

Semifinal first leg Brazilliance inspire Real



AFP, Madrid

Goals from Real Madrid's Brazilian World Cup winning pair of Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos gave the reigning European champions a slender 2-1 victory over Juventus in their European Champions League semi-final first leg here on Tuesday.

In a less-than-vintage performance, which hardly compared with their bewitching displays in the quarter-final against Manchester United, Ronaldo opened the scoring for Real midway through the first half but the hosts were stunned when French striker David Trezeguet levelled just before the break.

Real were the poorer side for much of the second period until Roberto Carlos got his winner 17 minutes from the whistle.

"We had to suffer during the first half but you expect to have to work hard against a team like Real Madrid," admitted Juve coach Marcello Lippi.

"But I was very happy with our second half when I thought we were the better side, and I feel confident ahead of next week's second leg. Little-by-little we grew in confidence throughout the game and we gradually took control of the possession."

Nevertheless, Juventus will still have to take the game to Real in the second leg in their Stadio Delle Alpi in eight days time.

In Turin, the Italians will be without defenders Marc Juliano and Ciro Ferrara, who both picked up bookings on Tuesday and will serve a one-match ban.

"It's a decent result although we deserved to win by a bigger margin, but that's only my opinion," said Real coach Vicente Del Bosque.

"However, we are not going to Turin just to defend this lead, my



PHOTO: AFP

THE 'R' FACTOR: Real Madrid's Brazilian superstar Ronaldo (R) is being attended to by medics on the touchline after suffering a minor calf injury while teammate Roberto Carlos concentrates on the game against Juventus at Madrid on May 6. Both scored in Real's 2-1 win.

teams always try and score goals."

A tepid opening 20 minutes saw Juventus soak up the pressure, often getting seven men behind the ball when Real moved forward, with only a curling free kick from Zinedine Zidane offering any threat to Gianluigi Buffon's goal.

Buffon pulled off a spectacular arms-length save to deny Zidane but was then slow getting down to

the ball when Ronaldo caught Juventus off-guard three minutes later.

Ronaldo's neat one-two with fellow striker Fernando Morientes gave him the time and space to send a low right-foot shot past Buffon.

The strike immediately changed the nature of game but Juventus nearly got an equaliser within two

minutes.

Pavel Nedved darted through Real's fragile defence and had a clear shot on goal, but Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas had the Czech's rasping shot well covered.

Trezeguet got his equaliser, and a vital away goal, just as time ran out at the end of the first half, when Alessandro Del Piero's shot took a deflection off Michel Salgado.

'See you at Old Trafford'



AFP, Madrid

"In the air," proclaimed the front page of Spanish sports daily Marca here on Wednesday and the main headline of Spain's biggest selling newspaper described Real Madrid's situation perfectly.

After their 2-1 win over Juventus in the first leg of their European champions league semi-final, Real must go to Turin in seven days time and defend the slenderest of leads, with La Vecchia Signora - Juve's nickname is The Old Lady - having a vital away goal tucked away in her handbag.

Real's inspirational French midfielder Zinedine Zidane, himself a former Juve player, offered one solution to the tricky situation.

"We have to go out to win in Turin, fighting the way we did in this game. It will not be easy because Turin is a tough place to score but we've got the advantage," Zidane told Spanish reporters on Wednesday.

To help Real progress towards their ambition of becoming the first team to win back-to-back Champions League titles since Europe's premier club competition changed its incantation from the European Cup in 1992, the nine-times continental kings

should have Raul Gonzalez back in the fold again.

The talismanic striker, who has scored nine times in this season's competition and a record 43 goals in his Champions League career, underwent an emergency appendix operation on April 21.

However, he has been back in serious training since the start of



KING JUAN CARLOS

the week and Real Madrid medical officials confirmed on Wednesday that they expect Raul to be ready to lead the attack in Juve's Stadio Delle Alpi.

Assuming he plays, then Raul will equal the record for the most appearances in the Champions League, currently held by Manchester United's Gary Neville, who has played in 78 games.

Who will accompany Raul will be another question that will remain up in the air until the last minute.

