

## WEST HAM DEAL COLLAPSES

The collapse of the deal for West Ham to buy the Olympic Stadium has left a funding gap of up to £60million needed to transform the venue before it can be leased out.

The stadium will now remain in public ownership and be rented out - almost certainly to West Ham again, according to London mayor Boris Johnson - but that is likely to mean more public money used to make the changes to the venue after the 2012 Games.

The collapsed deal would have seen the £95million cost split with £35million from the Olympics budget, £20million from West Ham and £40million from Newham Council. If similar changes are to be made then only the £35million is guaranteed and a gap of £60million will have to be filled.

Olympics minister Hugh Robertson said the Government pulled the plug on the West Ham deal due to "legal paralysis" caused by court action brought by Tottenham and Leyton Orient.

The biggest issue concerned an anonymous complaint to the European Commission that the £40million from Newham was effectively 'state aid' and therefore broke competition rules.

## Republic seal play-off spot

Giovanni Trapattoni has told his players they must accept whatever the draw for the Euro 2012 play-offs throws at them after seeing them claim a place in the shoot-out.

Tuesday night's 2-1 victory over Armenia at the Aviva Stadium assured Ireland of second place in Group B behind winners Russia.

Two years ago, they were paired with France in the World Cup play-offs and lost out in controversial circumstances in the second leg in Paris.

However, Trapattoni is happy to accept whatever fate sends their way.

He said: "All the second-placed teams are very important. We must accept whichever team."

"The first and second teams in the table are always great teams. But I think it would be better to play the first game away and the second at home."

"We have only done 50% of the job because there is now the play-off."

Ireland ensured their name will be in the hat with a hard-fought victory over Armenia, who caused them problems throughout despite having keeper Roman Berezovsky sent off after just 26 minutes.

# Scotland's 2012 hopes end

Craig Levein claimed he needed more time to prepare his Scotland side for their Euro 2012 qualifying campaign after it ended in Alicante on Tuesday night with a comprehensive 3-1 Group I defeat to Spain.

The Scots needed an unlikely win against the world and European champions to guarantee them a play-off spot or at least match Czech Republic's result in Lithuania, but most of the hope went out of the window after a first-half double from David Silva.

David Villa netted a third in the 54th minute in the Rico Perez Stadium before Scotland substitute David Goodwillie, on for Charlie Adam, scored a consolation goal from the spot after Victor Valdes had fouled Craig Mackail-Smith.

And - with the Czechs winning in Lithuania - it was all over for Scotland, who have not made the finals of a major tournament since the 1998 World Cup in France.

There is no shame in losing twice to Spain - it was 3-2 for the visitors at Hampden - but in

hindsight, Levein must look back at the two points dropped against Lithuania in the opening game and the defeat and draw against the Czechs.

However, the Scotland boss insists he was still trying to assemble his side in the early stages of the campaign.

"I am disappointed we didn't take any points tonight but the harsh reality is that Spain were better," he said.

"It doesn't get much harder than playing the European and world champions at their ground. But I feel we have improved and if we had three or four games before we started the campaign we could have got a better start. But I didn't know my best team then.

"It has taken me over a year to feel we have a strong squad. The campaign started slowly as we tried to establish who were our best players, trying to pull it all together but the second part was better.

"We missed out this time but we are determined not to miss out the next time."

## Wales win again

Wales manager Gary Speed hailed "phenomenal" Gareth Bale after the Tottenham winger proved to be the match winner in their 1-0 victory over Bulgaria at Vasil Levski Stadium.

The 22-year-old grabbed the only goal of the game late in the first half as he cut in from the right to fire a deflected shot past Nikolay Mihaylov in the Bulgaria goal and end the Euro 2012 qualifying campaign on a high.

The recently-crowned Wales Footballer of the Year also hit the bar with a fierce volley as he turned in the latest in a string of superb performances for his country where his trademark pace and trickery have scared full-backs witless.

And Speed readily acknowledged his contribution, particularly on a very heavy pitch.

He said: "Gareth was phenomenal again. The pitch out there tonight did not suit his game, I have played on pitches like that and it's heavy and dead, the grass was long and we said to the players at training last night that if you run with the ball on that you are going to get caught, so to put in a performance like that is phenomenal."

## Worthington finishes with 'fantastic occasion'

There was no redemptive final victory for departing Northern Ireland boss Nigel Worthington against a classy Italy side on Tuesday night, but he was still able to reflect on a "fantastic occasion" to end his tenure.

Worthington announced his decision to step down as manager on Monday but had his heart set on taking something better than a 3-0 defeat against a clearly superior Azzurri side.

Injuries yet again worked against him though, with Craig Cathcart's knee problem reducing him to just 16 fit players to choose from, and an Antonio Cassano brace put the hosts in control before Gareth McAuley's own-goal completed the scoring.

Fans could hardly have expected much better, with inexperienced youngsters like Oliver Norwood, Andrew Little, Jonny Gorman and debutant Conor McLaughlin all pitched into battle against world-class opponents.

Worthington refused to bemoan his ill-fortune - either on Tuesday or over the last four and a half years - and attempted, for a final time, to locate the positives.

"I don't look at bad luck, you make your own luck in football," he said.

