



Real Madrid striker Ruud van Nistelrooy (C) is on his knees in despair after missing a penalty in their Champions League clash against Lyon at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday.

Lyon hold off Real

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid missed the chance to go top of group E when they were held 2-2 by Champions League rivals Lyon here at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday.

Lyon raced into an early lead and with seven minutes remaining still held a 2-1 lead after Ruud van Nistelrooy had managed to sandwich a goal in between strikes for the visitors from John Carew and Florent Malouda.

Former Manchester United striker van Nistelrooy could have secured victory from the spot kick however his effort six minutes after his equaliser was turned away by France keeper Gregory Coupet.

And Real then had former Lyon midfielder Mahamadou Diarra to thank for a late equaliser which ensured they took a share of the points.

The result means Lyon remain top on 13 points, with Real - who were also qualified for the knock-out phase before kick-off -- in second on 10.

Steaua Bucharest remain third

on four points after their draw at home to Dynamo Kiev.

Lyon coach Gerard Houllier admitted it was one of the most difficult matches they had played in the competition.

But he added: "There were a lot of positives, but at the very top level when you create chances you can't afford to miss them."

"But I can't fault the players' commitment."

Real coach Fabio Capello claimed that Lyon's first goal was off-side, but added: "Lyon showed they are a difficult team to beat."

Lyon began the match without a handful of regulars including Brazilian forward Fred, Karim Benzema, Sidney Govou, and Sylvain Wittord, who is ill.

Gerard Houllier's men controlled the opening period and had big Norwegian striker Carew to thank for their opening.

Having given Real defender Fabio Cannavaro a taste of his technique, the Norwegian finally got the better of the Italian to beat Iker Casillas in the Real goal in the 11th minute.

Capello later said: "Trying to mark Carew would have been difficult for any player."

"I know him well because I've

seen him play in Italy, but I've never seen him play like he did tonight."

Carew then turned provider for Tiago, who this time failed to beat the Spanish keeper.

On the half hour Casillas could do nothing against Malouda, who snuck in and got his head to a stray

TUESDAY'S RESULTS

GRUPE
Real Madrid (ESP) 2 (M. Diarra 39, van Nistelrooy 83) Lyon (FRA) 2 (Carew 11, Malouda 31)
Steaua Bucharest (ROM) 1 (Dica 69) Dynamo Kiev (UKR) 1 (Cernat 29)

GRUPE F
Benfica (POR) 3 (Leo 14, Miccoli 16, 37) FC Copenhagen (DEN) 1 (Allbeck 89)
Celtic (SCO) 1 (Nakamura 81) Man Utd (ENG) 0

GRUPE G
Arsenal (ENG) 3 (van Persie 52, Ebou 83, Baptista 88) SV Hamburg (GER) 1 (van der Vaart 4)
CSKA Moscow (RUS) 0 FC Porto (POR) 2 (Quaresma 2, Lucho Gonzalez 61)

GRUPE H
AEK Athens (GRE) 1 (Julio Cesar 32) AC Milan (ITA) 0
Lille (FRA) 2 (Odemwingie 28, Fauvergue 47) Anderlecht (BEL) 2 (M. Mpenza 38, 48)

ball close in after a free kick from Juninho.

And Capello later admitted: "What can you do against a player who strikes the ball like Juninho? He's a phenomenon."

Real were dominating, but the scoresheet was saying otherwise.

Capello substituted Guti for Jose Antonio Reyes, and that seemed to give the hosts some pep.

Coupet was forced to parry a shot from the right from Reyes in the 34th minute, and five minutes later Diarra struck for the hosts after latching on to a Reyes corner from the left.

Real continued to dominate in the second half, and after six minutes' play Coupet was forced to block an effort from Sergio Ramos following a free kick from Roberto Carlos.

Five minutes later the Frenchman blocked an effort from Brazilian forward Robinho following a corner.

Real's persistence was finally rewarded when van Nistelrooy's effort bobbed over the line after a cross-goal header from Raul.

Five minutes later Coupet did superbly to keep out the Dutchman's effort from the spot after he had been fouled by Lyon defender Cris.

Brazil still on top

AGENCIES, undated

Brazil have maintained top spot in the latest FIFA world rankings ahead of world champions Italy and South American rivals Argentina.

World Cup finalists France slip one place to fourth while top African side Nigeria break into the top 10 at eighth.

Brazil have 1,588 points, World Cup champion Italy have 1,560. Brazil have been ranked No. 1 since July of 2002.

Italy's 1-1 draw with Turkey in a Nov. 15 friendly in Turkey would have been enough to pull even with Brazil in ranking points. But the Brazilians increased their lead at the top by beating Switzerland 2-1 in a friendly the same night.

Argentina moved up to No. 3 with 1,551 points, swapping places with France (1,523).

England, Germany and the Netherlands remain at Nos. 5, 6 and 7, with Nigeria moving up two places from 11th and the Czech Republic falling two places to 10th. Spain fell two places to 12th.

