



Hamburg's goalkeeper Sascha Kirschstein (R) makes a desperate attempt to stop Arsenal's Dutch forward Robin van Persie during their Champions League Group G match at the AOL Arena in Hamburg on Wednesday.

Best jersey picks up 24,000 pounds

AFP, London

A jersey worn by Northern Irish football legend George Best in a famous Manchester United match 36 years ago was sold at auction Wednesday for 24,000 pounds (36,000 euros).

The shirt was worn by Best, who died last year, in Manchester United's 8-2 demolition of Northampton in the fifth round of the FA Cup in 1970.

The late soccer legend came back from a six-week suspension to score six goals in that match, leading Northampton goalkeeper Kim Book to say that "not even the Berlin Wall" could have stopped Best that day.

The match was one of the most extraordinary played by the Manchester United and Northern Ireland star, remembered as one of the greatest players to have graced football.

He destroyed his opponents almost single-handedly with a bewildering range of flicks, dribbles and headers.

He was being marked by Roy Fairfax, who said later: "The closest I got to him was when we shook hands after the game."

The shirt was won by the seller in a national newspaper competition in 1996 but, after a fierce bidding battle, it was bought Wednesday by an anonymous buyer.

Elsewhere in the football memorabilia sale, the top worn by World Cup-winner Bobby Moore in his last ever English League match, between Fulham and Blackburn in 1977, sold for 3,600 pounds.

The 1970 FA Cup Winners medal awarded to Chelsea captain Ron 'Chopper' Harris fetched 13,200 pounds.

Also on sale was the shirt worn by the Brazilian Rivelino at the 1970 World Cup final, when his team beat Italy 4-1. However the shirt, which was expected to fetch up to 35,000 pounds, failed to sell.

The world record for a football shirt at auction was for Brazil striker Pele's jersey from the same match, which sold for 157,750 pounds in 2002.

AFP, Hamburg



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was looking forward to Sunday's clash with Manchester United after seeing his team finally record their first win of the season with a 2-1 Champions League group G win over ten-man SV Hamburg here on Wednesday.

Arsenal, who lost 2-1 Barcelona in last year's Paris final, had failed to win any of their opening three league fixtures but broke their duck in Europe to warm up for Sunday's tussle with Premiership leaders Manchester United.

"I think it is an important result although the performance is more difficult to rate as they had their goalkeeper sent off so early," said Wenger.

Hamburg were reduced to ten men after just 12 minutes with goalkeeper Sascha Kirschstein sent off for felling Robin van Persie in the penalty area.

Brazilian international Gilberto Silva converted the resulting spot-kick to put Arsenal ahead and the visitors were in cruise control.

AFP, Madrid



French serial domestic champions Lyon in their opening Champions League outing of the season on Wednesday.

Lyon outclassed the Spaniards and should have won by a hatful of goals but ultimately Gerard Houllier's men had to be happy with first-half goals from Fred and Tiago.

Lyon had crushed Real 3-0 last season and despite landing former Juventus coach Fabio Capello to restore order after three trophyless years at the Bernabeu it seemed noting had changed in 12 months as

"Our urgency dropped a little and the game was not over until we scored the second goal and we saw that even then Hamburg were dangerous," Wenger added.

Former Borussia Dortmund man Tomas Rosicky scored a cracking goal - his first for the club - on his return to Germany to clinch the spoils and was delighted with the effort.

"It is nice to score so early on in my Arsenal career and to get off with a win," said Rosicky.

"It is our target to win this competition but there are a lot of good teams in this competition. We are just one of them."

Wenger was full of praise for Rosicky, the new captain of the Czech national team, who signed from Dortmund in the summer.

"I think Tomas is very talented and a very promising player. He is sharper and had a good game tonight which he capped with a fine goal."

The only downside for Arsenal was the late strike from Boubacar Sanogo stopping Arsenal's German international goalkeeper Jens Lehmann record run of not conceding in this competition at 14 hours and 13 minutes.

Captain Gilberto Silva was glad to collect the three points but

warned that conceding late goals could not become a habit.

"We controlled the game and it was important to win this game with Manchester United coming up," said Gilberto Silva.

"We are annoyed at conceding a goal at the end and it is something we need to cut out in the future. If there had been a few more minutes to play it could have been nervy for us."

