

Soccer News Digest

Ryan TolmichGregg Berhalter fired as USMNT coach in wake of Copa America failureUSAGregg BerhalterTwo years ahead of the World Cup, and in the wake of a failed Copa America, Gregg Berhalter was fired as USMNT coachArticle continues belowArticle continues belowArticle continues belowBerhalter coaching tenure officially comes to endUSMNT eliminated in Copa America group stageMove comes 2 years before World CupArticle continues belowRyan TolmichRough night for Darwin Nunez, Uruguay and Copa America: Winners and losers as postmatch brawl overshadows Colombia's semifinal winWinners & LosersDarwin NunezColombiaRonald AraujoUruguayJames RodriguezCopa AmericaUruguay vs ColombiaFEATURESSoccer took a backseat to a melee in the stands, unfortunately for victors Colombia.?They made an avalanche on our entire family, this is a disaster. We had to stand up for our loved ones?Those were the pleas of defender Jose Maria Gimenez postgame, who witnessed family members of La Celeste, Uruguay players themselves, Colombia fans and organizers scuffle in the stands for more than 10 minutes.Moments after Colombia closed out a 1-0 victory over Uruguay in the Copa America semifinals in Miami, it all went to chaos. An altercation broke out in the stands that included striker Darwin Nunez, defender Ronald Araujo and others clashing with fans.Video replays showed that punches were thrown, objects were tossed and people were struck. It was a dangerous and unsettling scene. And one that marred what has been a damn good game.Colombia showed an incredible amount of heart while down a man, outlasting Uruguay to earn that 1-0 win that sent them to the Copa America final. But what happened post-match certainly dampened what happened during the game.Nunez, Araujo and a several other players could face ramifications, especially after a brawl that seemed to snowball. A video showed Núñez hitting a fan in Colombia team colors, and according to the Associated Press, it took more than 10 minutes for police to restore order. The public address announcer asked for fans to leave the stadium, but several supporters remained.About 100 Uruguayan fans and members of the federation staff remained on the field more than 20 minutes after the game, while Colombia fans made their way out to celebrate.CONMEBOL released a statement after the game saying that it

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strongly condemns any act of violence that affects the game. Our work is based on the conviction that soccer connects and unites us through its positive values," the organization said. "There is no place for intolerance and violence on and off the field. We invite everyone in the remaining days to pour all of their passion into cheering on their national teams and having an unforgettable party." Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa told reporters after the match that he was unaware of the incident, initially. "I thought that the incident ended with some argument on the midfield and when I saw that happening I went to the locker room," he said. "I thought that they were thanking the fans for their support. But then I learned that there were some problems over there unfortunately." Eventually, the focus will return to soccer, and the upcoming clash between Colombia and Argentina with a trophy on the line. Maybe that match will be good enough to establish itself as the defining moment of this tournament, but perhaps not. That unfortunately will probably be Wednesday night's melee. It wasn't supposed to be that way, and it didn't have to be. It was a sad night after what had been generally entertaining Copa America. GOAL takes a look at the winners and losers from Wednesday night, on and off the pitch. Article continues below

Richard Martin

England player ratings vs Netherlands: Ollie Watkins, what a hero! Super-sub sends Three Lions to Euro 2024 final with fabulous late finish

Player ratings

England

Ollie Watkins

European Championship

Netherlands vs England

FEATURE

The striker scored a stunning strike in the 90th minute as Gareth Southgate's side sunk the Dutch in Dortmund

Ollie Watkins became England's man of the hour in Dortmund, biding his time on the bench before delivering a lethal strike to seal a 2-1 win over the Netherlands and send the Three Lions to the Euro 2024 final.

Watkins had only previously played 20 minutes in the tournament, but was called upon with 10 remaining after Gareth Southgate's side's early spark had blown out and they were drifting towards extra-time for the third game in a row. But the Aston Villa striker, receiving a pass from fellow substitute Cole Palmer, took one touch before swivelling and firing into the bottom corner. The goal sent England into a second consecutive Euros final, where they will face Spain on Sunday.

