

ARGENTINA WORLD CUP 1978 / First Round  
Mendoza, Estadio Ciudad de Mendoza, 11 June 1978

## SCOTLAND - HOLLAND

3-2

### GEMMILL'S SUPER GOAL

Apart from the spectacular round A, in which Italy, Argentina and France had produced some exceptional matches, there had been no shortage of surprises in the other three rounds of the World Cup. Group C was surprisingly won by Schachner and Krankl's Austria ahead of second-placed Brazil, while Group B was won by Boniek and Deyna's Poland ahead of defending champions West Germany. In Group D, before the last match, Holland and Peru were practically qualified for the second round: against Scotland, Holland could also have lost, but with a maximum two-goal difference. By virtue of goal difference, should Scotland win by 3 goals, Holland would have been eliminated and Scotland would have gone through. An eventuality that was considered impossible given the tactical mastery of the Orange led by Ernst Happel and the shoddiness shown by Scotland against Peru (1-3) and Iran (1-1). But the unprejudiced attitude of the Scots immediately put the Netherlands on their guard, who in the first minutes of the game suffered a real onslaught: in the 4th minute, Buchan's free kick from the right and Rioch's header hit the crossbar. In the 13th minute Scotland scored through Dalglish, who swept in like lightning to intercept Krol's header and anticipated Jongbloed's exit, but the referee cancelled for a push on his marker Rijsbergen. Meanwhile, the Netherlands had lost one of their best men, Neeskens, who was forced off after just 10 minutes when he was hit in a clash with the vehement Scots, who were fighting on every ball. The Netherlands defended neatly, applying an exasperated offside trap, bordering on perfection, which managed to keep Scotland frequently away from their own area, despite their clear dominance in ball possession. On the half-hour mark, Willy Van de Kerkhof anticipated Dalglish and advanced chest-deep into the opponent's three-quarter, then served Rensenbrink unmarked on the left and the Scottish goalkeeper Rough catapulted to anticipate him outside the area, blocking the ball with his hands. Today it would be an expulsion foul, but in those days the rules were not so strict: a simple free kick from outside the area that did not pay off for Holland. Shortly afterwards, Scotland full-back Kennedy was in the thick of things, he had the ball blown away by Rep at the three-quarter line and chased down "Handsome Johnny" before knocking him down in the box with a reckless slide: penalty for Holland. Rensenbrink went to the penalty spot and made no mistake, scoring the historic goal number 1,000 at the World Cup and extinguishing Scotland's remaining hopes. But woe betide a Scotsman (do you know William Wallace, more commonly known as Braveheart?): in the 35th minute Donachie came forward on the left and centred a cross for Jordan, the striker barely touched it but behind him came Rioch's left-footed volley and Jongbloed was forced into a spectacular intervention to prevent the equaliser. The equalizer arrived before the end of the half, the culmination of a remarkable Scottish forcing: Souness threw Jordan well into the area, the "Shark" (a nickname deriving from the terrifying smile of the striker, who had no incisor teeth) overpowered Suurbier in the aerial break and handed the free Dalglish a golden ball, transformed into a goal with a spectacular volley at the crossbar of the posts. The Netherlands also lost Rijsbergen to injury and at the start of the second half there was immediately a penalty kick for Scotland: Dalglish's cross from the right, Jordan's new pass from an expert in aerial play, Souness's insertion being pushed by Krol to help Jongbloed out. Penalty not

It was a very clear-cut goal, but one that could stand. The expert Archie Gemmill, the inexhaustible little spinner who was the protagonist of Nottingham Forest's historic victory in the English First Division this season as a newly-promoted player, was in charge of the shot: it was the 2-1 goal. Holland realised they couldn't just manage the result and finally got into the game, Rep firing a right-footed shot from outside the box in the 49th minute that Rough parried in the dive. The Scots believed and multiplied their forces, Holland were forced into many fouls to curb their momentum. In the 68th minute Gemmill received the ball from Dalglish on the right, moved to the centre and with a sudden change of direction, skipped past Krol with a tunnel and Poortvliet on the dribble, deceiving the entire Dutch defence who were coming up with the offside trap expecting the cross; thus with this masterful play he found himself alone in front of Jongbloed, who he smashed home with a left-footed touch. A sensational goal that sent the Scottish fans into ecstasy: 3-1 and the miracle was now within reach. The Scots still need a goal, these are moments of great emotion. Boskamp kicked a free kick from the right and the Scottish goalkeeper came up empty, Kennedy found the ball on him and almost made a sensational own goal. But a minute later Rep advanced centrally and then unleashed a great right-footed shot from outside the area that went unstoppable into the crossbar, extinguishing Scotland's dreams of glory: it was 3-2. Scotland's momentum faded in the final minutes, aware by now of the impossibility of the goal and tired from all that had been spent during the great comeback. In the 87th minute the Netherlands went close to equalising with René Van de Kerkhof, who from a far left position, instead of crossing, tried to surprise Rough at the first post, but the ball crossed the goal line and went wide. In the final minute Forsyth's header went just wide from a good position and the referee blew the whistle for the end. Holland and Scotland finished on equal points but Holland went through and Scotland went home on goal difference. However, this match will remain in the memory for the most beautiful goal of the '78 World Cup, that of Archie Gemmill, and for the admirable Scottish pride that almost bent the strong Netherlands. To date, Scotland have never made it past the first round at either the World Cup or the European Championships.

SCOTLAND: Rough 6, Kennedy 5, Donachie 7, Buchan 7, Forsyth 6.5, Rioch 7, Gemmill 8, Dalglish 7, Jordan 7, Hartford 7, Souness 7. All. Alistair McLeod.

HOLLAND: Jongbloed 6, Poortvliet 5.5, Suurbier 5.5, Rijsbergen 6 (*from 45' Wildshut 6*), Krol 5, Jansen 5.5, Rep 7, Neeskens sv (*from 10' Boskamp 6.5*), Rensenbrink 6.5, René Van de Kerkhof 6, Willy Van de Kerkhof 6.5. Manager: Ernst Happel.

Referee: Linemayr (AUT) 6.5

On 34' Rensenbrink (Rig.) 0-1; on 44' Dalglish 1-1.

On 47' Gemmill (Rig.) 2-1; on 68' Gemmill 3-1; on 71' Rep 3-2.



*Gemmill after a sensational action scores the Scottish hopeful goal.*