

National Grid ESO expects 900MW electricity demand spike during ENG-GER match

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Britain's electricity system operator is expecting a 900MW electricity demand pick-up at half-time in this evening's EURO 2020 match between England and Germany – equivalent power to around 180 million light bulbs or 500,000 kettles.

The spike in power compares with 800MW at half-time during England and West Germany's famous world cup final clash in 1966, with historical records also showing a 600MW pick-up after Geoff Hurst's iconic final goal in extra time.

National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) balances the country's electricity supply and demand second-by-second, forecasting the power that will be required based on factors like the weather and consumer behaviour.

Major events that draw large television audiences – like sports fixtures, popular shows and royal weddings – can often produce a surge in electricity demand during natural breaks (like half-time or advertisements) as people make a cup of tea, open the fridge and flush the loo at the same time.

Having forecasts in place means National Grid ESO's control room is prepared and ready to draw on electricity generation quickly to meet any sudden changes in demand.

It has a range of tools at its disposal to do this, notably the balancing mechanism – essentially a marketplace for electricity – which allows it to access sources of extra power in real-time.

If the forecasts predict demand increases, the ESO can keep a number of power stations on reserve, ready to deliver additional electricity if needed.

Pumped storage hydroelectric power stations can be particularly useful in this situation, with their reservoirs able to drain quickly and deliver power at short notice.

The ESO is also predicting a 500MW pick-up at full-time tonight – though it'll be ready should history repeat itself and the match continues to grip audiences through to penalties.

TV moment	Pick-up
2021 UEFA EURO semi-final – England vs Denmark	1,400MW at half-time
2019 Rugby World Cup Final - England vs South Africa	1,350MW at half time
2011 Royal Wedding (Prince William and Kate Middleton)	760MW for the famous balcony greeting
1990 England vs Germany football world cup semi final	2800MW at the end of the penalty shoot-out
1966 England vs West Germany football world cup final	600MW after Geoff Hurst's iconic final goal

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Notes to editors

Contact details

For further press information, please contact Alex Roache, External Affairs Manager, National Grid ESO: alex.roache@nationalgrideso.com / 07790603991