England had produced their best 45

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minutes in Germany, hemming the Dutch into their own final third for large parts of the first half. But they only had a 1-1 scoreline to show for it and their goal was thanks to a generous penalty award from VAR. Harry Kane slotted from the spot after being caught by Denzel Dumfries to cancel out Xavi Simons piledriver. Phil Foden then hit the post and had a shot scrambled off the line by Dumfries, who hit the crossbar at the other end. A thrilling first half made way for a speculative and dull second, the most excitement coming when Bukayo Saka scored but had the goal ruled out for offside. Southgate finally looked to his bench and gave Watkins his chance. The striker certainly took it..GOAL rates England's players from Signal-Iduna Park...Article continues below

Ryan Tolmich Jurgen Klopp rejects approach from U.S. Soccer as USMNT's search for new head coach gets underwayUSA Juergen Klopp Liverpool Jurgen Klopp reportedly turned down an approach from U.S. Soccer as the federation begins its search for a new U.S. men's national team head coach. Article continues below Article continues below Article continues below Klopp rebuffs USMNT approach Berhalter fired after Copa America failure Ex-Liverpool boss one of the top targets Article continues below

Ryan Tolmich Jurgen Klopp, Steve Cherundolo, Thierry Henry and coaches USMNT could target after Gregg Berhalter's exit Analysis FEATURES USAGOAL looks at the candidates U.S. Soccer could consider to lead men's national team toward 2026 What's done is done. The Gregg Berhalter era is officially over. Now, U.S. Soccer must write a new chapter under a new manager as the U.S. men's national team marches towards the 2026 World Cup on home soil. Many will be excited about the possibilities of that new era, but who knows what it will look like? Much will depend on this next coaching hire, especially with so much on the line in 2026. Because of that, this job is an attractive one. Managing a sleeping giant like the U.S. in a home World Cup is a job many coaches will dream of. Ego and pride will drive plenty of candidates toward the role, and each will have their own ideas for what can be done to put this program on the proper trajectory. Depending on the candidate, the role could be a short run to a major tournament or a longer rebuild of a team - and program - that needs it. Which candidates could the U.S. turn to and why could each be the right fit

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for the job? GOAL takes a look. Article continues below

Nico Williams has officially become a target for Barcelona, following President Laporta's announcement on Monday that the club can afford to pursue the Athletic Club forward. The player's arrival has been a dream for both the president and Hansi Flick to strengthen the team, but the main concern was whether Barcelona had the financial capability to execute such a major transfer given their well-documented financial difficulties. Whilst Laporta is confident that the Blaugrana can afford Williams, it's clear that their interest in the forward has a defined limit. President Laporta's statement confirms that Barcelona are in a position to sign Williams, which is crucial as several top European clubs are also vying for the player's signature. By making these public statements, Laporta has made it clear that Barcelona is serious about signing Williams, despite increasing interest from other clubs. Barcelona's financial capability does have limits. The player's release clause is set at 58 million euros, a non-negotiable figure. The real competition will be over the player's salary, where Barcelona may struggle against wealthier clubs. The Catalan giants are aware of this and have no intention of entering into a bidding war, especially if Premier League clubs are involved. Barcelona face stiff competition from Liverpool, Chelsea, and Bayern Munich, as well as the possibility of Paris Saint-Germain entering the fray. PSG, backed by the state of Qatar, can offer Williams a significantly higher salary, posing a major challenge for Barcelona, especially after Kylian Mbappe departed the club. Barcelona plans to leverage aspects beyond financial incentives. The club can offer a welcoming atmosphere, as Williams has strong friendships with current Barcelona players like Lamine Yamal, Pedri, and Ferran Torres. These relationships could play a significant role in persuading Williams to join. Furthermore, there is the fact that Barcelona can guarantee Williams a regular starting position on the left wing, a role currently vacant in their team. In contrast, at PSG, Williams would face tough competition from players like Ousmane Dembele and Bradley Barcola. This assurance of playing time is a crucial factor that could sway Williams towards Barcelona. While Barcelona offers various advantages, the emotional ties Williams has with Athletic Club cannot be overlooked. The Basque club are known for

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its strong emotional connection with its players, and it's possible that Williams might choose to stay with his current club. Barcelona's pursuit of Nico Williams is set to be a challenging endeavor, with fierce competition from several top European clubs. However, by leveraging financial capacity, personal relationships, and guaranteed playing time, Barcelona hopes to secure the promising striker's signature.

BERLIN (AP) ? The quarterfinals and semifinals at the European Championship saw Spain and England prevail to set up a final in Berlin on Sunday. Host nation Germany, Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal and the Netherlands all lost close knockout games to bring their campaigns to an end. Associated Press photographers captured the drama on and off the field. Spain's extra time 2-1 win over Germany had plenty of drama and some controversy when German fans wanted a penalty for handball against Spain's Marc Cucurella. Even with the host nation knocked out, there was still plenty of passionate fan support. France beat Portugal on penalties after a tense goalless draw in their match, before the Netherlands beat Turkey and England eliminated Switzerland in another penalty shootout to end the quarterfinals. Sixteen-year-old Lamine Yamal was the talk of the tournament after his spectacular goal helped Spain to a 2-1 win over France in the first semifinal. England stepped up its game against the Netherlands to reach back-to-back European finals with Ollie Watkins' dramatic stoppage-time goal. Germany's Jamal Musiala, left, shoots the ball against Spain's Marc Cucurella, center, during a quarterfinal match between Germany and Spain at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Stuttgart, Germany, Friday, July 5, 2024. (Tom Weller/dpa via AP)

