

Barca, Gunners bow out

PARIS, Nov 26 (AFP/AP): A pulsating 3-3 draw at Barcelona on Wednesday means Champions Manchester United must wait to book a place in the European Champions League quarterfinals after group rivals Bayern Munich saw off Brondby to move above them.

While both United and Bayern await their fate, German league champions Kaiserslautern sneaked almost unnoticed into the last eight despite losing 2-1 at Benfica, thanks to an injury-time header from Jurgen Rische.

United, for whom Dwight Yorke (twice) and Andy Cole were on target in the Nou Camp to end Barcelona's hopes, must now beat three-time European champions, Bayern in their final Group D match on December 9 at Old Trafford.

The Bavarians lead the group by one point going into that showdown following a 2-0 home win over Denmark's Brondby - second-half goals from Carsten Jancker and Mario Basler wrapping up deserved win.

Defending champions Real Madrid slumped 3-1 at Inter Milan to leave their chances of a place in the last eight hanging in the balance.

Roberto Baggio scored twice in the final five minutes for Inter at the San Siro to send the Italians top of Group C and make them the bookmakers' joint favourites - alongside Manchester United.

In Inter's group, Spartak Moscow dropped two vital points at home in a goalless draw with Australia's Sturm Graz to remain third one point behind Real and two behind Inter.

BARCELONA-3, MAN. UNITED-3

At the Nou Camp, Manchester United had goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel to thank for their hard-won point after he denied Brazilian striker Giovanni in the dying minutes with a brilliant save.

United were shocked into action after another of Barca's Brazilian contingent Sonny Anderson fired the Catalan club into the lead after just 49 seconds with his fourth Champions League goal in five matches.

Denis Irwin could only nod out a cross by Giovanni straight to the former Monaco star and he stepped past Gary Neville before firing home.

Anderson was also on target in the first match at Old Trafford where United led a two-goal lead in another equally entertaining 3-3 draw.

United got back on terms in the 25th minute when Dwight Yorke cracked home a crisp drive from the edge of the area after superb work by Swedish winger Blomqvist.

United were clearly in the ascendancy after the break and Andy Cole made it 2-1 following a brilliant one-two with Yorke eight minutes into the half.

But just four minutes later Rivaldo scored from a brilliant freekick, completely wrong-footing Schmeichel.

Yorke was not to be denied and made it 3-2 to United in the 68th minute.

But Barcelona levelled once again five minutes later through an outstanding overhead kick from Rivaldo, who then promptly hit the crossbar in a furious finish.

Barca keeper Ruud Hesp



Paul Scholes (R) of Manchester United pulls the jersey of Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Rivaldo in a desperate attempt to contain the ace playmaker during their UEFA Champions' League match at Nou Camp in Barcelona on November 25. — AFP photo

made a superb fingertip save late on from Yorke, who has formed a lethal partnership with Cole since arriving from Aston Villa.

LENS-1, ARSENAL-0

English Premiership champions Arsenal meanwhile crashed out after losing 1-0 at Wembley to French champions Lens in Group E.

The Gunners, who were without Dutch striker Dennis Bergkamp and French midfielders Patrick Vieira and Emmanuel Petit, struggled to carve out any good chances and were undone by a Michel Debeve goal with a quarter of an hour remaining, Debeve sliding in at the far post to turn the ball past Seaman.

Arsenal's frustration boiled over at the end when Ray Parlour was dismissed for an ugly 'off-the-ball' clash with Cyrill Rool, and Lens also finished with ten men after striker Tony Vairelles received his marching orders for fouling Lee Dixon.

The Gunners' French coach Arsene Wenger could not hide his despair.

"We are hugely disappointed. It was a good match but everything went against us. Nothing has gone right for us in the Champions League," he said.

"Not playing at Highbury is no excuse. We beat Panathinaikos here at Wembley," said Wenger.

Lens counterpart Daniel Leclercq described the win as one of the greatest moments in the club's modest history, but criticised the sending off of Vairelles, claiming Dixon had pushed him.

DYNAMO KIEV-2, PANATHINAIKOS-1

Dynamo Kiev went top of the group after coming behind to beat Greek outfit Panathinaikos 2-1 and leap to the top of Group E.

