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## Euro 2020 Final (Italy v England)

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While the European Championship final is unfamiliar territory for England, Italy got tanked the last time they made it to this stage as Spain were comfortable 4-0 winners in 2012. However, that was an extraordinary La Roja side that dominated the world scene and the showpiece event is rarely so one-sided. Eight of nine finals since 1984 have featured fewer than three goals over 90 minutes, with five of the last six ending either 0-0, 1-1 or 1-0.

Past head-to-heads would suggest a similar type of scoreline, with seven of 10 clashes since 1997 also seeing a maximum of two goals, while none of them exceeded three strikes. In fact, only one of 14 meetings going all the way back to 1980 have been settled one way or the other by more than a single goal. That includes each of the past eight clashes as Italy have enjoyed a W3-D4-L1 record, though the past decade has been a more even W1-D3-L1, with both meetings since 2015 ending 1-1.

The most recent encounter came in Italy's final game before Roberto Mancini was appointed. Under the former Man City and Inter boss, they've now strung together a 33-game unbeaten streak, winning 26 of them inside 90 minutes, including 12 of the last 14. As formidable as that is though, Italy have only had five encounters with teams currently in the top 10 according to FIFA's world rankings under Mancini, going W1-D2-L2, while they were a tad fortunate that Spain's profligacy in front of goal let them off the hook last time out.

England are similarly difficult to overcome with just three defeats in 34 appearances now, winning 10 of the last 12 as they've only conceded twice. In this tournament alone they're yet to concede from open play, and with Gareth Southgate preferring a risk-averse strategy, it would be a real surprise if this game was an open affair. Jordan Pickford is the only goalkeeper with more clean sheets to his name than Italy's Gianluigi Donnarumma, and both will fancy their chances of adding another to their collection.

England have won 18 of their last 21 home games, though have been level at the break in six of the last seven on their own soil and with neither side seemingly set to start in expansive fashion, the half-time draw makes sense. In fact, six of the last eight 10 head-to heads have been level at the break, with four of these goalless at that stage.

Italy may have had the extra day to recover, though both sides had to endure extra time in their semi-finals, while Roberto Mancini's side have also played more football over the course of the tournament having also been taken the distance by Austria. In any case, having an extra day to prepare appears to have made little difference down the years, with the side seemingly benefiting from such a scenario only lifting the trophy in four of the last eight editions of this tournament.

The combined age of 70 between their centre-back pairing of Giorgio Chiellini and Leonardo Bonucci could also be a concern for Italy. Harry Kane will hope to move the pair around with his movement and allow for the quicker wide men to exploit the spaces created, but he may also look to how Dani Olmo was utilized as a false nine for Spain. Chiellini and Bonucci relish the physical battle, but didn't appear so comfortable when being encouraged to push up on a deeper lying forward – something Kane has been excellent at for both club and country as he gets involved in linking the play.

Another route that could prove useful for England is at set-pieces. Harry Maguire didn't even play the first two matches, but has since registered seven attempts on goal and is always going to be a threat in the opposition box. He should have scored one against Germany, did so against the Ukraine, while only a fingertip save from Kasper Schmeichel denied him last time out. His four attempts on target this summer account for just over 15% of England's on-target efforts, and looks over-priced to get on the scoresheet as a result.

Leonardo Spinazzola remains the only major injury concern and that should also help keep the scores down. Emerson Palmieri is a decent replacement but not inclined to bomb forward quite so much, while the lack of a marauding full-back on the outside appears to have curbed Lorenzo Insigne's effectiveness down that left flank. Moreover, if as many expect, Southgate switches to a back three when facing elite opposition, that should help keep the scores down even more.

With a low-scoring final expected this one could easily go to extra time and that should benefit England, who not only have the home crowd to bolster tired legs, but also an array of attacking talent that leaves Gareth Southgate with greater options from the bench. Three of the past six European finals have gone to extra time, so for England football may finally be coming home.

[HT Draw @ 1.91, SBK](#)

[0.5pts: England in Extra Time @ 11, Bet 365/Sky Bet/SBK](#)

[0.25pts: Harry Maguire Anytime @ 17, Bet 365/William Hill/Vbet](#)