



Real Madrid forward Robinho raises his arms in celebration of his goal in their Champions League clash against Steaua Bucharest on Tuesday.

The Real show

REUTERS, Bucharest

Real Madrid turned in a superb performance, striking twice in each half, to beat Steaua Bucharest 4-1 in their pivotal Champions League Group E match on Tuesday.

The win boosted Real's chances of advancing from the group phase to the last 16. They remain second in the table with six points from their three games, three behind Olympique Lyon but three ahead of Steaua who they will be favourites to beat again in Madrid in two weeks time.

The nine-time European champions showed their class throughout the match, keeping Steaua's defence under almost continual pressure and there was little doubt about the outcome after Sergio Ramos put them ahead after nine

minutes. Raul doubled the lead after 34 minutes to extend his record haul of Champions League goals to 54, Robinho made it 3-0 after 56 minutes and Ruud van Nistelrooy scored their fourth 14 minutes from time. He is the second all-time scorer in the Champions League with 46 goals.

Valentin Badea scored a consolation for Steaua after 64 minutes.

The other significant milestone of the night came after 71 minutes when David Beckham replaced Guti to become the third Real Madrid player to make 100 Champions League appearances.

Only Raul (104) and Roberto Carlos (102) have made more appearances in the competition's history.

Van Nistelrooy said afterwards: "If we play like we played today we'll come back to the highest level of European soccer."

Robinho, Sergio Ramos, substitute Ronaldo and Raul all wasted

good opportunities to add to Real's score while Badea and Nicolae Dica missed chances to reduce the gap.

The central defensive pair of Sergio Ramos and Fabio Cannavaro brilliantly dealt with Steaua's rare counter-attacks.

Sergio Ramos, the man of the match, scored for Real from a ninth-minute corner and Raul made it 2-0 in the 34th from a rebound after Steaua goalkeeper Carlos deflected a strike from Van Nistelrooy.

A fast counter-attack put Robinho in an ideal position to score from a tight angle, 11 minutes into the second half.

Steaua substitute Cyril Thereau provided the pass for Badea to score Steaua's only goal from close range, but it was scant consolation for the home side.

"This is the real face of Real Madrid," a happy club president Ramon Calderon said.

"We showed that when we want to we can play as a team," said Brazilian fullback Roberto Carlos.

"We showed personality and enthusiasm and were able to pressure our opponents. Those were things that were missing before."

Coach Fabio Capello said that the victory had served to erase the painful memories of the 1-0 Getafe defeat on Saturday.

"This time we saw a team with quality and spirit out there and that is what counts," said the Italian. "Now I'm happy."

"I said we had to forget the performance against Getafe because we can't play like that ever again. Instead we saw a Real Madrid that placed with pace and skill."

"I was pleased with the football we played because it isn't easy to come here and win by such a margin."

"It was a complete change from the Getafe match," said Real keeper Iker Casillas. "After such a terrible

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Comprehensive United win

AFP, Manchester



Sir Alex Ferguson is confident that Wayne Rooney has put his first prolonged slump in form behind him, despite the England forward's failure to end his goal drought in a 3-0 Champions League cruise against FC Copenhagen.

Handed the captain's armband just minutes before kick-off, Rooney was at the heart of United's slickest moves in a victory that virtually assures their progression to the knockout stages of the competition, although he remains without a goal in any competition since the opening day of the season and it is now over two years since he last scored on the European stage.

Ferguson however professes to be unconcerned about the 20-year-old, who was named captain after Ryan Giggs felt unwell shortly before the match and Rio Ferdinand cricked his neck in the warm-up.

"It was a bit of a nightmare," Ferguson said of that situation, although he claimed never to have doubted the wisdom of adding the captaincy to Rooney's creative responsibilities.

"I was looking around the dressing room with only 15 minutes to kick-off and you always look for someone who can respond to it, so therefore it was an easy choice," he said. "He did fantastic. His form is back, as we expected."

United's victory was assured when John O'Shea deflected a Darren Fletcher corner into the net

less than a minute after half-time, adding to a trademark edge-of-the-area effort from Paul Scholes six minutes before the interval.

Copenhagen's otherwise impressive goalkeeper Jesper Christensen then allowed Kieran Richardson's long-range effort to slip through his fingers in the closing minutes to put a slightly flattering gloss on the result.

"We made sure the pace of the game was quick and it was a good attacking performance and a good result," said Ferguson. "My only concern was that, with the chances we had in the first half, we should have killed them off."

With three wins out of three, one more point will ensure United avoid a repeat of last season's ignominious pre-Christmas exit from the competition.

"We know all about last year," Ferguson said. "We don't want a repeat and we are not getting a repeat and that speaks highly for the team and their motivation."