Germany's Toni Kroos walks off the pitch after a quarterfinal match between Germany and Spain at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Stuttgart, Germany, Friday, July 5, 2024. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

Theo Hernandez of France, right, celebrates with goalkeeper Mike Maignan after scores the winning goal to defeat Portugal during a quarterfinal match at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Hamburg, Germany, Friday, July 5, 2024. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

Kylian Mbappe of France challenges for the ball with Portugal's Joao Cancelo during a quarterfinal match between Portugal and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Hamburg, Germany,

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Friday, July 5, 2024. (AP Photo/Andreea Alexandru) Portugal's goalkeeper Diogo Costa, Pepe and Cristiano Ronaldo, from left, react after losing a quarterfinal match between Portugal and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Hamburg, Germany, Friday, July 5, 2024. France won a penalty shoot out 4-3 after the match ended in a 0-0 draw. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner) England's goalkeeper Jordan Pickford blocks a penalty shot by Switzerland's Manuel Akanji during a quarterfinal match between England and Switzerland at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Duesseldorf, Germany, Saturday, July 6, 2024. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein) Switzerland's Manuel Akanji reacts after missing to score by penalty during a quarterfinal match between England and Switzerland at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Duesseldorf, Germany, Saturday, July 6, 2024. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic) England's Jude Bellingham, right, and England's Trent Alexander-Arnold celebrate after a quarterfinal match between England and Switzerland at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Duesseldorf, Germany, Saturday, July 6, 2024. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic) Wout Weghorst of the Netherlands, right, and Nathan Ake of the Netherlands celebrate after a quarterfinal match between the Netherlands and Turkey at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Berlin, Germany, Saturday, July 6, 2024. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni) Turkey's Abdulkерim Bardakci pulls his shirt over his head after the end of the quarterfinal match between the Netherlands and Turkey at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Berlin, Germany, Saturday, July 6, 2024. The Netherlands won the game 2-1. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader) Turkish supporters celebrate the opening goal as they watch a quarterfinal match between Turkey and Netherlands at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament being played in Berlin, Germany, Saturday, July 6, 2024 at Besiktas stadium in Istanbul. (AP Photo/Francisco Seco) Spain's Dani Olmo celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez) Spain's Lamine Yamal, center, scores his side's first goal during a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. (AP

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Photo/Matthias Schrader) Spain's Lamine Yamal celebrates scoring his side's first goal during a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. (AP Photo/Ebrahim Noroozi) Spain's Dani Olmo celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez) Kylian Mbappe of France reacts after losing a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni) A Spain supporter holds up a poster on the stands at the end of a semifinal match between Spain and France at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Munich, Germany, Tuesday, July 9, 2024. Spain won 2-1. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader) England's Harry Kane celebrates in the arms of teammate Ollie Watkins at the end of a semifinal match between the Netherlands and England at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany, Wednesday, July 10, 2024. England won 2-1. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner) England's Ollie Watkins, right, scores his side's second goal during a semifinal match between the Netherlands and England at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany, Wednesday, July 10, 2024. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner) Wout Weghorst of the Netherlands reacts after a semifinal match between the Netherlands and England at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany, Wednesday, July 10, 2024. England won 2-1. (AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic) England's manager Gareth Southgate celebrates at the end of a semifinal against Netherlands at the Euro 2024 soccer tournament in Dortmund, Germany, Wednesday, July 10, 2024. England won the game 2-1. (AP Photo/Thanassis Stavrakis) ____AP Euro 2024: <https://apnews.com/hub/euro-2024>BERLIN (AP) ? French referee François Letexier was picked by UEFA to handle the European Championship final between Spain and England. At 35, he's one of the youngest referees to take charge of a major final. The game is on Sunday at the Olympiastadion in Berlin. The referees for the past three men's Euros finals were 48, 41 and 41 at the time. Letexier has refereed three games at Euro 2024 including Spain's 4-1 win over Georgia in the round of 16. In

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those games, he did not award a penalty kick and did not send off any player. He showed just 10 yellow cards, including one for Serbia forward Aleksandar Mitrovic, who was judged to have dived in the penalty area in a 0-0 draw against Denmark. There was no video review controversy in any of Letexier's games, including the 2-2 draw between Albania and Croatia. The VAR specialist for the final is also French, Jérôme Brisard. Letexier rarely shows red cards, with just one in the nine games he handled in the Champions League or Europa League last season from the group stage onward. That was to Bayern Munich's French defender Dayot Upamecano. His previous highest profile games for UEFA this season include Real Madrid and Manchester City drawing 3-3 in the Champions League quarterfinals, Bayer Leverkusen winning at Roma 2-0 in the Europa League semifinals, and the season-opening Super Cup last August between Man City and Sevilla.

