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Fifa Women's World Cup final 2023: Spain beat England to claim maiden World Cup title

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By Michael Burgess at Stadium Australia

Football's not coming home – not yet.

Instead, the coronation is complete for La Roja.

Spain are the 2023 Fifa women's world champions, with a thoroughly deserved 1-0 victory in a dramatic final against England on Sunday night.

After a wonderful tournament, this was the appropriate finale; a match that stretched on for 105 minutes, that was full of drama, quality, and plenty of magic.

A superb Olga Carmona goal in the 29th minute was the difference, as the Spanish captain found the bottom corner following an incisive move.

Spain outplayed England for long periods with magnificent, sharp possession football as the Stadium Australia field became their canvas.

But they were wasteful. Teenager Salma Paralluelo could have had a hat-trick on another night, while England goalkeeper Mary Earps had a match for the ages, an almost impregnable wall as she made a number of crucial saves, including a second-half penalty stop from Jennifer Hermoso.

England had a couple of good opportunities, including a strike that hit the crossbar in the first half, but lacked a cutting edge and were flattered by the final scoreline.

It's a remarkable feat for Spain, in only their third World Cup. They came back from a 4-0 group stage defeat by Japan and got stronger and stronger, battling through against the Netherlands and Sweden.

In contrast England were outclassed against the first major European nation they faced, after the impressive semi final win over Australia.

After a brief but moving closing ceremony, the action got underway. There were two pockets of Spanish support near halfway but they were vastly outnumbered by large blocs of English support.

All predictions of a cagey final went out the window early. Both teams showed attacking intent, wanting to make things happen.

Paralluelo almost got free, while Alessia Russo forced a corner after some casual play on the edge of the Spanish area.

The tone was set as early as the 13th minute after a wonderful sweeping move by Spain, though Paralluelo couldn't find the cross.

England were unlucky not to open the scoring three minutes later, as Lauren Hemp's first-time shot rattled the woodwork with Spanish goalkeeper Cata Coll beaten.

But from there Spain dominated. They should have scored soon afterwards, as a cross flashed across the six-yard box but Alba Redondo sent her shot straight at Mary Earps after Paralluelo had missed the driven ball.

Something was coming though, and Spain got their reward with Carmona's stunning strike.

It came after England fullback Lucy Bronze was dispossessed near halfway after she ran and ran and ran into trouble. Spain snapped into gear, with Mariona Caldentey sprinting down the left channel before releasing an overlapping Carmona, who produced the finish of her life to find the bottom corner from a narrow angle.

England tried to respond, but were limited to counterattacks. Spain had more chances, with defender Irene Paredes hooking a rebound wide, while Aitana Bonmati miscued a cross after a fast break. They were inches away from extending their lead just before the break, with Paralluelo finding the base of the post, after a rapid incursion from the right.

England had to change something, and introduced Lauren James and Chloe Kelly, with Rachel Daly and Russo sacrificed. Hemp had a great chance at the far post – directing

her shot wide – but Spain still dominated, with Caldentey and Bonmati both creating good opportunities.

The flashpoint of the second half came with Hermoso's missed penalty in the 70th minute. The spot kick was awarded – via a lengthy VAR referral – after the excellent Caldentey had coaxed Keira Walsh into the slightest handball. It was a correct, though tough call. But Earps saved brilliantly to her left, anticipating Hermoso's tentative shot.

That produced one of the biggest cheers of the night as England were visibly lifted, and then James powered her way through, with Coll doing well to tip her shot over.

From there the game stretched out. England threw bodies forward, while Spain tried to contain but also counter. The Spanish looked more likely, but with every miss, the tension grew.

Could England steal a late equaliser?

There were moments, especially when Hemp hared down the right in the dying stages, but her cross eluded everyone. Earps came forward for one last corner, which Coll snaffled, before the referee blew the whistle to start the Spanish celebrations.

Spain 1 (Olga Carmona)

England 0

FT: 1-0