Ruud in disarray

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid striker Ruud van Nistelrooy said he was devastated after missing a last-gasp penalty that would have earned his side a first win against Olympique Lyon in the Champions League.

The Dutchman scored Real's second goal as they battled back from 2-0 down against a dominant Lyon on Tuesday and earned a penalty when he went down in the area as he challenged Cris for the ball in the 89th minute.

But he missed his third spot-kick in five attempts when Lyon goalkeeper Gregory Coupet guessed right, dived to his left and turned his low shot past the post.

"The team has a right to be pleased with their performance, but I don't," the former Manchester United striker told reporters.

"I'm upset because the team played with a lot of guts and character to get back into the match and then I missed the penalty in the last minute."

"I didn't hit it well and it isn't good to be missing so many penalties, but drawing the game after being 2-0 down isn't a bad result."

Even if Van Nistelrooy had netted his spot kick Real would still have in second place in Group E given that they lost 2-0 to Lyon in their opening match.

Tugay, Ghaly appeals fail

AFP, London

Blackburn's Tugay and Tottenham's Hossam Ghaly have both had their claims for wrongful dismissal rejected by an independent disciplinary commission, the Football Association (FA) announced Tuesday.

Both midfielders were sent off during Sunday's 1-1 Premiership draw at Wood Park.

Turkish international Tugay, 36, opened the scoring for Rovers before his foul on Ghaly led to the visitors' equaliser with Jermain Defoe scoring from the penalty spot.

Tugay will now serve a one-match suspension as a result.

Egypt's Ghaly, 24, was sent off after he appeared to elbow Michael Gray late in the game. He will serve a three-match suspension.

The red cards angered Tottenham boss Martin Jol and Blackburn manager Mark Hughes, who criticised referee Phil Dowd's performance after the match.

Porto bring down CSKA

AFP, Moscow

CSKA Moscow's Champions League hopes dipped dramatically here Tuesday after a comprehensive 2-0 defeat to group G rivals FC Porto.

FC Porto had a red hot start in the icy Russian temperatures, taking a second-minute lead through Ricardo Quaresma.

Argentinian Lucho Gonzalez then hit a superb second-half goal for the Portuguese visitors, who moved top of the group ahead of Arsenal's match against SV Hamburg at Highbury.

CSKA's recent league title victory celebrations were tempered by the news that their coach Valery Gazzaev's younger brother Ruslan had been killed in a car crash on Saturday.

On Tuesday, Gazzaev could only watch as his side succumbed to a conspicuously superior side who pushed them into second place in the group.

In their final group game against SV Hamburg in a fortnight the Russians could be forced into battling to stay in the competition, but they will do so without Brazilian striker Vagner Love.

Love was booked in the second half. Influential Bosnian midfielder Elvir Rahimic will also miss that match after picking up a yellow card.

Porto's early lead hit CSKA hard, but was merely a sign of things to come.

After just two minutes Helder Postiga found Lisandro Lopez down the right and he produced a superb pass across the penalty area which the Porto striker met with a shot that found the far corner of Igor Akinfeev's net.

It was Quaresma's first ever goal in his 19th Champions League appearances.

Porto were on fire despite the icy conditions.

First Postiga forced Akinfeev into turning the ball round the post and from the resulting corner Pepe should have scored as the ball evaded all the defenders but free at the far post he volleyed over the bar.

CSKA won their third league title inside four years on Saturday, however in this match they were sorely lacking any kind of winning

instinct, and Porto proved all too dangerous on the counter attack.

In the second half CSKA's fortunes dipped again when Love was booked shortly after the restart, assuring he would miss CSKA's next, potentially crucial fixture against Hamburg.

And on the hour mark the Russians were stunned again when Porto skipper Lucho Gonzalez finished off a superb offensive action by firing past Akinfeev to give Porto a deserved 2-0 lead.

The ball was played in high from the right of Akinfeev's goal and Lisandro Lopez headed the ball down towards Lucho Gonzalez who was unmarked on the edge of the area.

The Argentinian coolly hit a

swerving first-time shot past the diving keeper to claim his third goal of this season's competition.

Porto almost struck a third in the 69th minute when Lucho Gonzalez set up Postiga with a deft pass to the right of the six-yard box, but the striker's close-range blast was blocked by the keeper.

CSKA had little to offer in reply, and in the 73rd minute they had another reason to think about their final group game when Rahimic was booked for a foul on Bruno Alves.

In the dying minutes Love gave the hosts a glint of hope, but after fighting his way through a crowd of Porto defenders the Brazilian's lofted shot bobbed as he made contact and sailed well wide of Helton's right hand post.



FC Porto players celebrate a Lucho Gonzalez strike that put them two ahead against CSKA Moscow during their Champions League encounter in Moscow on Tuesday.

Technology on the cards

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Goal-line technology will be used in next year's World Club Championship following trials this year in junior competitions run by world football's governing body, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said on Tuesday.

FIFA had planned to use the technology in this year's World Cup but shelved the idea after trials had proved inconclusive.

