

Why Manchester United vs Tottenham was one of the most underwhelming European finales in recent memory

Postecoglou edged past the travelling circus that is Manchester United to help Tottenham end their 17-year trophy drought in a final which will be forgotten in three months' time by everyone except the Spurs' fans.

On the eve of the Europa League final, Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou had blasted a reporter for a headline which said that the Australian was "teetering between hero and clown". "I'll tell you one thing, irrespective of tomorrow, I'm not a clown and I never will be, mate," he had said. On Wednesday night, Postecoglou edged past the travelling circus that is Manchester United to help Tottenham end their 17-year trophy drought in a final which will be forgotten in three months' time by everyone except the Spurs' fans.

In one of the most dull and meandering finals in recent memory, both teams, who are 16th and 17th in the Premier League table looked like they were playing in a Community Shield clash, rather than one of the top European competitions. Throughout the match, United kept the lion's share of the possession only to pass ponderously to each other in a hope to penetrate a Spurs backline which had the propensity to leak goals. But the white wall held their nerves and while Micky van de Ven made an acrobatic clearance to deny United a sure shot goal and goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario saved a late Luke Shaw header, Spurs were never really threatened by their more decorated counterparts with the Red Devils showing all the accuracy of a faulty cannon.

As opposed to United who had 15 shots but rarely hit the target, Spurs took 3 and scored from one of them as Ruben Amorim's side's defending frailties were on display once again. After captain Bruno Fernandes, who had a rather forgettable outing, conceded possession to Pape Sarr near the centre, Spurs broke quickly with the Senegal star eventually firing in a cross which Spurs defender Brennan Johnson got something on before the ball deflected off Luke Shaw's arm and went into the United net with Andre Onana scampering to clear it. A messy goal which perfectly encapsulated the nature of the match.

The 42nd minute strike was Spurs' last attempt of the match as they went back to defending which would make 2004's Greece proud. United would keep coming at them but with their talisman Fernandes choosing this match to have an off night, the creative bankruptcy of the team was laid bare. Rasmus Hojlund was toothless once again, Mason Mount was invisible while Alejandro Garnacho did little of note in his cameo appearance. It was only when Amad Diallo had the ball in the right wing where United looked mildly threatening but with their main creative output Bruno misfiring, the Ivory coast winger could make little impact in the match.

Moments that will live forever ■ pic.twitter.com/0y5SYSpRo4

— Tottenham Hotspur (@SpursOfficial) May 21, 2025

With the win, Spurs were the latest in a season which will ultimately be remembered for so called underdog teams breaking their longstanding trophy drought joining the likes of Newcastle, Crystal Palace and Bologna. In a sweet ironic twist, former Spurs captain Harry Kane also won his first major trophy in his career when he clinched the Bundesliga with Bayern Munich.

As for United, this was their 7th winless match against Spurs, losing the last 4 matches against them, all of them coming this season with Postecoglou's men continuing to be their bogey team. The infamous "It's Tottenham" speech by Sir Alex Ferguson now seems like lightyears away, such

has been the fall from grace by United.

However, not taking anything away from Tottenham, the Europa finale offered up exactly what you would expect from two teams who look on course to finish the season just above the relegation. For Spurs though, they have silverware which papers over the cracks for the time being. For United, the cracks have turned into crevices which threaten to engulf Amorim's promising management career.