

Wisden credit for McGrath

BRISBANE, Nov 3: Fast bowler Glenn McGrath's destruction of England's Ashes challenge last summer helped him be named Wisden's Australian Cricketer-of-the-Year on Wednesday, reports AFP.

He edged out captain Steve Waugh for the prestigious prize primarily because of his 24 wickets against England last summer and a big-hearted 30 victims during only four Tests in the West Indies.

McGrath, who lived in a caravan when he started playing grade cricket in Sydney, is a modest man and was thrilled by the recognition from the crick-eting bible.

To be named cricketer-of-the-year in a team like the Australian team at the moment is a pretty big buzz," said McGrath, who has 244 wickets from 53 Tests.

Wisden also gave retired Australian wicketkeeper Ian Healy an award in recognition of a 119-Test career that netted 395 victims, the most by any govt man in history.

Healy is to be honoured at the Gabba ground on Friday, before the first of three Tests against Pakistan gets under way.

McGrath said the Pakistani top order would be vulnerable against the Australian pace attack.

"If they get it right they're a pretty dangerous team so we'll be right on the ball from ball one, the first session here will set up the first Test which will set up the series," he said.

"We'll be looking to put them behind the eight ball to start off with and keep on top of them. On these type of wickets in Australia there's more bounce and I think our bowlers can get onto their batsmen, that's probably the biggest difference we have over them."

He added that if Australia could consolidate on that "I think that's where we'll beat them."

McGrath also said Australia's humiliation of Pakistan in the World Cup final in June would be an on-field talking point during the series.

"I'm sure that left a lot of scars, we'll remember it and I'm sure they'll remember it, we'll remind them every now and again," he said.

Winward win

KINGSTON, Nov 3: The Windward Islands ended their Red Stripe Bowl cricket campaign on a winning note Tuesday, thrashing Bermuda by 161 runs at Kensington Park, reports AP.

The match had no bearing on the tournament, as both teams failed to make the semi-final round, having lost their earlier matches to Jamaica and Guyana.

After winning the toss and taking first use of the pitch, the Windwards were bowled out for 209 in 49.4 overs. But penetrative bowling from their spin and pace attack routed the Bermudians for a mere 48 in 27.3 overs, the lowest score in the tournament.

Captain Rawle Lewis was the hero for the Windwards, scoring an aggressive 67 at bat and then leading the Windwards attack on Bermuda's batting with three wickets for ten runs off 5.3 overs.

Medium pacer Richard was Bermuda's best bowler with five wickets for 35 runs off his 10 overs. There were two wickets each for fastbowlers Nixon McLean and McNeil Morgan, and spinner Roy Marshall.

Buchanan gets down to work

BRISBANE, Nov 3: Australia have been under-achieving in the Test arena since winning the Ashes against England here last summer, new coach John Buchanan said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Steve Waugh's incumbency as Test skipper has realised a 2-2 series draw with the West Indies and retention of the Frank Worrell Trophy in the Caribbean, a waterlogged 1-0 loss in Sri Lanka and a one-off win over Zimbabwe in Harare late last month.

Winning the World Cup in England last June took the heat off the Australians but Buchanan, who introduced himself to his players on Tuesday night after taking over from Geoff Marsh, said better results in Tests were attainable.

Buchanan, a Queenslander, walked onto the Gabba for the first time in his new role Wednesday to read a sign on the giant video screen: "Congratulations and good luck John Buchanan, Australian coach."

"You couldn't say they are not a successful side, they have got the trophies to say that, but they would be the first to admit they could be doing more than what they have done," Buchanan said.

"As a group we talked about that last night. There are some goals we can set ourselves, not just for the team but the squad and that will carry into the way that (Australian) states develop their players as well."

"So we have something pictured three or four years down the track."

Buchanan told the players he was proud to be a part of their tight-knit group and it would take "the next few months" for everybody to get to know each other.

A major problem for Australia this calendar year has been its top-order batting, which has relied too much on captain Steve Waugh and lately No.6 Ricky Ponting.