Arsenal surprised all by reaching the final last season but that target is at the back of Wenger's mind as the Frenchman prepares his side for the date with Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday.

"It was good to get players back and get them physically fit and sharp. It was important to win so we can go into the Manchester United match knowing how to win as we have not managed to do it in the league," Wenger said.

"I think you will see an interesting game on Sunday. Both teams are always up for it and it is always an intriguing game when the two teams meet."

Arsenal are fourth from bottom and can not afford to lose the match if they have any realistic hope of mounting a title challenge this season.

Mourinho's favourite restaurant bugged!

AFP, London

A tiny bugging device has been found at a Portuguese restaurant in London frequented by Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho, British newspapers reported Thursday.

Staff at the Portal, which is popular with financial workers and lawyers, discovered the bug in a wall plug after a radio used by kitchen staff was continually interrupted by deafening feedback.

The restaurant, in the City financial district of London, is said to have been the location for talks between Mourinho and Ashley Cole before the England defender's controversial recent move from Arsenal to Chelsea.

Owner Antonio Correia told the Independent that, on one frequency, staff could hear what was being said at nearby tables, prompting him to draft in security experts to make a regular sweep of the restaurant to detect further devices.

A number of other players from the English Premiership champions dined at a table next to the bug in the days before it was discovered, Correia said.

"Who knows if the device was connected to them (the Chelsea players)? To me, it doesn't matter. A lot of my clients work at the Stock Exchange or for finance companies and lawyers.

"They are people who take privacy seriously, so it is very important for me as a businessman to protect them," he was quoted as saying.

Will Geddes, from the International Corporate Protection Group which is assisting the restaurant, told the newspaper he was surprised they had not done more work against apparent industrial espionage in Britain before.

The bug would have required the eavesdropper to be sitting nearby, possibly with a receiver and recording device, he added.

"Who knows why it was there? It could have been as simple as a wife checking on a husband, but there could obviously also be a more sinister explanation for its appearance," he said.

Puskas in ICU

AFP, Budapest

Ailing Hungarian football legend Ferenc Puskas was admitted to the intensive care unit of a Budapest hospital, state news agency MTI reported on Wednesday.

The 79-year-old has been suffering from Alzheimer's disease and has been confined to a hospital in the capital for the past six years.

A friend of the family, Gyorgy Szollosi, who is the author of a biography of Puskas, informed MTI of the star's transfer to the intensive care unit of the hospital.

He declined to elaborate, citing the request of the Puskas family.

The hospital could not be immediately reached for comment.

Puskas, known as the 'Galloping Major' for his playing for an army team at the time Kispeszt Honved, is considered one of the 20th century's greatest footballers who led his native Hungary to Olympic glory in 1952 and a World Cup runners-up medal in 1954 and Real Madrid to a string of league and European Cup titles in the 60s.

He became a Spanish citizen in 1962 - playing for them in the 1962 World Cup finals - and scored 512 goals in 528 matches for Real winning the European Cup three times and scoring four goals in the 1960 final.

One of the best strikers the game has known, Puskas scored a remarkable 83 goals in 84 matches for Hungary from 1945 to 1956, when the national squad was known as the "golden team."

Revenge on Fergie's mind

AFP, Manchester



Revenge is a dish Sir Alex Ferguson expects to dine on in Lisbon at the end of this month.

In ebullient mood after his side's 3-2 win over Celtic on Wednesday, the Manchester United manager vowed to avenge last season's Champions League humbling at the hands of Benfica.

United ended bottom of their group after crashing to a 2-1 defeat in the Stadium of Light and the memory rankles with the Scot.

"It will be a bloody different result the next time, believe me about that," Ferguson said after watching his side score as many goals in one match as they managed in six group stage games last season.

Louis Saha claimed two, the first a penalty, before substitute Ole Gunnar Solskjaer settled the contest just after half-time.

Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink and Shunsuke Nakamura had ensured Celtic were on level terms at the break but United's second-half superiority made them worthy winners.

"In the sum total of the game we could have scored ten," Ferguson said. "Louis Saha could have broken the European scoring record."

That was an exaggeration but only a slight one. With Saha a real handful and Paul Scholes pulling United's strings as impressively as he has done for several years, