Beat: Sports

Barça survives the hell of El Sardinero and seals the ticket to the quarterfinal

King's Cup of Spain Soccer

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USPA NEWS - A goal from Ferran Torres and the agonizing sentence from Lamine Yamal (0-2) ended the dream of a Racing de Santander that made the Super Cup champion tremble. Joan García, with a miraculous save in the 94th minute, avoided extra time.

FC Barcelona survived one of the most hostile atmospheres in Spanish football on Thursday night, edging past Racing Santander 2–0 in a Copa del Rey tie that demanded resilience more than brilliance. Goals from Ferran Torres and Lamine Yamal were enough to eliminate the Segunda División leaders, but the scoreline hides how close the Catalans came to collapse.

For long stretches, Hansi Flick's side were second?best in intensity, structure and emotional control. Racing, backed by more than 22,000 fans in a packed and delayed Sardinero, delivered the kind of performance that has made them one of the most compelling stories in Spanish football this season: disciplined without the ball, fearless with it, and tactically mature beyond their category.

A Test of Barcelona's Depth and Nerve

Flick rotated heavily, trusting academy midfielders Casadó and Bernal to dictate the tempo. Instead, they were suffocated by Racing's aggressive pressing and positional discipline. The hosts' defensive pairing of Castro and Hernando neutralized Marcus Rashford, while Suleiman and Arana repeatedly exposed Barcelona's defensive transitions.

Despite enjoying 77% possession in the first half, Barcelona produced little of substance. Racing's counterattacks were more threatening than any of Barça's long spells on the ball, forcing Pau Cubarsí into several interventions that prevented the match from tilting early.

Moments, Not Control, Decide the Tie

The breakthrough came only after Flick introduced Fermín López, whose verticality immediately changed the rhythm. His line?breaking pass in the 66th minute allowed Ferran Torres to score the opener with the composure of a veteran forward.

But the match's defining sequence arrived deep into stoppage time. Racing, emboldened by two disallowed goals from Manex Lozano, launched a final assault that nearly forced extra time. Lozano again found himself alone in front of Joan García, only for the Barça goalkeeper to produce a save that will live long in the club's season narrative. Seconds later, with Racing fully committed and their goalkeeper in the opposing box, Lamine Yamal finished a counterattack to seal the result and claim the MVP award.

A Victory That Raises as Many Questions as Answers

Barcelona advance, but not unscathed. Flick's team showed character under pressure, yet their structural issues against organized, energetic opponents remain evident. The German coach acknowledged as much afterward, praising his players' composure while implicitly recognizing the fragility of the performance.

For Racing, the elimination carries a different tone. José Alberto López's side confirmed that their leadership in Segunda División is no accident. Their tactical clarity, physical commitment and emotional maturity suggest a team ready for top?flight football. The coach's post?match message — frustration mixed with pride — reflected a group that competed on equal terms with one of Europe's giants.

A Glimpse of Spain's Footballing Ecosystem

Beyond the result, the match offered a snapshot of Spanish football's competitive depth. A second?tier club pushed Barcelona to the brink, not through romanticism but through structure, identity and ambition. For Barça, the night was a reminder that the Copa del Rey remains a tournament where hierarchy guarantees nothing. For Racing, it was proof that their project is built on more than momentum.

Barcelona move on with scars and lessons. Racing leave with credibility and conviction. Both, in their own way, strengthened their season's narrative.

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