Ronaldo limped off in Tuesday's game with an injury to his notoriously tender left calf, a similar problem with the same fragile muscle which kept him out of the first four games of Real's domestic campaign after his move from Inter Milan last summer. "It's nothing serious," said Real coach Vicente Del Bosque on Tuesday, although it may be bad enough for him to consider alternatives to the Brazilian World Cup winner, who once again showed his appetite for the big occasion by scoring Real's opening goal against the Italians.

The tie may be finely poised but some Real fans are more optimistic about the outcome than others.

"If the team continues with this attitude then we will win in Turin and progress to the final," said the Real president Florentino Perez after the game.

Juan Carlos, the King of Spain, was also in attendance on Tuesday night, sitting alongside Perez and watching the team that was given the royal seal of approval by his grandfather.

"And the King's last words to me as he left were, 'See you at Old Trafford,'" added Perez, who made it clear that he doesn't expect Real to let down its most regal supporter and deprive him of a trip to Manchester for the final on May 28.

Beckham going nowhere



AFP, Manchester

England skipper David Beckham put an end to all talk of a big-money move to Real Madrid on Tuesday by announcing that he is staying with English champions Manchester United.

"My feelings for Manchester United, the club itself, the players, the fans and the backroom staff, are as strong as ever," said the 28-year-old who has just helped United to their eighth English Premiership title in 11 years.

"There's been lots of stuff in the media about me and my future, but I can honestly say that there has been no contact between either me or my adviser, with Real Madrid, or any other club.

"I know that the chief executive Peter Kenyon and the manager are saying they want me to stay, and that's good enough for me. My affection for the club has never changed from the day I signed for United," Beckham told the Manchester Evening News.

Despite the speculation surrounding his future, Real Madrid last week issued a public statement distancing themselves from a bid

The ball fell to the feet of Trezeguet who had little problem finding the net from close range, although there were protests by the Real players that the Juventus forward had used his right arm to control the ball.

Lippi brought on Gianluca Possotto at half time in place of Iuliano with the aim of countering the threat of Luis Figo down the right wing and the tactical shift muzzled the Real attack.

The second half was a scrappy affair, only livening up after Roberto Carlos used his left foot to fire home the winner from more than 20 metres after 73 minutes.

Earlier, Real lost some of their fire power when Del Bosque took the precaution of taking Ronaldo off the field only five minutes into the second half, with the Brazilian suffering from a slight calf injury.

Del Bosque defended his tactics which saw Spanish international striker Fernando Morientes - who has not started a Spanish league match this season - start up front alongside Ronaldo.

"The team was a reflection of many things, including how we felt Juventus were going to play," explained the coach.

"However, it wasn't a reaction to Saturday's result (when Real lost 5-1 at home to Real Mallorca). Domestic results don't usually affect how I think about Champions League matches."

Real's surprising change in strategy from recent games meant that English midfielder Steve McManaman was dropped and Jose Maria 'Guti' Gutierrez, normally a striker, played just in front of Real's back four.

"Guti playing in that position did surprise me," admitted Lippi, who will be looking forward to the return of the suspended Paolo Montero and Edgar Davids for the second leg.

"A win or a draw would obviously have been better here but I can't be unhappy with the result. This tie is still very much alive."

Protesters demand tour cancellation



AFP, London

Protesters are set to return to Lord's on Wednesday and picket the annual general meeting of the ground's owners, Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), as they bid to have Zimbabwe's cricket tour of England abandoned.

Last Thursday, 10 members of the Stop the Tour campaign gathered outside Lord's as Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak gave his first media conference of the two-Test tour.

They want the tour called off in protest at the alleged human rights abuses carried out by Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe.

And the object of Wednesday's protest is to try to persuade MCC to cancel the first Test, which is due to begin at Lord's on May 22.

On Sunday, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Bakili Muluzi of Malawi met with Mugabe in Harare in a bid to encourage dialogue

between the Zimbabwe leader and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change.

But analysts said they would have also discussed the issue of Mugabe's retirement. Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe since independence from Britain in 1980.

However Stop the Tour Organiser Peter Tatchell told AFP on Tuesday that his group's demonstrations would continue.