An Angelos Basinas own-goal ten minutes from time clinched a crucial victory for the hosts, who had fallen behind to a 36th minute opener from Greek midfielder Andreas Lagonikakis after he latched

onto a ricochet from a corner. Kiev's Sergei Rebrov equalised in the 72nd minute for his fourth goal in the competition.

Kiev now need to draw at Lens in their last game to qualify.

BENFICA-2, KAISERSLAUTERN-1

In Group F, Kaiserslautern just squeezed into the last eight despite going down 2-1 at Portugal's Benfica.

Although Benfica can still catch them on points Rische's late, late goal means that the Germans have ousted the Portuguese on the basis of their face-to-face meetings by thanks to that one away goal, having won the match in Germany 1-0.

Kaiserslautern needs a draw at home to HJK Helsinki in two weeks to guarantee top place.

PSV EINDHOVEN-3, HJK HELSINKI-1

Three goals by the leading scorer in Dutch soccer, Ruud

Blatter reaffirms Africa backing

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 26 (Reuters/Internet): FIFA president Sepp Blatter reaffirmed his support for an Africa bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals when he met South African president Nelson Mandela on Thursday.

"It is logical that the World Cup finals goes to Africa in 2006 and if they can prove they can organise it, then I will back it 100 percent," he said after awarding Mandela with the FIFA Order of Merit.

Blatter, who also met the South African World Cup bid committee, added: "Every other continent has had an opportunity and we now have to work to get it to Africa."

English FA to pull its socks up

LONDON, Nov 26: The Football Association of England has vowed to step up efforts to stamp racism out of the football after losing an appeal against a 28,000 pounds fine imposed following England's game in Sweden, reports Xinhua.

The fine was imposed by European football's governing body, UEFA, after a section of England supporters were accused of racially abusing striker Henrik Larsson during the Euro 2000 qualifying match in Stockholm two months ago.

FA lawyers disputed that there had been any racist chanting, but UEFA's appeals body rejected an appeal against the fine following a hearing in Geneva.

A UEFA statement read: "The appeal was rejected following evidence presented by the referee, Pierluigi Collina, and the UEFA delegate at the match, Mattieu Sprengers, stressing that on at least eight occasions during the game English fans had directed racist chants at the Swedish player, Henrik Larsson."



Ricardo Garcia (C) and Gustavo Endres (R) of Brazil try to block a spike from Spain's Carlos Vega during the World Volleyball Championship Group G match in Osaka yesterday. Brazil won 15-4, 13-15, 15-5, 15-9. — AFP photo

Daily Star's first match today

Sports Reporter



The Daily Star will kick off its John Player Gold Leaf (JPGL)-Lights Professional's Cup cricket tournament campaign against SK + F at the Uttara Friends Club ground today.

With an ever dependable Morshed Ali Khan at the helm, the leading English daily will be looking forward for a positive start against the renowned Pharmaceuticals, who recorded a comfortable victory over British American Tobacco (BAT) Bangladesh Limited in the tournament opener on November 13.

Meanwhile, in the other two matches of the day, BOC will take on Credit Agricole Indosuez at the BAT ground; while Nestle Bangladesh Limited (NBL) will lock their horns against British American Tobacco at the BUET ground.

All the matches, will start at 9 am. Eight office teams are taking part in the meet.

Zidane's no to Istanbul

TURIN, Italy, Nov 26: Juventus' World Cup star Zinedine Zidane said on Wednesday that he and his teammates will not be going to Istanbul to face Galatasaray next week, reports AFP.

The European Champions League tie has been caught up in a diplomatic crisis over Italy's refusal to extradite Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, who is wanted by Turkey on treason and terrorism charges.

But Zidane made it clear that UEFA's decision on Monday to postpone the tie by one week did not go far enough.

"We're not going to Istanbul: It's too risky," said the Frenchman at the club's training ground here.

"I'm only speaking personally, but all my teammates think the same way; Galatasaray v Juventus has to be played in another country, not Turkey."

Italian spikers down Dutch

HAMAMATSU (Japan), Nov 26: Defending champions Italy became the last team to earn a semifinal berth when they defeated arch rivals the Netherlands at the men's World Volleyball Championship today, reports AFP.

