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Socceroos outclassed by France in first World Cup game in Qatar, with 4-1 scoreline putting Australia in deep hole

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French wingers Kylian Mbappé and Ousmane Dembélé were constantly threatening the Socceroos defence. *(Getty Images: Patrick Smith/FIFA)*

The Socceroos' chances of getting out of their group are in immediate strife after a heavy loss to France to kick off their Qatar World Cup campaign.

Already long odds to finish in the top two of Group D alongside the French reigning champions, Denmark and Tunisia, the Socceroos were not helped by a 4-1 loss to Les Bleus at Al Janoub Stadium.

It came on the back of a 0-0 draw between Denmark and Tunisia, leaving Australia last in the group after the first day of matches.



Paris Saint Germain superstar Kylian Mbappé was constantly threatening and played a part in three of France's goals, with fellow winger Ousmane Dembélé also influential and Olivier Giroud's double equalling Thierry Henry's record of 51 goals for France.

"They're world champions for a reason," Socceroos coach Graham Arnold said.

"The first half we did well, second half we ran out of legs a bit."

And it had started so well.

Australia shocked France by taking the lead in the ninth minute, when defender Harry Souttar unleashed Mat Leckie down the right wing with a sensational diagonal ball over the top, and Leckie's cross was poked into the top of the net by Adelaide United captain Craig Goodwin at the far post.



Craig Goodwin's opening goal seemed to shock France into action. (Getty Images: Patrick Smith/FIFA)

That might have given the Australians hope of [emulating Saudi Arabia's upset of a global football power from mere hours earlier](#), especially as France lost defender Lucas Hernandez to a non-contact leg injury as he tried to stop the goal.

But it all seemed to awaken a sleeping giant, as France's world-class talent began to make an impact.

The pressure eventually told when, after reloading from a cleared corner, Hernandez's brother, Theo, crossed into the box and Adrien Rabiot nodded the ball past Mat Ryan.



Five minutes later, a costly turnover from Nathaniel Atkinson deep in Socceroos territory, followed by some neat interplay between Rabiot and Mbappé, led to Giroud's 50th international goal and a 2-1 lead for France.

It could have, and probably should have, been 3-1 just before half-time when Mbappé missed two-thirds of open goal after a neat run and cross from Antoine Griezmann.

At the other end, Jackson Irvine came within a whisker of equalising as he hit the post with his header, but the first half ended with the same final scoreline as the corresponding match in Russia four years earlier.



Olivier Giroud's 50th goal for France gave them a crucial first-half lead and it only got worse for Australia from there. *(Getty Images: Robert Cianflone)*

Giroud almost added a stunner with a bicycle kick to start the second half, but his miss did little to relieve the pressure on Australia, led largely by the pace and skill of wingers Mbappé and Dembélé.

They combined for France's third in the 68th minute, when Mbappé nodded home a cross from Dembélé, and Mbappé turned distributor three minutes later when he skinned Atkinson before breaking down the

left wing and curling in a perfect cross for Giroud to head home and equal the French goal-scoring record.

The tiring Socceroos held off a few more attacking raids before the full-time whistle and now need to prepare for their second match against Tunisia on Saturday night (AEDT).



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