"The meeting in Harare came to no conclusions and produced no results. Protests against the Mugabe dictatorship must continue until the restoration of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe.

"What is needed is a combination of pressure from both outside and inside Zimbabwe. Protests from other African leaders will help but so will protests around the world. They reinforce the message that Mugabe is isolated and loaded."

Stop the Tour said they would be handing MCC members a letter calling on them to withdraw permission for the use of Lord's.

They also want all cricketers playing against Zimbabwe and spectators watching them to wear black armbands in an echo of a political protest at the World Cup.

During Zimbabwe's opening match in February, against Namibia in Harare, players Andy Flower and Henry Olonga wore black armbands and issued a statement lamenting the 'death of democracy' in Zimbabwe under Mugabe.

Peace on pitches

FROM PAGE 13 dence building measures," Zia said.

The PCB had already started planning to host India's national eleven next February following Zia's meeting last week with his Indian counterpart Jagmohan Dalvi in Dubai to discuss a revival of Pakistan-India cricket.

Bombay

FROM PAGE 13 third Ranji Trophy title by virtue of their 11-run first innings lead if they can manage to hang on for a draw.

Bombay, 228 for four overnight, lost Amol Muzumdar early on for seven when he was caught behind chasing a wideish Suresh delivery outside off-stump.

But Thakkar and Sairaj Bahutule (27) came together for a valuable 52-run sixth wicket stand before Powar walked in and took centre-stage with his unorthodox brand of luscious

Steve sees

FROM PAGE 13 Lara has stood by his team, saying that more experienced players had come up short in the past.

Waugh remembered when he began his record-breaking Test career, West Indies were the dominant force.

"I have great respect for West Indies cricket and they taught us a lot when we were not doing so well. I played in 85 and they were the dominating force and we were learning from them."

Waugh has an excellent personal record against the West Indies.

In the 1994-5 series, he averaged 107.25 over four Tests, including a double century in the decider at Kingston, Jamaica which effectively ended West Indies' domination of the world game as well as paving the way for Australia's emergence as the team to beat.

It was West Indies' first home series defeat in 22 years and Australia's first series win against them since 1978.

Waugh, who made a century in the drawn tour opener against Guyana last week, was to be almost as inspirational in the 2000-1 home series, averaging 69.8.

Waugh promised there would be no letting-up.

"No side has won 4-0 in the Caribbean and so there's a lot of milestones to play for," said Waugh.

"The greatest sin as a sportsman is to waste good form and we don't want to do that.

"I don't remember the West Indies easing up on us back in '85."

Magura cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Milon and Sucharu guided Young Star Club to a three-wicket victory over Nabaganga Cricket Club in the Econo Cricket League at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Nabaganga decided to bat first and collected 106 runs all out in 20.1 overs.

In reply, Young Star reached the target of 109 runs for the loss of seven wickets in 24 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Nabaganga Cricket Club: 106 all out in 20.1 overs (Didar 16, Suman 13, Hasan 12; Milon 5/22, Sucharu 4/25, Sanat 1/15).

Young Star Club: 109 for 7 in 24 overs (Manna 32, Sucharu 27, Apurba 12; Didar 4/26, Minhaj 1/11, Khabir 1/5).

Result: Young Star Club won by 3 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Milon.

Victoria denied

FROM PAGE 13 match with 68 points in hand, will have to win this match and then pray that Victoria lose to City. In that unlikely scenario, there will be a play-off between the joint leaders to decide the championship.

Mohammedan will miss the service of their in-form Indian top order Sandeep Sharma who cut his right wrist during a practice session recently. The popular Motijheel outfit have already flown in 19-year old Delhi all rounder Rajat Bhatia as Sandeep's replacement for today's match.

Meanwhile, two neutral umpires Gaminu Dassanayeke and Rammore Martinez of Sri Lanka, who have been officiating the Super League matches so far, returned home yesterday as they have been appointed for the one-day tri-series between Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Pakistan.

Local umpires Nadir Shah and Akhteruddin Shaheen will officiate today's match.

Ruud warning



AFP, Manchester

Ruud van Nistelrooy has warned Premiership defenders that he will present an even more potent threat when Manchester United's next campaign kicks off in August.