"In 2005 we did different tests at the Under-17 World Cup in Peru but the evidence wasn't clear so we will continue to carry out trials in junior competitions in 2007," Blatter told a news conference in Madrid.

"We will then use it at the 2007 World Club Championship and offer its use at other FIFA competitions too."

England's Premier League, which intends to submit a paper on the issue to FIFA in January, welcomed the news, describing it as a "step in the right direction".

"There were problems of course as we know in the beginning, but from our studies, this technology can be very effective," said Premier League spokesman Dan Johnson.

But proposals by the English league on the introduction of a "video-referee" to solve other arguments during a game such as offside, penalty claims and off-the-ball clashes were quickly dismissed by both FIFA and UEFA, the European governing body.

Blatter said goal-line video equipment was the only type of technology that might be used to help referees, stressing the need for improved training for match officials.

"We need to have better training for referees and especially linesmen," he said.

"Referees need to be professional and the linesmen must be specialists. The 2009 Confederations Cup will only use specialist linesmen."

UEFA chief executive Lars-Christer Olsson said his organisation was in favour of goal-line technology, but said this was "farenough".

"The goal-line system is in real-time and happens quickly, but we are concerned that video-refereeing would stop the flow of the game," he told Reuters after a meeting at the European Parliament in Brussels.

"This would also open up windows for further commercials in the middle of the match, which would damage its image and secondly this would lead to a referee's authority being undermined during a match."

The English Premier League said that despite these comments, it still hoped the broader issue of video technology would be debated by UEFA and FIFA next year.

Nakamura stuns United

AFP, Glasgow

A sensational Shunsuke Nakamura free-kick helped Celtic make history in the Champions League with a crucial 1-0 win at home to Manchester United here on Tuesday.

The Japanese international's perfectly-struck set-piece with only nine minutes remaining ensured the Scottish champions emerged from the competition's group stages for the first time.

Celtic's 1-0 win, coupled with their 3-2 defeat against United at Old Trafford, means that even if Benfica win their last game against the English side, the Glasgow club go through on goal difference

ahead of Sir Alex Ferguson's team.

Celtic keeper Artur Boruc was also a hero for the Hoops, saving a Louis Saha penalty in the final minute after Spanish referee Manuel Enrique Gonzalez ruled that a Ronaldo free-kick had struck the hand of Shaun Maloney.

Celtic skipper Neil Lennon had to be told they had qualified for the knockout phase, but the northern Irishman was quick to condemn the penalty decision before pouring praise on Boruc and Nakamura.

"It's the best result of my career," said Lennon. "The (penalty) decision was crazy but credit to Boruc for the save."

"If this means we go through, then I am ecstatic."

Lennon added: "Nakamura has to be one of the best free-kick takers in the world. You've seen that he did exactly the same against United at

Old Trafford."

Celtic manager Gordon Strachan and his Manchester United opposite number Sir Alex Ferguson were in shock for different reasons.

"I can't believe it, I will have to double check in the morning just to make sure," said Strachan, who has enjoyed frosty relations with Ferguson since writing a tell all book about the United chief, having played for him both at Aberdeen and United.

Strachan went on to praise Nakamura.

"He is as good as anyone in the world right now."

Ferguson admitted that his side had failed to take advantage of all their dominance.

"To be honest, losing this game is very hard to take," he said.

"I am in shock," was his succinct

assessment.

It means United will now fight it out with Benfica for the remaining qualifying spot in Group F.

United had pushed Celtic on to the back foot from kick-off as they looked to win the group with a game to spare.

French striker Saha tested Boruc in the fourth minute when he latched on to Paul Telfer's loose ball and struck a low drive from 20 yards which the Polish international gathered to his chest.

An audacious Wayne Rooney volley from a Ryan Giggs corner whistled just wide of the post in the 30th minute with Boruc struggling to get across his line.

Strachan was clearly displeased with his side's first half performance and made a double substitution at the break, bringing Czech

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Celtic's Japanese star Shunsuke Nakamura (R) curls in a superb freekick for the winning goal over Manchester United in their Champions League clash at Celtic Park on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Odonkor set for surgery

AFP, Berlin

Real Betis's German international midfielder David Odonkor is set to undergo surgery on his right knee, the national team doctor confirmed Tuesday.

The 22-year-old picked up the injury during last Wednesday's Euro 2008 Group D qualifier against Cyprus in Nicosia which finished 1-1.

Odonkor was one of the revelations of the 2006 World Cup when he won a surprise call-up by coach Jürgen Klinsmann.

The operation is expected to take place on Thursday.

De la Pena staying put

INTERNET, undated

Ivan de la Pena is set to commit his future to Espanyol after being informed that the Montjuic outfit want him to sign a new contract.

The 'Little Buddha' is happy back in his favoured role of central midfielder and is tipped to agree to extend his stay at the Liga club.

Espanyol sporting director Paco Herrera approached the 30-year-old recently and, although he will take his time over the decision, de la Pena is ready to commit the

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