

Egypt booked their spot in the World Cup knockout rounds for the very first time on Friday, outlasting Australia in a tense penalty shootout after a 1-1 draw in Dallas.

The Pharaohs claimed a 4-2 shootout victory after Australian skipper Harry Souttar and Lucas Herrington both missed from the spot.

“It’s history,” said Egypt captain Mohamed Salah, who coolly converted his team’s third penalty. “I told the boys before the match: ‘Guys, this is the biggest game of your lives, so just go out and enjoy it. Don’t let the pressure ruin the moment.’”

The 34-year-old superstar added, “I’m just incredibly glad we got it done.”

Egypt struck first in the opening half when Emam Ashour turned in a sharp header. However, Australia found their lifeline through another aerial play. Aidan O’Neill swung a dangerous free-kick in from the left wing, forcing an error from Mohamed Hany, who inadvertently deflected the ball into his own net—his second own-goal of the tournament.

While Australia dominated possession after the equalizer, nerves began to creep into their game late in the second half. Egypt finished the stronger of the two sides, nearly sealing the win in stoppage time when Mo Touré misdirected a pass to concede a late corner.

Salah whipped the ensuing cross to Ramy Rabia, whose goal-bound header looked destined for the top corner.

It took a spectacular, full-stretch save from Patrick Beach to deny Egypt a late winner. Making just his second appearance for the Socceroos, the 22-year-old goalkeeper kept his team alive at the death—only to be subbed off moments later in a tactical gamble for the shootout.

Australia manager brought on veteran keeper Mathew Ryan for the penalties, but the 34-year-old could only watch as all four of Egypt’s penalty takers clinically outwitted him to send the Pharaohs through.