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Middlesbrough, Sevilla reach UEFA Cup final

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LONDON (AP) - Middlesbrough and Sevilla reached their first UEFA Cup soccer final Thursday.

English club Middlesbrough staged a remarkable comeback at its Riverside Stadium to beat Steaua Bucharest 4-2 and advance 4-3 on aggregate with substitute striker Massimo Maccarone scoring twice.

Steaua had won the first leg 1-0 in Bucharest, Romania, last week on striker Nicolae Dica's goal.

In Spain, Sevilla needed an extra-time goal from reserve midfielder Antonio Puerta to advance 1-0 over 1997 champion Schalke on aggregate after it was 0-0 in last week's first leg in Germany.

The May 10 final in Eindhoven, Netherlands, will be the first European final for both clubs. There will be another Spain versus England matchup a week later when FC Barcelona plays Arsenal for the Champions League title.



Mark Viduka celebrates

The 101-year-old Sevilla club won its only Spanish championship 60 years ago. Middlesbrough's only title in its 131-year history was the 2004 League Cup, the second-tier English club knockout competition.

On Thursday, Middlesbrough went 2-0 down after 24 minutes and needed to score four goals and not concede again.

It did - Maccarone scoring either side of goals by striker Mark Viduka and defender Chris Riggott.

"It's unbelievable," Middlesbrough striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink said. "We are in the final and we have to go for it in the final.

"We had to do it the hard way."

Steaua took the lead in the 17th minute when Petre Marin's shot was stopped by Middlesbrough goalkeeper Brad Jones but Dica scored on the rebound.

Dorin Goian made it 2-0 when his header was palmed away by Jones - but Goian converted the rebound.

That prompted Middlesbrough manager Steve McClaren - a candidate to succeed Sven-Goran Eriksson as England coach - to bring Maccarone on for captain and defender Gareth Southgate.

Maccarone's 34th-minute goal sparked Middlesbrough's revival.

"Unfortunately, we believed too early that we were through to the final," said Steaua coach Cosmin Olariu. "The first goal we allowed scared us a little and we took a step back.

"We made foolish mistakes, caused by our lack of experience at this level."

It's the second time Maccarone has proved the difference for 'Boro in the last minute this season.

The Italian scored to complete a 4-1 victory over Swiss team FC Basel that gave Middlesbrough a 4-3 win on aggregate in the UEFA Cup quarter-finals April 7.

Sevilla advanced on Puerta's goal in the 101st minute. Puerta, a 77th-minute replacement for Adriano Correia, fired his shot from the left side of the goal at Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium.


Roared on by a capacity 45,000-strong crowd which set off firecrackers and red flares before the game, Sevilla

began brightly with strikers Luis Fabiano and Javier Saviola each shooting narrowly wide.

Sevilla goalkeeper Andres Palop saved Gerald Asamoah's low shot in the 61st minute, and he then deprived Kevin Kuranyi of a shooting chance six minutes later.

Schalke midfielder Fabian Ernst shot just over the bar in the 87th minute in the last chance of regular time.

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