Earlier, Yugoslavia took the first set 15-3 against Russia to secure top place in group H, and then sent on substitutes to give the last players a rest, letting Russia take the following three sets 15-13, 15-5, 15-11.

The win meant Russia's hopes of a semi-final place were temporarily kept alive, but the Italians, who suffered a severe defeat to Yugoslavia Wednesday, rallied to a 15-2, 15-7, 15-1 victory to avenge their loss in the Atlanta Olympics final to the Dutch.

Yugoslavia, Italy and Russia stood with six wins against one loss. The Yugoslavs took top spot with one more set won than Italy.

In Group G in Osaka, Cuba outlasted Argentina, 15-12, 15-4, 15-12 to take second place and qualify for the semifinals.

Brazil ended top with seven straight wins beating Spain 15-4, 13-15, 15-5, 15-9.

In Saturday's semifinals in Tokyo, Italy will take on Barcelona Olympic champions Brazil, while Yugoslavia play Cuba.

"I'm really satisfied to finish top of such a tough group and I'm happy that my players took the first set really seriously. Our second six also did very well," said Yugoslav head coach Zoran Gajic.

Cuban coach Juan Diaz Marino said: "We are very happy, because we have achieved our initial goal to be among top four."

"We have to play very well against Yugoslavia. We played them and we won in the semifinals of the world league. I kept (Rodolfo) Sanchez and (Raul) Diago Izquierdo for the matches in Tokyo," Marino said.

In other matches, the United States breezed past China 15-11, 15-8, 15-4, and Ukraine downed Greece 15-3, 12-15, 15-3, 15-2. In Group H South Korea defeated Canada 7-15, 15-9, 15-11, 15-5 in Group G.

Baggio: Triumph of the divine spirit

MILAN, Nov 26 (AFP): Scoring the goals which sank Real Madrid and propelled Inter Milan towards the European Champions

League quarter-final, Baggio came true for Roberto Baggio.

The world's best known and arguably best-loved number 10 had spent the last three months battling with a tendon injury and was relegated to the substitutes' bench here on Wednesday night.

But with the score deadlocked at 1-1, and Inter's hopes of reaching the last eight beginning to fade with little more than 20 minutes to play, Baggio came on to score twice in the last five minutes.

"I often dream," he admitted. "This was an important match and I had been hoping I could

make it finish like it did." "It was my dream, but it was one that all my teammates shared to because matches like these are fundamental for a team. I scored those goals not for me, but for the team to win the match."

"Winning brings a group of players closer together and gives them confidence. We all wanted to turn the match around. We took the lead and then they equalised, but the desire to win was there right from the start."

"Obviously, everyone wants to play from the first minute, but if every match were to finish like this I'd be happy to play just 20 minutes."

Not only did the ending signal Baggio's return to form, but it also raised hopes of a revival too in the Serie A where Inter are struggling down in mid-table after losing four of their last six matches.

Tipped as pre-season favourites for the title, the injuries suffered by Baggio and Ronaldo have robbed the team of its shape, while the losing streak could yet cost coach Gigi Simoni his job.

But Baggio is a born optimist, and convinced that things could be about to change now that the two men are back.

"The important thing now is not to throw away everything that we have built, everything we have achieved here tonight," he said.

"We have to realise that every match is difficult and we have to go into it with the same determination that we had here, otherwise we risk going back to the highs and lows that unfortunately we've had until now."

Looking forward to renewing his partnership with Ronaldo, he said: "Every player needs to work on their fitness. Unfortunately, he has been out of action for a long time, like me until recently."

"Now he and I just need to play, it's the only solution." Though Baggio wants to end the inconsistency which has dogged Inter Milan this season, the 31-year-old is no stranger to highs and lows in his own career.

After two unhappy years on and off the bench at AC Milan, he joined Bologna in the summer of 1997 and went on to score a personal record of 22 league goals, also earning his return to the national side.