"We'll have a much better appreciation of where we stand batting-wise at the end of these six Test matches" against Pakistan and India, Buchanan said.



Lazio's Yugoslav star Dejan Stankovic (R) and Dynamo Kyiv's Yuri Dmitrulin scuffle for possession during their Champions' League match at Kyiv in November 2. — AFP photo

Lucky passage for Kyiv



KIEV, Nov 3: Dynamo Kyiv qualified for the second phase of the Champions League on Tuesday despite losing 1-0 at home to Lazio in their final Group A tie, reports Reuters.

Dynamo, last season's semi-finalists, finished level on seven points with Bayer Leverkusen, who drew 0-0 with Slovenia's Maribor Teatonic.

But the Ukrainians went through to the last 16 thanks to their 1-1 away draw at Leverkusen in September and a 4-2 defeat of the Germans in Kiev last month.

Lazio, who already clinched the top spot in Group A, finished with 14 points.

Dynamo assistant Alexei Mikhailichenko, who took over from ill head coach Valery Lobanovsky, had to thank the Slovenians for their efforts.

"Only showed that we had a difficult group and every team, including Maribor, had a chance to go further, said the former Rangers midfielder.

"Obviously, we are happy with the outcome, especially after losing our first two matches."

Lazio boss Sven-Goran Eriksson was equally pleased with the result.

"I have to thank my players for giving their best effort against very tough opponents," said the Swede.

Lazio took the lead in the 18th minute when Kiev defender Ramiz Manuedov accidentally put the ball into his own net after a goalmouth struggle with Dario Marcolin.

The hosts, urged on by a 65,000-strong home crowd which included Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, wasted several good scoring chances before the interval.

Ukraine international Andriy Gusin was the most active, coming close on three occasions. His best chance came in the 24th minute but Lazio second string keeper Marco Ballotta made a fine save on Gusin's point blank header.

Dynamo pressed forward after the break, but Lazio, playing without several leading players, held strikers Serhiy Rebrov and second half substitute Maxim Shatskiikh well in check.

Simon Inzaghi had a chance to make it 2-0 for the Italian league leaders when he went clear on goal late in the game but Dynamo keeper Olexander Shovkovsky made a key save.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated results in European Champions League matches played in Groups A-D Tuesday: Group A At Kyiv, Ukraine Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) 0 Lazio (Ita) 1 (Manuedov 18-g) At Leverkusen, Germany Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 0 Maribor (Slo) 0 Group B At Florence, Italy Fiorentina (Ita) 3 (Bressan 14, Balbo 56, 69) Barcelona (Spa) 3 (Figo 20, Rivaldo 43, 74) At Stockholm, Sweden AIK Solna (Swe) 2 (Andersson 41, 68) Arsenal (Eng) 3 (Overmars 17, 52, Suster 56) Group C At Rotterdam, Netherlands Feyenoord (Ned) 1 (Somalia 86) 0 Rosenborg (Nor) 0 At Porto, Portugal Boavista (Por) 1 (Emanuel 16) Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 0 Group D At Manchester, England Manchester United (Eng) 2 (Solskjaer 56, Keane 69) Sturm Graz (Aut) 1 (Vastic 87-pen) At Marseille, France Marseille (Fra) 2 (Bakayoko 53, Diawara 89) Croatia Zagreb (Cro) 2 (Mujcin 42, Mikic 84)

Display pleases Trapattoni

FLORENCE, Italy, Nov 3: Fiorentina coach Giovanni Trapattoni reckons his team have restored their international credibility by drawing 3-3 here with Champions League favourites Barcelona, reports AFP.

Fiorentina, like their opponents, had already qualified for the second round even before they walked out at the Franchi stadium on Tuesday night.

But the Italian side's stirring performance and the quality of the football did much to restore their battered pride after being humiliated by Barcelona 4-2 at the Nou Camp.

Trapattoni, convinced there was a lesson for his team in the point earned here, said: "I'll certainly be giving everyone a tape of this match. There is a lot we can all learn from it."