"They have grown up. They don't want any more embarrassments, they are winning and they are playing good football to the bargain."

Copenhagen coach Stale Solbakken took heart from a spirited display by his side, who have taken just one point from their three opening matches in the group.

"We created chances all through the first half and that shows we are becoming a little bit more experienced and maybe with two or three more players we will be able to compete at this level," he said.

"We had a go at them but obviously their individual skills are better than ours and we went to sleep

at the start of the second half and they scored at a set piece from inside five metres, which is not good enough at this level.

"With Celtic beating Benfica it now looks like it is going to be a fight for third place between us and Benfica, which suggests Celtic are not as bad a team as some in the Danish press had suggested."

The first act of Rooney's captaincy

JESDAY'S RESULT

GRUPE	
At Kiev	Dynamo Kiev (UKR) 0 Lyon (FRA) 3 (Juninho 31, Kallstrom 38, Malouda 51)
At Bucharest	Steaua Bucharest (ROM) 1 (Badea 64) Real Madrid (ESP) 4 (Ramos 9, Raul 34, Robinho 56, Van Nistelrooy 75)
GROUP F	
At Glasgow	Celtic (SCO) 3 (Miller 56, 66, Pearson 90) Benfica (POR) 0
At Manchester, England	
Manchester United (ENG) 3	(Scholes 39, O'Shea 46, Richardson 83) FC Copenhagen (DEN) 0
GROUP G	
At Moscow	CSKA Moscow (RUS) 1 (Carvalho 24) Arsenal (ENG) 0
At Porto, Portugal	
FC Porto (POR) 4	(Lisandro Lopez 14, 81, Lucho Gonzalez 45-pen, Postiga 69) SV Hamburg (GER) 1 (Trochowski 89)
GROUP H	
At Anderlecht, Belgium	Anderlecht (BEL) 0 AC Milan (ITA) 1 (Kaka 58)
At Lens, France	Lille (FRA) 3 (Robail 64, Gyagax 82, Makoun 90+1) AEK Athens (GRE) 1 (Ivic 68)

was to help on Michael Carrick's pass to put Louis Saha clear of the visiting back four after barely 30 seconds, the French striker pushing his shot against the sprawling body of the goalkeeper.

Another early chance went begging when Rooney narrowly failed to connect with a Cristiano Ronaldo cross in front of an open goal and Copenhagen progressively began to pose some problems of their own.

Marcus Allback and Michael Silberbauer both tested Edwin van der Sar before centreback Michael Gravgaard headed a corner disconcertingly close to the United goalkeeper's right hand post.

At the other end, Christiansen denied Saha, played in by Rooney once more, and Carrick before Scholes gave United the lead.

Patrice Evra started the move with a surge down the left flank and a pass inside for Saha on the edge of the area. The Frenchman's lay-off found Scholes and, after one touch and a sideways shimmy, the ball was hammered past Christiansen's right hand from the best part of 25 yards.

Any doubt about the outcome ahead disappeared when O'Shea scored within a minute of the restart, although van der Sar needed to produce a good save from Atiba Hutchinson to preserve United's lead before Christiansen's fumble gifted the home side a third goal.

Real to appeal Ronaldo red card

AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Real Madrid are to appeal star striker Ronaldo's red card in Sunday's 1-0 defeat by Getafe the club announced on Tuesday.

The all-time World Cup finals leading scorer was sent-off a minute from time for a second bookable offence, but Real believe that his first yellow card was unjustified and hope to win the appeal so he can play in Sunday's clash with bitter rivals Barcelona.

"We are going to appeal the first booking because we believe it is a little unfair," said Real's sporting director Predrag Mijatovic in Bucharest where Madrid play Steaua Bucharest in the Champions League later on Tuesday.

The Getafe defeat - which saw coach Fabio Capello round on his players - left Real in fifth place, five points adrift of leaders Barcelona.

Follow rugby example: Henry

REUTERS, London

Arsenal captain Thierry Henry believes soccer should follow rugby's example and encourage better communication between referees and players.

The France striker was left incensed after having a late equaliser ruled out for alleged handball during Arsenal's 1-0 Champions League defeat by CSKA Moscow on Tuesday.

Spanish referee Mejuto Gonzalez booked Henry after the striker appeared to control the ball

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Italy threaten Brazil lead

AFP, Paris

World Cup winners Italy are hot on the heels of Brazil in the FIFA world rankings, surging three places up into second position.

Germany (6th, up 2) and Greece (14th, up 8) are also flying high after winning recent Euro 2008 qualifying matches.

Mali (41st, up 19) and Northern Ireland (45th, up 13) have now returned to the top 50 after a long absence.

