

## Four arrested over online racist abuse of England footballers

*Police warn other alleged offenders will be tracked down for targeting black players after Euro 2020 final*



*Bukayo Saka (centre) is comforted after failing to score a penalty against Italy.*

Tobi Thomas  
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Police have arrested four people over alleged racist abuse directed at England football players online, while warning other perpetrators that they will be tracked down.

After England's Euro 2020 final defeat to Italy on Sunday, three black players – Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka – were targeted with racist abuse after missing penalties during the match.

Those detained included a 42-year-old man arrested on Wednesday by Cheshire constabulary on suspicion of displaying threatening, abusive or insulting written material that is likely to stir up racial hatred.

Greater Manchester police arrested a 37-year-old man on suspicion of an offence under the Malicious Communications Act, and West Mercia police detained a 50-year-old man on suspicion of inciting racial hatred.

The UK Football Policing Unit, which works with the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), said it was running a hate crime investigation and had submitted dozens of data applications to social media companies.

Mark Roberts, the chief constable of Cheshire constabulary and the NPCC lead for football policing, said: "I'm disgusted that there are a number of individuals out there who think it's acceptable to direct such abuse at them, or at anybody else, and we are working very closely with social media platforms to trace those responsible for these utterly vile messages.

"I want to make it clear to anyone thinking of doing anything similar that you cannot simply hide behind a computer screen, using pseudo names to conceal your identity – rest assured that we will track you down and you will face the consequences of your reprehensible actions."

Social media companies were "working very closely" with the football policing unit to identify those responsible, Roberts said.

"The ... investigation is well under way and work continues to identify those responsible. We are working very closely with social media platforms, who are providing data we need to progress inquiries."