"We have improved a great deal since the first leg," he said. "And the fact is that this result will have got back our confidence, our determination and our credibility."

"I'd said before the match that I really wanted to erase the humiliation we suffered in the first leg. Clearly, the lads got my message."

Trapattoni also thanked the fans who had been showing signs of unrest at a run of disappointing performances, which ended with last week's surprise 1-0 victory over Arsenal at Wembley.

"Fans are always demanding, but they are also a fair reflection of what's been happening," Trapattoni said. "The people of Florence have realised that the team have been putting their hearts into their last few matches."

"They've realised that we aren't machines, and that we can make mistakes."

Draw spells Leverkusen's doom

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, Nov 3: Germany's Bayer Leverkusen were eliminated from the European Champions League Tuesday after being held to a home 0-0 draw by Slovenian minnows Maribor, reports AFP.

Leverkusen, runners-up to Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga last season, must settle for the consolation prize of a place in the UEFA Cup.

Leverkusen launched a sustained assault on the Maribor goal but the Slovenes seemed to relish playing the role of party-poopers.

Leverkusen's task was not helped by the absence of prolific striker Ulf Kirsten through suspension and four other first teamers through injury, notably Brazilian international Ze Roberto.

Oliver Neuville hit the side netting after six minutes after good work from American Frankie Hejduk and Brazilian Emerson.

And Maribor goalkeeper Luka Gresak foiled Thomas Reichenberger and Carsten Ramelow in the first half.

After the interval Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum introduced two more forwards Thomas Brdaric and Robson Ponte and the move almost paid dividends when Brdaric struck a post.

Fortune favours Feyenoord

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, Nov 3: A late goal from Brazilian star Somalia ensured Dutch champions Feyenoord qualified for the next phase of the European Champions League, reports AFP.

Feyenoord's 1-0 home win over Norway's Rosenborg Trondheim, who had already qualified as group winners, was not enough on its own.

They also relied on Portuguese side Boavista's unexpected 1-0 win over Borussia Dortmund to go through.

The Rotterdam outfit made an entertaining start and Danish striker Jon Dahl Tomasson and Bonaventure Kalou went close in the first 10 minutes.

But then Rosenborg's well-organised defence got to grips with Leo Beenhakker's side, silencing the 42,000 crowd.

A goalless scoreline was beginning to look inevitable but the 73rd minute introduction of Somalia proved Beenhakker's master stroke.

Barca, Fiorentina party



FLORENCE, Italy, Nov 3: Fiorentina and Barcelona celebrated their qualification for the second phase of the European Champions League with a roller coaster 3-3 draw in their final group B match on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

With both clubs already guaranteed a place in the last 16 before kick-off, the two naturally attack-minded sides gave the 28,000 fans full value for their money, Rivaldo and Abel Balbo each scoring twice.

Fiorentina took a 1-0 lead with one of the goals of the competition from midfielder Mauro Bressan but Barcelona led 2-1 by the interval thanks to clinical strikes from Luis Figo and Rivaldo.

Veteran Argentine Abel Balbo then scored twice after the break to edge the Italians back in front before Rivaldo grabbed his second of the match after 74 minutes to ensure Barcelona ended the first stage of the tournament unbeaten.

The Spanish champions topped the group on 14 points with Fiorentina behind them on nine.

"The important thing was to make up for the humiliation of our performance in Barcelona," said Fiorentina coach Giovanni Trapattoni, referring to Barca's imperious 4-2 victory at the Nou Camp in their first clash.

"I think my boys got the message."

Fiorentina took the lead against the run of play in spectacular style.

Teammate Enrico Chiesa was thwarted in an attack down the right but the Barcelona defence failed to clear the ball and it bounced to Bressan well outside the penalty area with his back to goal.

He fired a superb, right-foot bicycle kick over his shoulder, past goalkeeper Francesco Arnao and into the top corner of the net off the underside of the crossbar.

Fiorentina's lead always looked tenuous and within six minutes the Catalans pulled level, taking advantage of the home side's defensive frailties.

