



England 4-2 Croatia: Kane Double Fires Three Lions Into World Cup Contention In Dallas Thriller

Description

England returned to the World Cup stage with the kind of performance their supporters have long demanded — chaotic at times, clinical when it mattered most, and ultimately a thoroughly deserved 4-2 victory over Croatia in Dallas to open their Group L campaign in style.

Harry Kane, who carried England's hopes so often without reward, finally got the World Cup start he deserved. Two goals from the Bayern Munich striker helped Thomas Tuchel's side overcome a spirited Croatia side, with Jude Bellingham and Marcus Rashford completing the rout in a pulsating encounter at Dallas Stadium on 17 June 2026.



Harry Kane and Croatia captain Luka Modric ahead of kick-off in Dallas. (© The FA / englandfootball.com)

Kane Opens From the Spot

England started brightly and were rewarded in the 12th minute when Kane stepped up to convert a penalty – his 10th World Cup goal in the process, equalling Sir Gary Lineker’s long-standing record as England’s all-time leading scorer at the tournament. It was a milestone delivered with the minimum of fuss, a simple run-up and a confident finish.

Kane doubled his tally and England’s lead in the 42nd minute, this time from open play, turning and finishing crisply after clever approach work. At 2-0, England appeared to be cruising towards a comfortable win. Croatia, however, had other ideas.

Croatia Fight Back

The 2018 finalists and 2022 third-place side are never straightforward opponents at a World Cup, and they showed exactly why with two goals in the final nine minutes of the first half. Baturina pulled one

back in the 36th minute, and deep into stoppage time, Musa levelled at 2-2 to send Croatia into the break with genuine momentum. It was a reminder that this tournament respects no reputations.



Kane, the Three Lions's all-time World Cup top scorer alongside Gary Lineker. (© The FA / englandfootball.com)

England's Second-Half Dominance

Tuchel's half-time words clearly had an effect. England emerged for the second half a different team – composed, disciplined, and ruthless. Jude Bellingham restored the lead within two minutes of the restart, powering forward in his inimitable style to make it 3-2 and settle English nerves. Marcus Rashford, one of the livelier performers throughout, wrapped up the victory in the 85th minute,

converting with a composed finish to confirm a 4-2 final score.

The result puts England in a strong position in Group L. With Panama and Ghana still to come, Tuchel's side control their own destiny heading into the second round of fixtures.

Kane's Historic Milestone

The headline statistic of the evening belonged to Kane. His brace made him, alongside Gary Lineker, the joint-leading scorer for England at FIFA World Cups with 10 goals. Should he find the net again in the games ahead, he stands alone in the record books. He also became only the second England player to score at three different World Cup tournaments, following in the footsteps of David Beckham, who netted in 1998, 2002, and 2006.

It has been a long road. Kane played in Russia in 2018, where England reached the semi-finals, and in Qatar in 2022. He scored in both, but silverware has always remained just out of reach. In Dallas, the tone was different – assured, purposeful, and full of belief that this time could be England's moment.



Croatia reached the World Cup final in 2018 and finished third in 2022 â?? they remain a formidable side. (Â© The FA / englandfootball.com)

Looking Ahead

For Croatia, the result is not a fatal blow, but it leaves them needing to win their remaining group games to advance. Their quality is not in doubt â?? but their vulnerability to fast, direct opponents was exposed on the night.

England, by contrast, will face Panama and Ghana in the knowledge that a victory over either will likely seal their place in the knockout rounds. Tuchel had spoken at length about building a different England â?? more structured defensively, more consistent in attack â?? and on this showing, the message has been received.

The England team arrived in North America having [navigated a challenging Group L draw](#) with Croatia, Ghana, and Panama. With [a squad built around Kane, Bellingham, Rashford, and Saka](#), expectations are high. Against Croatia in Dallas, they delivered precisely what was asked of them.

Englandâ??s next Group L fixture takes them further through the tournament schedule â?? and with Kane in this form, the rest of the field will be watching closely.

Date Created

18/06/2026

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