RELATED COVERAGE Euro 2024 in pictures: Triumph for England and Spain, heartbreak for host Germany 'We all want to be loved:' England coach Southgate savors Euro 2024 semifinal win after criticism Ollie Watkins the unlikely toast of England after last-gasp winner at Euro 2024 Letexier joined the FIFA list of referees for international games seven years ago. The fourth official for the final will be Szymon Marciniak of Poland, the referee at the 2022 World Cup final and 2023 Champions League final who had a controversial season. Marciniak and his match officials team made consequential stoppage-time decisions in Champions League games between Bayern and Real Madrid in the semifinals and Paris Saint-Germain and Newcastle in the group stage. ____AP Euro 2024: <https://apnews.com/hub/euro-2024>MUNICH (AP) ? A year after a high-profile failure to sign Portugal midfielder João Palhinha, Bayern Munich finally made the deal happen on Thursday. Palhinha joins Bayern from English Premier League club Fulham for a reported fee of nearly 50 million euros (\$54.2 million) on a contract through June 2028, the Bavarian club announced. Palhinha, who helped Portugal to the quarterfinals at the European Championship, is the latest signing in a Bayern rebuild after the club's first season without a trophy since 2012. ? Palhinha was highly sought after by FC Bayern even last summer, and rightly so. It was important that we

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never lost touch," Bayern board sporting director Max Eberl said. "João really wanted to come to Bayern, and we need players like that. He's an important building block for our future." Bayern seemed sure to sign the player last year and the midfielder even traveled to Munich for a medical but the deal — reportedly worth 65 million euros (\$70 million) at the time — collapsed just before the end of the transfer window. Thomas Tuchel, Bayern coach at the time, was keen to sign a more defensive-minded midfielder like Palhinha in a squad packed with midfielders like Joshua Kimmich and Leon Goretzka who liked to make attacking runs into the opponent's box. Two weeks after that, Palhinha signed a new contract at Fulham through the 2027-28 season. RELATED COVERAGE

Euro 2024 in pictures: Triumph for England and Spain, heartbreak for host Germany French referee François Letexier picked to handle Spain-England final of Euro 2024 Darwin Núñez, Uruguay teammates enter stands as fans fight after Copa America loss to Colombia Palhinha is the third new signing to be confirmed at Bayern since Vincent Kompany was hired as coach in May, after Stuttgart defender Hiroki Ito and Crystal Palace forward Michael Olise. Bayern has yet to sell any of its current first-team players in this transfer window.____AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Darwin Núñez and about a dozen Uruguay teammates went into the stands as fans brawled at Bank of America Stadium following a 1-0 loss to Colombia in a Copa America semifinal on Wednesday night. After a physical and contentious match, a melee broke out behind the Uruguay bench after Mexican referee César Ramos' final whistle. The crowd of 70,644 was about 90% in favor in Colombia, but a small patch of Uruguay fans fought with Colombia supporters as beverages were thrown. Núñez and teammates then climbed a staircase into the crowd. A video showed Núñez hitting a fan in Colombian team colors. Uruguay captain José Giménez said players went in the crowd to protect their families. "This is a disaster. Our family is in danger. We had to get into the stands to take out our loved ones with small babies, newborns," he told TUDN. "Everything was a disaster. There was not a single police officer." It took more than 10 minutes for police to arrive on the scene and to restore order. The

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public address announcer asked for fans to leave the stadium, but several supporters remained. About 100 Uruguayan fans and members of the federation staff remained on the field for their own protection more than 20 minutes after the game, while Colombia fans made their way out to celebrate. RELATED COVERAGE AP PHOTOS: Fans of Copa America Show their spirit- Photo Collection Colombia beats Uruguay 1-0 and will face Lionel Messi and Argentina in Copa America final Gregg Berhalter fired as U.S. men's soccer coach after Copa America first-round exit CONMEBOL released a statement after the game saying that it strongly condemns any act of violence that affects the game. "Our work is based on the conviction that soccer connects and unites us through its positive values," the organization said. "There is no place for intolerance and violence on and off the field. We invite everyone in the remaining days to pour all of their passion into cheering on their national teams and having an unforgettable party." Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa said he didn't see what was happening right away. "There was some argument in the midfield, and when I saw that happening, I went to the locker room. I thought they were thanking the fans for their support," Bielsa said. "But then I learned there were some problems over there unfortunately."___AP Copa America coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/copa-america>