Luis Figo stepped past a half-hearted challenge from centre back Alessandro Pierini and, with German wing back Joerg Heinrich seemingly frozen to the spot, the Portuguese midfielder burst into the box and slotted the ball under Francesco Toldo.

Two minutes before halftime the visitors took the lead from a free kick. Figo backheeled the ball to Rivaldo and his low first time shot beat Toldo at his left-hand post.

Barca coach Luis Van Gaal, who rested key defenders Sergi Barjuan and Abelardo Fernandez before kickoff, made further changes during the interval, replacing the experienced Pep Guardiola and Ronald de Boer with Xavi and Carles Puyol.

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Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Rivaldo (C) being congratulated by teammates after one of his two goals against Fiorentina in the Champions' League on Tuesday. — AFP photo



Barcelona's Brazilian superstar Rivaldo (C) being congratulated by teammates after one of his two goals against Fiorentina in the Champions' League on Tuesday. — AFP photo

Some solace for Gunners



STOCKHOLM, Nov 3: English Premier League side Arsenal went out of the Champions League on a high note here Tuesday, beating AIK Solna 3-2, reports AFP.

Arsene Wenger's side now go into the draw for the third round of the UEFA Cup on Friday as consolation for finishing third in Group B.

They will desert Wembley to play all their home ties at their traditional Highbury home.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was heartened by the fitness displayed by French international midfielder Emmanuel Petit and the back-to-

form Marc Overmars, who bagged a double.

World Cup winner Petit, who missed nine matches at the start of the season with a knee ligament injury and looked certain to be out for another long spell when crooked again in last week's Wembley defeat by Fiorentina, rampaged through 77 minutes here.

And Wenger said: "I only took him off before the end as a precaution. He looked much more ready than the two previous games in which he tried to come back and I think he has a good chance to play the full game at Tottenham on Sunday."

That match now takes on prime importance for the Gun-

ners and Petit as his midfield partner Patrick Vieira starts a six-match ban following his spitting shame, immediately afterwards.

Wenger, who was also hopeful that winger Ray Parlour will recover from a strained hamstring within 10 days, got the perfect result against the Swedes to lift his side's spirits.

Overmars opened the scoring in the 17th minute, with Newcastle forward Andreas Newcaston levelling just before the interval.

The home side were on the back foot early in the second half, with Overmars getting his double in the 52nd minute and Davor Suker making it three for the visitors four minutes later.

Andersson saved some of Solna's blushes with his second shortly afterwards.

Wenger said: "We knew it would be a difficult game because we came here with nearly nothing at stake and it was important for me to see the attitude of the players. They did very well."

"I am left with many regrets from the Champions League now that we've been unbeaten in the three away matches but made mistakes at Wembley against Barcelona and Fiorentina."

Wenger left out Tony Adams, Martin Brown and Dennis Bergkamp but said: "We wanted to show that we are a strong team. But it's difficult to accept we missed our best opportunities at home."

"It was a disappointment to go out and we've had enough bad luck in the last two European seasons to be lucky for the next 10 years."

Wenger was also boosted by the form of two-goal Overmars and said: "You could see he was back to his best."

"He had so many injury problems last season but he was sharp tonight and, hopefully, by scoring we will now see a more confident player. He always looked dangerous."

MU's confidence boosting win



MANCHESTER, England, Nov 3: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Roy Keane led European Cup holders Manchester United to a 2-1 win over Sturm Graz in the Champions League on Tuesday — before manager Alex Ferguson promised their fans the best was yet to come this season, reports Reuters.

Although the victory ensured United finished top of Group D, they did not impress without suspended England international David Beckham and Paul Scholes against the enterprising Austrian side.

But Ferguson admitted his side would now improve and he was looking forward to playing the high profile teams left in the Champions League.

"Hopefully we can emerge from the group as an improving team," he said.

"From the experience of last season I would say we look forward to the bigger matches and we are going to get them now."

"But we are not playing anywhere like we did last year but we are not doing badly. It was a difficult group and some teams surprised us."