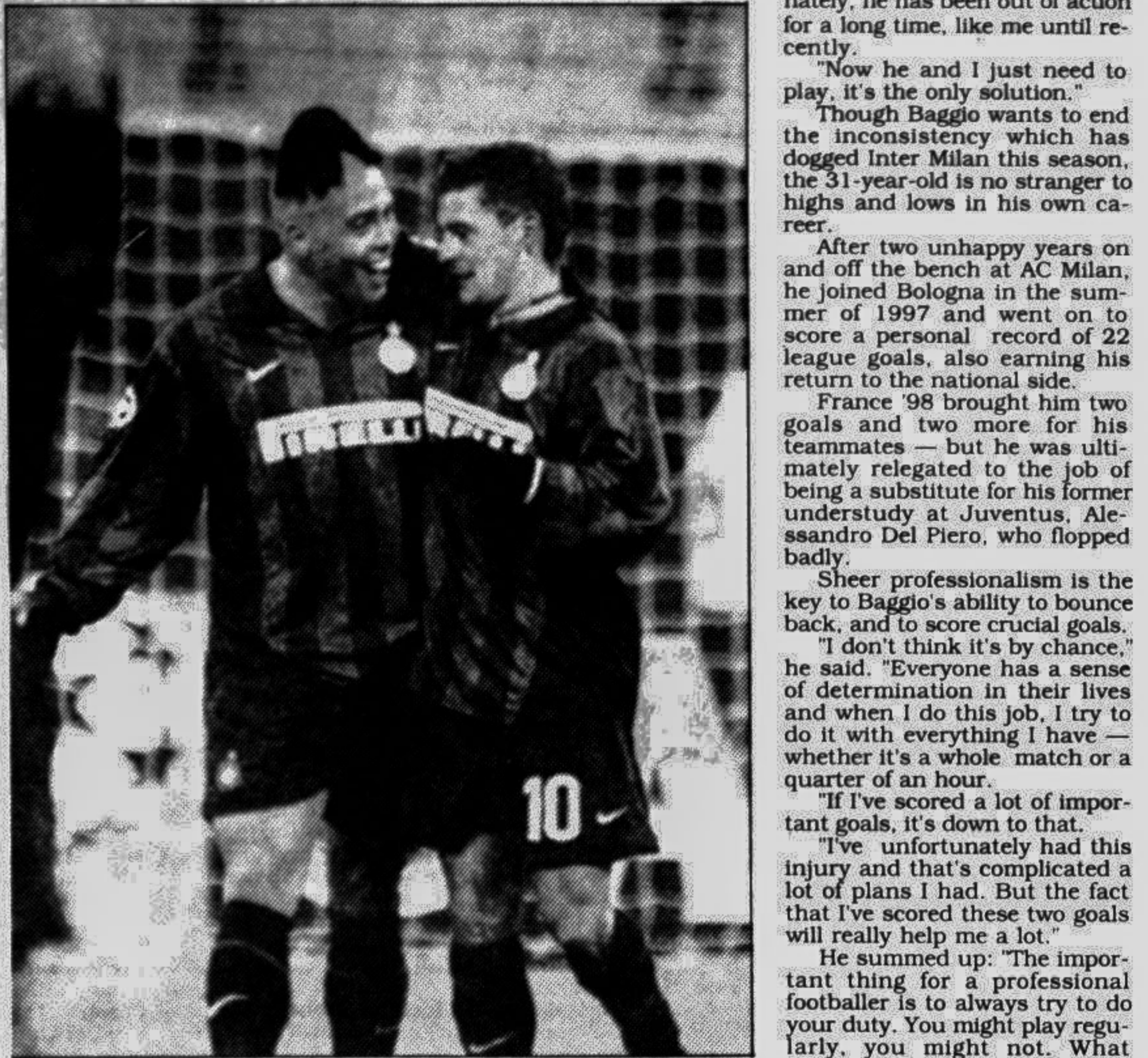
France '98 brought him two goals and two more for his teammates - but he was ultimately relegated to the job of being a substitute for his former understudy at Juventus, Alessandro Del Piero, who flopped badly.

Sheer professionalism is the key to Baggio's ability to bounce back, and to score crucial goals. "I don't think it's by chance," he said. "Everyone has a sense of determination in their lives and when I do this job, I try to do it with everything I have - whether it's a whole match or a quarter of an hour."

"If I've scored a lot of important goals, it's down to that. I've unfortunately had this injury and that's complicated a lot of plans I had. But the fact that I've scored these two goals will really help me a lot."

