

Oceania Olympic qualifier

New Zealand
thrash Fiji

AUCKLAND, Dec 19: The New Zealand under-23 soccer team's 5-2 win over Fiji here wasn't spectacular, but with most of the players recovering from a debilitating illness it was excusable, reports AFP.

The no-frills win in Saturday's Oceania Olympic qualifying tournament semifinal earned the New Zealanders a place in Monday's final against the Solomon Islanders here at North Harbour Stadium.

The winner will take on the fourth-best African nation on a two-legged playoff next April to determine the qualifier for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

New Zealand should have gone ahead inside a minute but Gareth Rowe headed a Jeff Campbell free kick just wide. That disappointment was quickly forgotten.

Another Campbell free kick -- after Fiji's Seveci Rokotakala had been booked for a foul -- was met on the charge by Nelsen who headed home for a goal in the third minute.

The home side continued to press but without reward until the third minute of added time in the first spell when Rowe played a good ball to Paul Urlovic to find Kris Bouckenhooghe, who deflected a neat header away from goalkeeper Shamal Kumar.

The Fijians made much of the play in the early stages of the second-half and were rewarded in the 66th minute when Noah Hickey handled and referee Gerry Connolly pointed to the penalty spot.

Captain Sameer Ali stepped forward and promptly fired hard and high into the centre of the goal.

Seven minutes later the Fijians could have been on equal terms when substitute Sanaila Bera rose well to head the ball on to the upright.

Luckily for the New Zealanders it rebounded into the hands of goalkeeper Robbie Baraclough.

A minute later Fiji's Olympic dream was shattered when Bouckenhooghe got on the end of another Campbell free kick to score after a linesman flagged for offside and had that overruled by Connolly.

Hickey volleyed home for 4-1 lead six minutes later before the Fijian captain smacked in his second penalty after Connolly had given a hand-ball decision against Greg Uhlmann.

Matthew Urlovic goal two minutes into added time completed the scoring.

The Solomons Islands led Papua New Guinea 1-0 at half-time in their semifinal Saturday before winning 3-1.

Fergie believes
Beckham will
stay

MANCHESTER, England, Dec 19: Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson believes England midfielder David Beckham will stay with the English, European and World club champions, reports AFP.

Beckham's wife Posh Spice (Spice Girl songstress Victoria Adams) had suggested last week that the England star could leave the club and play abroad at some stage of his career.

Sir Alex said: "I am happy with David and I cannot see him leaving Manchester United. I think he has another three years left on his contract and I believe he will see it through."

Beckham has had a magnificent 18 months since he was scapegoated for England's World Cup defeat at the hands of Argentina when he was sent off in the second round match - England ultimately losing on penalties.

He played a key role in the United team that this year has won the English Premiership, English FA Cup, the European Cup and the Intercontinental Cup, the unofficial world club championship match.

West Ham coach
blames luck

LONDON, Dec 19: West Ham coach Harry Redknapp and his captain Steve Lomas differed on Sunday over where the blame lay for the Football League's decision forcing the club to replay their League Cup quarter-final with Aston Villa after they fielded an ineligible player in Wednesday's match, reports AFP.

West Ham won the tie on penalties after the match had finished 2-2 after extra-time.

While Redknapp, whose decision to send Manny Omoymomi, who had played for Gillingham in an earlier round, on with eight minutes remaining in extra-time was the reason for the replay, protested that the Hammers were unlucky to have to play Villa again Lomas blamed the club for the costly error.

"I don't think the luck has gone with us. It's gone completely against us - the luck has gone with Villa, surely," Redknapp told BBC Radio Five Live.

They got beat on the night and we're on the coach going home thinking they were out of the League Cup. How could the luck be with us?"

However, while Lomas said he should have shown some responsibility, the club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."

"It could have been much worse - we could have been chuck out, though that would have been heartbreaking."

The club should have shown some responsibility. The club has to stand up and say sorry," the Northern Irish international midfielder said.

"I thought we might just get a heavy fine but it was a mistake by the club and rules are rules."