Kane celebrates 100th cap with brace as England sink Finland

AFP – Harry Kane celebrated his 100th England cap in memorable style as the striker's superb double sealed a 2-0 win against Finland in the Nations League on Tuesday.

England captain Kane struck with a pair of eye-catching finishes in the second half at Wembley to mark the latest landmark in his remarkable career.

The 31-year-old is the 10th man to reach a century of England appearances, joining the likes of David Beckham and Bobby Moore in the exclusive club.

Goalkeeper Peter Shilton holds England's caps record with 125 appearances, while Wayne Rooney is the country's most capped outfield player on 120, and it would be little surprise if Kane passed both of them.

He is only the third England player to score on their 100th appearance after Rooney against Slovenia in 2014 and Bobby Charlton against Northern Ireland in 1970.

Kane became England's record scorer in March 2023 and the Bayern Munich striker now has 68 goals for his country.

Inspired by the longevity of Portugal striker Cristiano Ronaldo, who recently scored his 901st career goal, and NFL legend Tom Brady, Kane shows no signs of easing up in his record-setting career.

It was a perfect night for the former Tottenham star, who led England onto the pitch alongside his two of children before kick-off and was presented with a commemorative gold cap by fellow Three Lions centurions Frank Lampard and Ashley Cole.

“His finishing is very good, even in training. It’s not a surprise when he scores goals as his habits are so good,” England interim boss Lee Carsley said.

“The way he trains and conducts himself, he is a great example for the rest of the players.”

While Kane took the spotlight, it was also another encouraging game for Carsley, who oversaw a 2-0 victory against Ireland in his first game in charge on Saturday.

Carsley is the first England manager to win his first two competitive games since Fabio Capello in 2008.

The 50-year-old, who replaced Southgate following his resignation after the Euro 2024 final loss to Spain, has deployed an attacking game-plan that stands in stark contrast to his predecessor’s conservative tactics.

– Midas touch –

Whether that will be enough to earn him the job on a permanent basis remains to be seen, but his impressive start has given the Football Association food for thought before England return to action against Greece in October.

“I’m totally relaxed about the situation. I have got to do a good job,” Carsley said.

“We have shown ourselves that we can do it. We can put ideas in place and the players have responded really well.”

Showing faith in the players he worked with as England Under-21 coach, Carsley gave a first Three Lions start to Lille midfielder Angel Gomes, who gave a made solid impact, while Chelsea winger Noni Madueke set up Kane’s second goal after coming off the bench for his debut.

Carsley’s previous visit to Wembley was to watch Bruce Springsteen earlier this year and, while England might not

have put on a show to match the other ‘Boss’, they had a headline act of their own in Kane.

Wearing gold boots, Kane turned the Nations League Group B2 tie in rain-lashed north London into the latest demonstration of his midas touch.

After being denied by a tight offside call in the first half and several fine saves from Finland keeper Lukas Hradecky, Kane got the goal he craved in the 58th minute.

Taking Trent Alexander-Arnold’s pass 20 yards from goal, Kane deftly shifted the ball into space before unleashing a blistering strike that cannoned into the net off the underside of the crossbar.

Kane’s 26th goal in 35 Wembley appearances for England was swiftly followed by his 27th in the 76th minute.

Running to Alexander-Arnold’s pin-point pass, Madueke teed up Kane with a low cross that the striker slotted home in typically predatory fashion from 12 yards.

Capping a night to remember, Kane exited to a standing ovation when he was substituted moments later.

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