



England beat Greece 3-1 in Crete to take control of their Women's World Cup play-off

Description

England beat Greece 3-1 at the Pankritio Stadium in Crete on Friday, 9 October, and take a two-goal lead into the second leg of their Women's World Cup play-off. Georgia Stanway, Maya Le Tissier and Alessia Russo scored for [the Lionesses](#), who are two ties away from a place at Brazil 2027.



Photo: The FA

It was the first time England and Greece had met in senior women's football, and it was not a comfortable night for the European champions. Greece sat in a low block and broke quickly whenever England lost the ball, and Sarina Wiegman's side needed most of the first half to find a way through.

Stanway breaks the low block

The opener came before half-time. Stanway finished neatly inside the area to put England ahead, her first goal of the new season after she finished 2025-26 as the season's top scorer with nine goals.

England went in at the break with only that one-goal cushion, and Stanway admitted afterwards that the game had been “a bit more transitional than what we had hoped”.

Le Tissier’s first England goal

The second half was where England pulled clear. Le Tissier, playing at right-back, had been a threat down the right flank all evening, and she pushed up again to rifle a powerful drive from an angle. Greek goalkeeper Rafaella Petaloti got a hand to it but could not keep it out.

It was the 24-year-old’s first goal for England, and even she was not sure it had gone in. “I thought the keeper saved it but I just smacked it so I’m very glad,” Le Tissier said.



Maya Le Tissier scores England’s second goal. Photo: The FA

Russo added the third soon after, and at 3-0 the tie looked close to settled. Greece then scored late on to give themselves something to take to England.

“I’m not happy with the goal we conceded,” Wiegman said. “At moments in the game we weren’t tight enough, the ball wasn’t moving quick enough, especially when we got the ball a lot

in the pockets and higher up the pitch.â?•

Why England are in the play-offs

England won the Euros in 2025, yet they are in this round because they finished second in their qualifying group behind world champions Spain on goal difference. The Lionesses won five of their six group games, and the only points they dropped came in a 4-0 defeat away to Spain.

Greece reached this round by winning all four of their League C matches, against the Faroe Islands and Georgia.

The second leg in Leicester

The return leg is at the King Power Stadium in Leicester on Tuesday, 13 October, at 7.30pm UK time, which is 2.30am on Wednesday, 14 October in Singapore. England, as the seeded side, play the second leg at home.

The winner meets Slovakia or Ukraine in Round 2, again over two legs, in late November and early December, and the winner of that tie qualifies for the 2027 Womenâ??s World Cup in Brazil.

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Author

jadeyeo