

My most memorable match

IT WAS the morning of the Cup.

December 23, 1977. I'll never forget the date.

A third-round match, with Bayern Munich playing host to the mighty Derby — unbeaten by foreign teams and all-comers in the first division bar the even mightier Liverpool.

I was buzzing with expectation.

This was a chance for the newcomers to show the big boys they had arrived.

The pitch was immaculate, an emerald oasis which had been tended with loving care for this day.

As the two teams lined up there were a few nervous glances between the players. Those on the sideline felt the tension.

Early exchanges were even, with the Bayern defence brilliantly marshalled by Beckenbauer, cutting off long balls here, sliding into position there to plug a gap.

Sepp Maier was at his best too. A shot on the run from Hector, a snap drive from Todd, both deftly turned away.

Then it happened. Kappellman broke on the left, cut into the area and slid the ball for Muller to poke it home. 1-0!

But there was no time to celebrate. From the re-start, Derby hit back, Todd cracking home a scorcher after a jinking run from Charlie George.

Nerves were exposed, mistakes were made, refereeing decisions were queried.

The fans too, sensed the tension.

Derby probed and Bayern countered. Schwarzenbeck and Schenck, marshalled by "Der Kaiser" kept a tight rein on Derby's attack.

Nothing seemed to be working for Derby, while the long ball game of Bayern was finding holes in the Rams' defence.

Kappellmann, Rummenigge and Hoeness combined again, and this time they broke through.

Kappellmann slipped his marker, Nish, the covering tackle from McFarland was wayward, and the deadly winger sliced his shot into the corner of Moseley's net.

Derby were stunned — unused to being behind twice in a match with only minutes till the break. For Bayern it was sheer joy. Only one half to go and history would be written.

The second period was fast and furious, with Derby pushing men forward, but being unable to breach the rock-like defence.

Then almost tragedy with minutes to go. A quick Derby attack suddenly found George in a shooting position with no defence. My heart stopped — but the shot went over.

Then the ref signalled the end. The Derby manager slumped, stunned. He barely knew where to look.

I exploded with a yell.

But there was no post-match lockerroom celebrations or invasion of the pitch by excited fans, rejoicing into the night at local bars.

It's a bit hard when there are only two of them . . . fans that is.

But those are the crowds at Subbuteo Table Soccer matches.

As Derby manager Gary Hosie gathered up his team and I packed away my precious Bayern side, we somehow knew it would be a result to stun the Sydney Subbuteo fraternity of the day.

My elimination of Gary from the NSW State Cup in 1977 was the talk of the scene for weeks. A relative newcomer to competitive Subbuteo back then, it was, and still is, my most cherished match.

Now a veteran some 12 years later, I still get a buzz from a good game of "Subbo" — though that match will always hold a special place in my heart.

And that Bayern team, so lovingly painted in minute detail, has been immortalised in its own display case, kept in a place of honour, while now a new side does my battles on the table soccer pitch.

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The British

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