He summed up: "The important thing for a professional footballer is to always try to do your duty. You might play regularly, you might not. What counts is that when you do, you bring out everything that's inside you."

"In my case, if I do that, it means I don't have any regrets."



DEADLY DUO: Ronaldo (L) and Roberto Baggio celebrate one of the latter's two goals during Inter Milan's 3-1 Champions' League triumph over Real Madrid at the San Siro in Milan on November 25. — AP/UNB photo

United calibre on show

MANCHESTER, England, Nov 26 (Reuters/Internet): Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson might not admit it, but his team's 3-3 Champions' League draw with Barcelona on Wednesday night was a testament to how far they have come since he started chasing his European dream.

The last time United visited the Nou Camp in 1994 they were beaten 4-0 by a team that contained players of the calibre of Romario, Hristo Stoitichkov and Ronald Koeman.

Ferguson has admitted it was one of the worst defeats of his career after his gamble on leaving out Peter Schmeichel to ensure he did not break the three foreign player rule backfired.

But from the phoenix of those ashes has risen a team capable of finally capturing the biggest prize in European football.

And the fact only a mistake by Schmeichel denied United a famous victory was proof that Ferguson's canny planning is bearing fruit.

He said: "We have to be satisfied to come away with a draw because it seemed one side might eventually score a winner."

"We concentrated better in Munich but despite that, you had to say we scored three goals in the Nou Camp which is great."

But getting to the stage where United can travel to the great clubs of Europe confident of getting a result has been a

painful process.

One of the lessons Ferguson learned from that heavy defeat in Spain was the need to build a side of home-grown players and concentrate more on the European Cup and less on the domestic front.

His bid to test out his masterplan in the following season was short-lived as United went out in the first round of the UEFA Cup to Rotor Volgograd.

But his single-mindedness nearly paid off in the 1996-97 season as his stars quickly learned a European style of play that was new to English clubs banned from European action following the Heysel disaster.

But despite reaching the semifinals after qualifying from a tough group, United lost out to eventual winners Borussia Dortmund by two deflected goals.

Ferguson was left only with the consolation that the European experience gained would stand his team in good stead for the following season.

He said at the time reaching the last four showed United were making progress.

But despite his claims United slipped out at the quarter-final stage last term as Monaco repeated the sucker punch treatment after the Reds had provided their fans with some of the club's best displays in Europe.

The 3-2 victory over Juventus at Old Trafford was Ferguson's brand of football at its best with quick breaking moves that tore apart the Italian giants.

But the European dream was snuffed out for another season.

by a catalogue of injuries that saw sit out large parts of the second half of the season.

Depth in the squad was the one area Ferguson knew he had to improve and his summer spending spree that saw Jaap Stam, Jesper Blomqvist and Dwight Yorke sign for the Reds has finally given United the look of potential world beaters.

Giggs' current absence with a broken bone in his foot has hardly been noticed as Blomqvist has terrorised defences down the left and Yorke has struck up a deadly understanding with Andy Cole.

But now comes Ferguson's biggest test.

His free-scoring side must find a way through Bayern Munich's methodical defence without falling prey to their Achilles' heel - gifting opponents a soft goal that could ruin their chances of reaching the knock-out stages.

No let off for Krakow

NYON, Switzerland, Nov 26: Polish club Wisla Krakow's appeal against a one year ban from European football's governing body UEFA here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

UEFA upheld their decision following a knife-throwing incident which ended with Parma's Dino Baggio needing five stitches in a head wound.

UEFA confirmed it would exclude Krakow next time it qualified for any of the European competitions.

SIX NO TRUMPS

A K Sayeedul Huq

WHEN TO TAKE THE ACE ?

(Hand # 137)

North		East	
♠ S: KQ764	♥ H: Q	♠ S: J10	♥ H: 8754
♦ D: J985	♣ C: J74	♦ D: Q1072	♣ C: 653
South (D)		West	
♠ S: 85	♥ H: AKJ10986	♠ S: A932	♥ H: 32
♦ D: A8	♣ C: A102	♦ D: K43	♣ C: KQ98

Bidding: East West were vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1 Heart	Pass	1 Spade	Pass
3 Hearts	Pass	4 Hearts	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South had a good Heart sit. When partner bid spades in response, he double raised Hearts to indicate that partner should bid games if he had the values, he did not have to worry about the Heart suit. North dutifully bid game in Hearts, although he did not have much outside the Spade suit.