## TUESDAY'S RESULTS

## EURO 2012 QUALIFYING

## Group B

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
FYR Macedonia	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Rep of Ireland	2	1	0	0	1	0	3
Russia	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Russia	10	7	2	1	17	4	23
Ireland	10	6	3	1	15	7	21
Armenia	10	5	2	3	22	10	17
Slovakia	10	4	3	3	7	10	15
Macedonia	10	2	2	6	8	14	8
Andorra	10	0	0	10	1	25	0

## Group C

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Italy	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	10	8	2	0	20	2	26
Estonia	10	5	1	4	15	14	16
Serbia	10	4	3	3	13	12	15
Slovenia	10	4	2	4	11	7	14
N. Ireland	10	2	3	5	9	13	9
Faroes	10	1	1	8	6	26	4

## Group G

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Bulgaria	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
England	8	5	3	0	17	5	18
Montenegro	8	3	3	2	7	7	12
Switzerland	8	3	2	3	12	10	11
Wales	8	3	0	5	6	10	9
Bulgaria	8	1	2	5	3	13	5

## Group I

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Lithuania	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
Spain	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Spain	8	8	0	0	26	6	24
Czech Republic	8	4	1	3	12	8	13
Scotland	8	3	2	3	9	10	11
Lithuania	8	1	2	5	4	13	5
Liechtenstein	8	1	1	6	3	17	4

## FINALISTS

Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy, Russia, Spain, Sweden

Co-hosts - Poland, Ukraine

## PLAY-OFF TEAMS

Turkey, Republic of Ireland, Croatia, Montenegro, Norway, Czech Republic, Estonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina

(Play-off draw on Thursday)

## EURO U-21 QUALIFYING

## Group Three

Wales 0-1 Czech Rep

## Group Seven

Liechtenstein 1-4 Rep of Ireland  
Italy 2-0 Turkey

"Overall we have done exceptionally well for what we've got and to play against quality opposition like the Italians tonight... what a fantastic occasion, from my own point of view."

"What a fantastic game to finish on against a top quality side like Italy. And what an occasion for those youngsters, too."

"Take Conor McLaughlin, capped tonight for his country against Italy at the age of 18. That is outstanding."

"We had many youngsters out there tonight. There were seven or eight senior players missing and everyone out there put a real shift in. I'm really proud of them."

## Flynn: Czechs taught us a lesson

Wales Under-21 boss Brian Flynn thought his team were taught a lesson by the Czech Republic on Tuesday night.

Wales' hopes of qualifying for the 2013 UEFA Under-21 Championship suffered a blow as they went down to a 1-0 loss at the Racecourse Ground.

Impressive Sparta Prague forward Vaclav Kadlec grabbed the only goal after just five minutes but the technically proficient Czechs, with Vladimir Darida inspirational, created several other chances.

The match was watched by representatives of numerous Barclays Premier League clubs, including Liverpool director of football Damien Comolli, and Flynn felt there were many good players on show.

Flynn said: "It was a sloppy goal to start off with which disrupted us."

"They caused us many problems in the first half and I was quite happy to come in at half-time 1-0 down because we could sort things out."

"We were better second half, we did cause them a few problems but in their relatively short careers, that is the best team they have played against."

## Collins sparks win

James Collins' hat-trick earned the Republic of Ireland Under-21 side a thumping 4-1 win in Eschen to boost their Euro 2013 qualifying hopes.

The Shrewsbury striker notched three times in eight minutes in the first half as Noel King's side overturned a one-goal deficit to close to within three points of group leaders Turkey with a game in hand.

Simon Pirker gave the home team a 14th-minute lead but it lasted only 12 minutes as Manchester United winger Robbie Brady, who has impressed on loan at Hull this season, delivered a near-post corner which was headed home by Collins.

Greg Cunningham delivered the cross for the second goal and Collins, who played an instrumental role in the Shrews' giant-killing run in this season's Carling Cup, completed his hat-trick in the 34th minute.

Everton defender Shane Duffy rounded off the scoring shortly before half-time with a powerful header and, though there was no addition to the score in the second period, the Republic were able to celebrate a comfortable win.

## Reds seeking TV rights overhaul

Liverpool are prepared to lead a challenge for Barclays Premier League clubs to sell overseas television rights individually, according to managing director Ian Ayre.

The league's broadcast rights outside of the United Kingdom are presently sold in a joint package, which is worth £3.2billion for 2010-13 to be shared equally among the 20 clubs.

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## NASRI RESCUES LES BLEUS

Samir Nasri came to the rescue to send France through to the Euro 2012 finals after Bosnia-Herzegovina had threatened to pull off an upset at the Stade de France.

Edin Dzeko's stunning 40th-minute strike looked set to be enough to send Bosnia to the finals before his Manchester City team-mate Nasri was tripped in the box 12 minutes from time and got up to coolly convert the spot-kick.

Nasri's goal guaranteed France their place in Poland and Ukraine next summer while disappointed Bosnia must settle for a place in the play-offs.

But Ayre claims the system is unfair on the higher-profile clubs, arguing they attract more viewers and more subscriptions, and advocated the adoption of the Spanish model.

There, individual clubs have the freedom to negotiate their own packages, meaning Real Madrid and Barcelona's earnings will dwarf those of the lesser Primera Division teams - and those of the top English sides, who are restricted to their share of the league's earnings.

Ayre said: "Personally I think the game-changer is going out and recognising our brand globally. Maybe the path will be individual TV rights like they do in Spain."

"If you're a Bolton fan in Bolton, then you subscribe to Sky because you want to watch Bolton. But if you're in Kuala Lumpur there isn't anyone subscribing to Astro or ESPN to watch Bolton, or if they are it's a very small number."

"The large majority are subscribing to watch Liverpool, Manchester United, Chelsea or Arsenal."

## Ferguson calm over Rooney

Sir Alex Ferguson has refused to condemn Wayne Rooney for his latest red card.

Ferguson is expecting to see Manchester United's star striker on Wednesday for the first time since Rooney was sent off for lashing out in Montenegro.

The incident has already led to a minimum one-match ban and a warning from Fabio Capello that the 25-year-old may not find it easy to win his place back at Euro 2012.