Several other teams have jumped up at least thirty places, including Burkina Faso (64th, up 33), Cape Verde Islands (83rd, up 30), Haiti (83rd, up 35), St Vincent and the Grenadines (85th, up 44), and Barbados (100th, up 52).

FIFA Top Ten:

1. Brazil	1560 pts	(0)
2. Italy	1540	(+3)
3. France	1483	(-1)
4. Argentina	1446	(-1)
5. England	1370	(-1)
6. Germany	1339	(+2)
7. Netherlands	1313	(-1)
8. Czech Republic	1253	(-1)
9. Portugal	1224	(0)
10. Spain	1198	(0)

Kaka saves Milan

AFP, Brussels

AC Milan survived the dismissal of defender Daniele Bonera at the start of the second half to sneak a precious 1-0 win over Anderlecht in the Champions League here on Tuesday.

Ironically, the six-time European champions played much better after Bonera went for an early bath, and a superb goal from Kaka in the 58th minute clinched victory.

Fed by Clarence Seedorf, the creative Brazilian midfielder took a quick glance up before firing a rasping drive into the top corner from 20 yards.

Anderlecht hit the bar in a late

rally, but Milan's 10 men held on to their slender advantage.

The win not only ended Milan's run of four consecutive draws in all competitions, but also moved them closer to the knockout stages of Europe's premier club competition.

Milan top Group H on seven points, two ahead of Lille, who beat AEK Athens 3-1. Anderlecht remain on two points and AEK on one.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said the sending-off of Bonera turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

"We were a bit timid in the first half and we conceded possession too often," he said.

"But when Bonera was sent off and it became tougher for us, the team woke up and started to play."

"Everyone stepped up a gear and at the same time Anderlecht opened up, and that meant there

was more space.

"They started to push forward more, thinking they were at least going to get a draw, and that was good for us."

Kaka may have been the match-winner, but Ancelotti heaped praise on attacking Czech defender Marek Jankulovski.

"He was brilliant," said the Milan coach. "He gave us another dimension going forward and he defended well when he had to."

His Anderlecht counterpart Frank Vercauteren admitted there had been a gulf in quality even with the extra man.

"I have nothing to say against my players," said Vercauteren, a member of the Belgian side that reached the 1986 World Cup semi-finals.

"However the difference was quality and they had more of it. I

don't believe we were too cautious only that we did not always do things we should have done at 11 men against 10."

Anderlecht defender Vanden Borre was shown a yellow card by Luis Medina Cantalejo in the sixth minute for demanding Milan's Gennaro Gattuso be booked for fouling Nicolas Frutos, which nowadays amounts to unsporting conduct.

Filippo Inzaghi saw his volley safely gathered by Daniel Zitzka as Milan gave an early glimpse of their attacking intent, while at the other end Bart Goor saw his low drive whistle wide.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



AC Milan midfielder Kaka (C) shrugs off the attentions of Anderlecht defender Roland Juhasz (L) and midfielder Lucas Biglia during their Champions League clash in Anderlecht on Tuesday.



Manchester United midfielder Kiernan Richardson (C) is hugged by teammate Cristiano Ronaldo (L) as Wayne Rooney joins in the celebrations after their third goal in their Champions League match against FC Copenhagen at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

Ambulance controversy continues



AFP, London

Ambulance staff have backed Reading's and not Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho's timeline of the evacuation of the London club's injured goalkeeper Petr Cech from the Madejski Stadium over the weekend.

Mourinho on Tuesday claimed it took 30 minutes for an ambulance to reach Cech after the goalkeeper's horrific head injury at Reading after a collision with home midfielder Stephen Hunt.

Mourinho also complained that Cech had to leave his stretcher to get into a wheelchair so he could fit inside a lift, and that the delay could have cost the goalkeeper his life.

But Mark Ainsworth, who was the ambulance duty officer on the

scene, insisted it took only seven minutes for the ambulance to arrive from the time one was called.

"We support Reading Football Club with their statement of events," Ainsworth said.

"They are the accurate ones and I'm not sure where the confusion has arisen with Jose Mourinho's version of events."

"The player (Cech) was taken off the pitch and went down into the players' dressing room up to where the ambulance was waiting to take him to Royal Berks (hospital)."

Ainsworth said the decision to use the lift had been taken by Chelsea's medical staff.

"We have two options for removing players from the ground, one of those is on a stretcher round the edge of the pitch in front of all the players and then out through the tunnel."

"The ambulance was called at 1745 and it arrived at 1752, so seven minutes from the time that the call came through to the ambulance control until they actually arrived at the scene."

"It left 12 minutes later, that was obviously taking him from the players' area up to the ambulance and actually leaving the ground area. He was taken in a lift from the players' dressing room up to where the ambulance was waiting to take him to Royal Berks (hospital)."

"That was declined by the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4