Sturm Graz manager Ivica Osim praised his team for performing so well despite lacking several key players.

"We have lost five key players in the last month and all we have had left is midfielders and forwards," he said.

"But we did well as it was an experience of a lifetime to play against a team like Manchester United at a full stadium like this one. We are happy to have qualified for the Uefa Cup but we need a little luck in the draw now and we hope to get a team similar in size to ourselves rather than someone like Arsenal."

"We are having a nice time in Europe playing in places like Marseille this year and Madrid last season. These are places we only normally get to see at the cinema."

United, whose form dipped with four defeats in various competitions in October, have now won three in succession without reaching the heights they touched last season.

Striker Andy Cole missed a clearcut chance to give United a first half lead when he inexplicably sidefooted wide of an empty net in the 15th minute.

He later had another shot cleared off the line by Gerald Strafar.

The Austrians nearly took the lead in the third minute when Ivica Vastic's inswinging corner hit the post and Tomislav Kocjan also hit the woodwork with a 22nd-minute volley before United took control of the game.

Solskjaer scored with a stunning volley from the edge of the box in the 57th minute after being presented with the chance by Strafar's weak headed clearance.

Keane added the second with a 70th minute volley after a Ryan Giggs corner had been headed against the bar by David May.

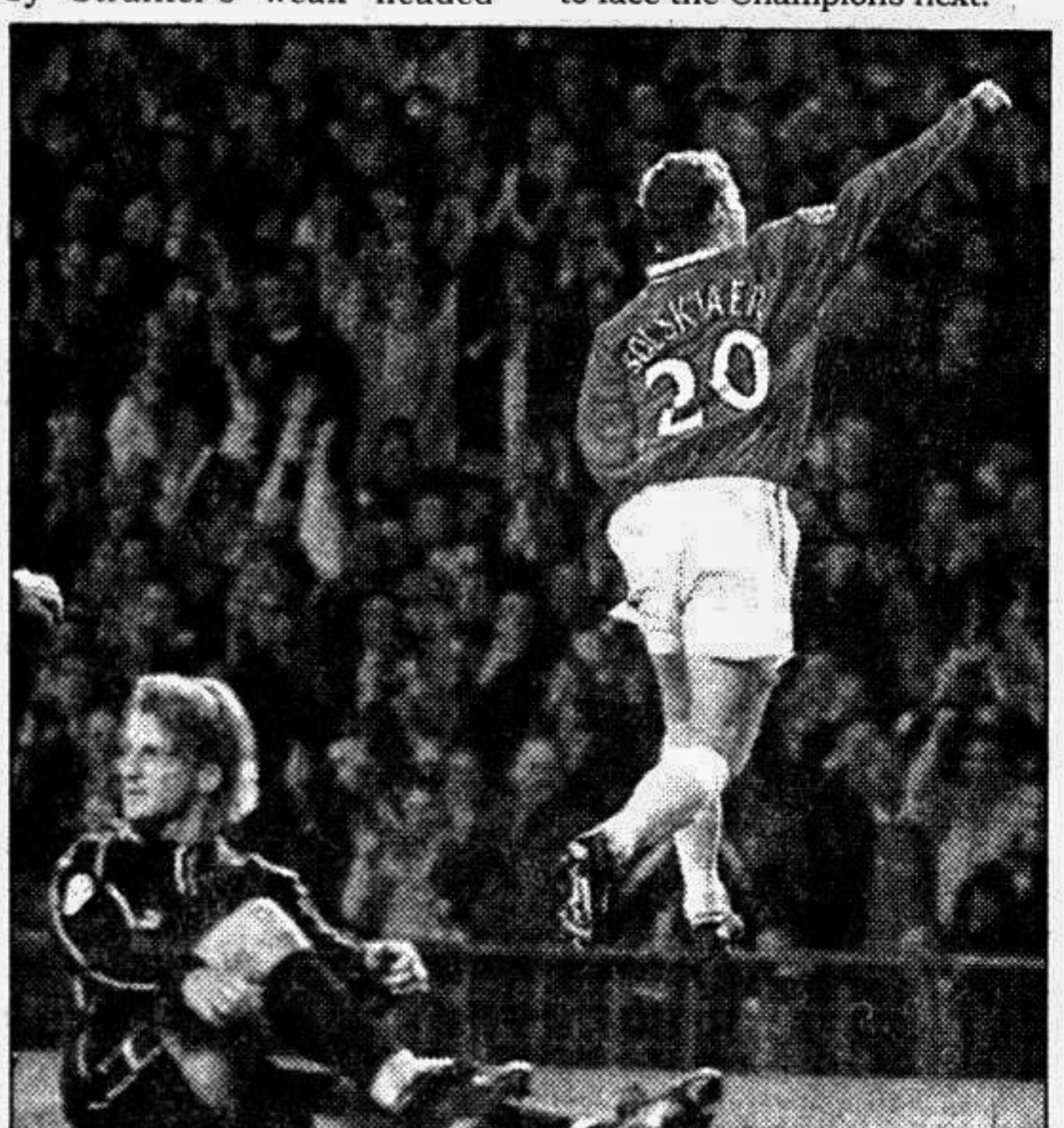
Vastic pulled one back for Graz two minutes from time when he scored from the spot after he was fouled by Ryan Giggs.

