



IT'S NOT QUITE OVER: Real Madrid's French superstar Zinedine Zidane (R) gears up for a shot against Wisla Cracow in Cracow on August 11 during their first leg Champions League third preliminary round match. Zidane announced on the day he was retiring from international football.

## No hiccups for giants



AFP, Paris

The established order in European football was respected on Wednesday night with big clubs Manchester United, Real Madrid, Monaco and Inter Milan all set to reach the Champions League group stages.

United may have beaten Dynamo

Bucharest 2-1 in Romania to virtually

assure qualification but it was an uphill

task all the way.

A late Fernando Morientes double

ensured Real Madrid won 2-0 at Wisla

Krakow and Monaco had an emphatic

win with new recruits Mohamed Kallon,

who scored twice, and Ernesto

Chevanton getting on the scoresheet for

a 3-0 victory at Slovenian club Nova

Gorica.

Inter Milan got a useful 1-1 away

result at FC Basel to make them firm

favourites to go through to the lucrative

group stage, worth upwards of 25

million dollars to the victors.

United overcame a host of absen-

tees, a bomb scare and an early own goal

on their way to victory.

An own goal by Angelo Alistar in the

second half proved the winner after

Ryan Giggs had levelled following

Quinton Fortune's early own goal to put

the Romanians ahead.

United, the 1999 champions, were

up against it from the start. Ferguson's

side, which suffered a bomb scare at

their hotel on the morning of the game,

had a whole host of absentees.

Ruud van Nistelrooy and Louis Saha

were out injured and Cristiano Ronaldo

and Gabriel Heinze were at the Olympic

games. Rio Ferdinand of course was still suspended, fellow defender Wes Brown was out injured, and Ole Gunnar Solskjær looks to be out for the season with a serious knee injury.

After just 10 minutes however

United were behind. Dynamo's Claudio

Niculescu fired across a low, cross-cum-

shot which was blocked by Howard but

the ball then made contact with the

South African Fortune on the goalline

before finding the net.

In the 38th minute, United were

back in the game. Giggs, one-on-one

with the keeper after an error by Alistar,

knocked the ball into the net for the

equalizer.

Though the match had been even

early on in the second period, United

managed to get what proved to be the

winner in the 71st minute. United's

Liam Miller got to the by-line and hit a

dangerous ball across goal which made

contact with Alistar on its way to the

roof of the net to leave United players cele-

brating.

United had not played brilliantly but

solid if not great performances from

Keane, Scholes and Smith were enough

to make United firm favourites to go

through after the return match at Old

Trafford in two weeks time where

Bucharest must score at least twice.

Morientes' rich vein of form in the

Champions League continued in

Poland.

The Spanish international is back on

duty with the nine-time European

champions after a spell on loan to

Monaco, the French club who with his

help emerged as surprise finalists last

season.

The fact that Morientes played here

and is now 'cup-tied' will dampen

speculation that he is to be used in a

rumoured deal involving Liverpool's

Michael Owen moving to Real and

Morientes being off-loaded to Anfield.

Morientes struck for the first time in

the 72nd minute when David Beckham

sent in a well-weighted cross in the 72nd

minute.

He added a second on the stroke of

full-time, converting a cross from

Roberto Carlos to take Real into the

home leg of the tie with a comfortable

advantage.

Morientes started on the bench but

his introduction after 68 minutes for

playmaker Zinedine Zidane seemed to

pour cold water on media speculation

that Real were ready to let him go in part

exchange for Liverpool striker Michael

Owen.

New Real coach Jose Antonio

Camacho confirmed as much after the

match, saying: "There are no plans

relating to Morientes leaving the club".

Regarding a move for Owen, he added

cryptically: "I've heard that the deci-

sions have been made."

Until Morientes came on Real had

looked sluggish and only threatened in

goals against a Krakow team desperate to

be the first Poles to reach the group

stage since Widzew Lodz in 1998.