The Dutch striker goes into Sunday's end-of-season clash with Everton needing just three goals to equal Dennis Law's record for a single season at Manchester United.

After hitting the net 36 times in his debut season at Old Trafford, the Dutchman has claimed a phenomenal 79 goals from 100 appearances at the club.

And he is confident that he can maintain that form in what is expected to be a significantly strengthened United squad next season.

"I was warned that the second season was the hardest and was told if I'm not going the way you want then don't get frustrated," van Nistelrooy revealed on Wednesday.

"People tried to warn and reassure me. But I wasn't too worried or bothered. I thought that if I had a good season last year

and showed I was capable of doing it once, then if I have the will to work and improve, why can't I do it another time?"

The 26-year-old said in an interview with the Manchester Evening News.

"I knew it was a hell of a task for me to do it again but I just wanted to improve. I didn't set myself a goal target this season and I won't do it next year. I don't do goal targets. All I aim to do is improve and see where that takes me."

Van Nistelrooy, who joined United for 19-million pounds in 2001 after a season sidelined by a serious cruciate knee ligament injury, believes he has become a more complete player this season without sacrificing his efficiency in front of goal.

"Being just a goalscorer was fine for me in the first season at Old Trafford, but I wanted more and I believed I could show more as a player and be more complete."

"That has worked out. I think I improved as a player and as a goalscorer. In that sense I am really happy with the season."

"I didn't feel I might have to sacrifice goals to become a more complete player. I don't think that way. My goals will come if I play well. Most of the time that is the case with me. If I do my job up front and play well and work hard

and do my job as a striker then the goals will follow."

Van Nistelrooy's debut season with United was marred by a disappointing end to the campaign as the time he had spent out of the game took its toll.

But Holland's failure to make the World Cup in Japan last summer and a new fitness regime has helped sustain him during the current run-in, during which he has been irresistible.

"Strength and speed-wise I wanted to progress and I believe I have done," he said.

"Unlike last season, I have been at my peak at the end of the season. The last 10 to 15 games I was really going well. It helps that I didn't play in the World Cup. Obviously I was disappointed Holland didn't make it, but maybe I would have petered out earlier if I had gone to Japan."

Van Nistelrooy would like to make more goals but he insists there is no danger of him losing the selfish streak vital to all great strikers.

"You have to be clear in your mind that if you have a chance you have to take it. You don't have to think about an assist, that has to be a natural thing. For me the natural thing is to see the goal!"

Draw, but dramatic

FROM PAGE 13

Jayasuriya stepped down to concentrate on his cricket, defended the decision not to chase down the target.

"We wanted to go for it, but after Jayasuriya got out there was no way we could have scored the required runs," Tillakaratne said.

"He is our most attacking and experienced batsman and a lot rested on him. If he had been there till the end we may have been able to win."

"I don't think we did a disservice to Muralitharan by not going for the runs."

"He is a class act and will always take wickets on any surface. But we also have to be realistic."

"I don't think the fifth day wicket was conducive to scoring runs fast," Tillakaratne said.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said he would have preferred to have a positive result in the series, but the wickets in the two Tests were heavily weighed in favour of the batsmen.

SCOREBOARD

Table with columns for Team, Innings, Runs, Wickets, Extras, and Total. Includes Sri Lanka and New Zealand scores.

Table with columns for Player, Runs, Wickets, and Extras. Lists players like Richardson, Fleming, and Jayasuriya.

Table with columns for Player, Runs, Wickets, and Extras. Lists players like Jayasuriya, Muralitharan, and Jayawardena.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 25 mins.

Cryptquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers. Includes a clue: 'CW'Z EOGPW WSK!'.

CRYPTOQUIP
A K L D U G X U C Z K L K A C K M
G I E X K M O G G H E O G P W
W N K I C L Z W M E W U N S E H K L Z :
'CW'Z EOGPW WSK!'
Yesterday's Cryptquip: AT THE ARCHERY TOURNAMENT, BOY WAS IT A CLOSE CALL! A GUY WON BY AN ARROW MARGIN.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: W equals T
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.