Then United keeper Mark Bosnich did well to deny substitute Hannes Reinmayr an equaliser with a good save from his low shot.

United now await their next three rivals when the draw for the second phase — another group of four — is made in Geneva on Friday.

If they heed Ferguson's words, none of the other 16 survivors will want to be drawn to face the Champions next.

Manchester United's Norwegian international Ole Gunnar Solskjaer jumps with joy after scoring against Sturm Graz in their Champions' League meeting on Tuesday. — AFP photo



Manchester United's Norwegian international Ole Gunnar Solskjaer jumps with joy after scoring against Sturm Graz in their Champions' League meeting on Tuesday. — AFP photo

Boavista show Dortmund the door



PORTO, Portugal, Nov 3: Borussia Dortmund were eliminated from the European Champions League Tuesday when a freak goal saw them defeated 1-0 by Portugal's Boavista, reports AFP.

That result - coupled with Feyenoord's 1-0 victory in Rotterdam over Group winners Rosenborg of Norway - was enough to condemn the 1997 European champions to their fate and a place in the much less prestigious UEFA Cup.

Boavista have had a dismal campaign after making Portuguese history by becoming the first club outside the country's big three - Benfica, Sporting Lisbon, and FC Porto - to compete in Europe's premier club competition.

But this result was well deserved if ultimately futile and was all the more remarkable as coach Jaime Pacheco had dropped five first-team regu-

lars.

The Porto-based side were unlucky not to win a penalty in the opening minutes but fortune was very much on their side when they took the lead after 16 minutes.

The ball broke to defender Pedro Emmanuel on the left flank just outside the penalty area and his shot appeared to be heading towards the corner flag when it struck the back of former German international Jurgen Kohler totally wrongfooting Dortmund goalkeeper Jens Lehmann.

Even though Emmanuel's shot was clearly missing the target he was credited with the goal.

Although no blame could be attached to Kohler it completed a miserable Champions League campaign for the veteran - a class act in his heyday.

Kohler had been run ragged by Rosenborg's beanpole striker John Carew in the two matches between the teams and was not afraid to admit it.

Boavista bossed the game after that and never looked like conceding an equaliser even after Brazilian midfielder Nilton was dismissed for a second bookable offence after 66 minutes.

Gazza was a tough challenge to win back a place, especially with Paul Ince, Juninho and Christian Ziege a formidable midfield trio.

Gazza is not for sale. He is a top player who has been unlucky with injuries. He is now on a week of pre-season style training in a bid to get fully fit," said Robson.

Gazza faces a tough challenge to win back a place, especially with Paul Ince, Juninho and Christian Ziege a formidable midfield trio.