Real find themselves having to

navigate the tricky qualification round

after their 2003/04 season fell apart -

they were knocked out of the

Champions League in the quarter-finals

by Monaco with Morientes inflicting

part of the damage.

The team Real beat in the 2002 final,

Bayer Leverkusen, look home and hoped

for the next round after handing out a 5-

0 drubbing to Czech side Banik Ostrava.

Brazilian striker Franca grabbed a

hat-trick with his compatriot, defender Juan, and Bulgarian attacker Dimitar Berbatov completing the rout.

Inter Milan, who failed to make it into the knockout stages last season, took a 19th minute lead against FC Basel via Adriano, the striker back from helping Brazil win the Copa America where he emerged as the South American championship's top scorer.

But the Swiss hosts were soon back on level terms when midfielder Benjamin Huggel scored six minutes later.

Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk look set for the group stages after thrashing Belgium's Club Brugge 4-1 at home.

The other five-goal thriller of the night came in Serbia and Montenegro where Red Star Belgrade beat PSV Eindhoven 3-2.

South Korean midfielder Ji-Sung Park put PSV ahead before former European titleholders Red Star retaliated through goals from Milan Dudic, Bosko Jankovic and Marko Pantelic. PSV's John de Jong reduced the deficit with less than half an hour to go.

Irish minnows Shelbourne meanwhile held Spanish giants Deportivo La Coruna to a goalless draw at Lansdowne Road to keep their European adventure alive.

## RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated European Champions League third qualifying round, first leg results on Wednesday:

**At Bucharest**

Dynamo Bucharest (ROM) 1 (Fortune 10-0g) Manchester United 2 (Giggs 38, Alistar 71-0g)

**At Krakow, Poland**

Wisla Krakow (POL) 0 Real Madrid (SPA) 2 (Morientes 72, 90)

**At Belgrade**

Red Star Belgrade (SEM) 3 (Dudic 29, Jankovic 39, Pantelic 59) PSV

Eindhoven (NED) 2 (Park 9, De Jong 66)

**At Leverkusen, Germany**

Bayer Leverkusen (GER) 5 (Franca 10,

67, 88, Juan 74, Berbatov 82) Banik

Ostrava (CZE) 0

**At Budapest**

Ferencvaros (HUN) 1 (Vagner 27)

Sparta Prague (CZE) 0

**At Donetsk, Ukraine**

Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 4 (Aghahowa 15, Marica 70, Vorobei 78, Brando 90)

Club Brugge (BEL) 1 (Balaban 50)

**At Nova Gorica, Slovenia**

Nova Gorica (SLO) 0 Monaco (FRA) 3 (Kallon 9, 89, Chevanton 76)

**At Basel, Switzerland**

FC Basel (SWI) 1 (Huggel 25) Inter Milan (ITA) 1 (Adriano 19)

**At Dublin**

Shelbourne (IRL) 0 Deportivo La Coruna (SPA) 0

**At Trondheim, Norway**

Rosenborg (NOR) 2 (Brattbakk 1, Solli 9)

Maccabi Haifa (ISR) 1 (Rosso 45)

## Owen's dream falls through?

INTERNET SOURCE

Michael Owen trained with the Liverpool reserves yesterday as his dream move to Real Madrid hit an unexpected hitch.

Liverpool told Madrid, who have finally confirmed their interest in the 24-year-old, they preferred Samuel Eto'o rather than Fernando Morientes or the £15million makeweight in any deal for the England international.

But the Cameron international was on the brink of a move to bitter rivals Barcelona last night after Morientes proved his worth after coming off the bench and scoring both Madrid's goals in the 2-0 Champions League win over Wisla Krakow.

The amount of cash Madrid is prepared to pay for Owen has also emerged as a major stumbling block.

And Madrid officials want £10m plus a £15m-rated striker from Madrid after being informed Owen wants to end his 13-year association with the club and join the Galacticos.

But Madrid are believed to have offered only £4m up front as they take advantage of Liverpool's contractual dilemma with the striker.