THE PLAY

West led a Heart. The declarer overtook the Queen to clear trumps in four rounds. Then he played the 8 of Spades. Should West take his Ace now? He decided to duck not because, he did not have a suitable return but because the declarer could not go back to his hand without setting up a trick for defence either in Clubs or Diamonds as West himself was holding the Kings in both the suits. However, there was a danger that the declarer might have a singleton in Spades and West might lose a trick for nothing. But the risk was worth taking.

The Queen in the dummy was the trick while East dropped the Jack to indicate either singleton or J10. The declarer then played the J of Clubs from the dummy and played small from the closed hand. West won the Queen and then he had to think very carefully. He could not play Spade, nor could he play a Club as the declarer, Club would indicate that he had the Ten. Could the declarer had the AQ of Diamonds? Very unlikely, for, in that case he probably would have led a Diamond instead of a Club unless of course he placed the King of Clubs with the West. Again, if he had AQ of Diamonds, that would total 18 HCP in the declarer's hand, and in order to indicate 18 HCP he would have opened one Club under the bidding system followed by them. West therefore placed the Q of Diamonds with the partner and therefore led a small Diamond. The declarer took East's 10 with the Ace and led another Spade. This time, West took the Ace as the declarer had no entry in the dummy unless partner had a singleton Spade. As the cards were, the contract was set as the declarer could not cash the second Spade trick. Notice that if West did not duck the first Spade trick, the declarer could have made the hand.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
1 Ecuador's capital
6 Bolivia's capital
11 Andean pack animals
12 Expresses in words
14 Milky
15 Fix wickwork
16 Bat wood
17 Basis of rubber
19 Prevention
20 Incurison
22 Family mem.
23 Reply to the Little Red Hen
24 Sgt. Bilko
26 Pleasure
28 Frenzied
30 Cartesian conclusion
31 Wedding reception
35 Taboo
39 New rock
40 Kinesy subject
- 42 Hindu discipline
43 Army rank
44 Spot on TV?
46 Les hommes
47 Schwarzenegger movie
49 Lasso loops
51 Snarl
52 Cantant-kerous
53 Carries noise
54 Requisites
1 Child of the streets
3 NYC transit letters
4 Drugery
5 Felix's roommate
6 Rhine seductress
7 Pinnacle for short
8 Snapshot
9 Comparison
10 Pinnacle noise
11 Trumpet
12 Telecomm. hookup syst.
19 Wants
21 Cupid's yokemate
23 Shaker co-star
25 Com spike
27 Telecomm. hookup syst.
29 Wants
31 Cupid's yokemate
32 Turkish mountain
33 Selena's style
34 Actor Harrison
36 Bruted (about)
37 Those with wandering eyes
38 Impudent
41 Inactive gas
44 Soccer legend
45 Traditional tales
48 York's rank
50 Inseparable
- SOLUTION time: 28 mins.
SAJAK RAM SMU
INUSA EGO EAN
TODAY JUMANJI
APOGEE WOOF
AMI SOG PERRY
LOGI ATARI
TELA IDEB JAM
DIEB IDEB HUGO
BANGCO TAP JET
IDOL DOREMI
JUVENAL TITILE
OLIA LIVE ARSON
WITE PEN LOUSE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11					12				13
14					15				
16		17	18			19			
20		21	22		23				
24		25		26	27				
28		29	30						
31	32	33		34	35	36	37	38	
39			40	41		42			
43			44		45		46		
47		48		49	50				
51					52				
53					54				

CRYPTOQUIP
NCBM QFGYO IACWCIFBMB
GCTGPS: ZVAT VPTISO
MVAO ZFWW WFYA
YAO WFNABMCTA QFA
Yesterday's Cryptquip: I'D RATHER DODGE AN ENTHUSIASTIC GEYSER BECAUSE IT BECOMES MUCH TOO GUSHY.
Today's Cryptquip clue: Y equals K
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.