzurri were under Mancini again for the first time since he walked away in 2023, in a League A group with France and Türkiye. Belgium arrived with van Bommel in his first match as senior coach, and with Serie A regulars Kevin De Bruyne and Charles De Ketelaere in the starting XI.

Both sides observed a minute of silence for Franco Baresi before kick-off. Italy had chances early. Francesco Pio Esposito hit the base of the post, though he was offside, and Moise Kean tested Senne Lammens from distance. Belgium still found the opener in the 20th minute. Alessandro Romano, on his Italy debut after switching from Switzerland, misplaced a pass. De Bruyne slipped Godts through, and the Paris Saint-Germain forward cut inside Gianluca Mancini before finishing at the near post.

Gianluigi Donnarumma kept Italy alive with a string of saves, including a double stop on De Ketelaere and Nicolas Raskin, then a reaction stop when Godts headed at the back post. Kean forced Lammens into a sharp save from six yards right after the restart, and Pio Esposito was denied at the near post from a NicolÃ² Cambiaghi pull-back. Just as Italy pushed, Belgium struck again.

In the 69th minute Lukebakio, on from the bench, ran from inside his own half on the counter, cut inside and bent a left-foot finish into the far corner from outside the box. Giorgio Scalvini later hit the underside of the bar from point-blank range, but Italy could not force a goal. After the whistle Donnarumma and Romelu Lukaku were both booked in a flash of late tension.

Belgium open the Nations League campaign with three points on the road. Italy start Mancini's second era with a home defeat and an early mountain in the group.

Date Created

26/09/2026

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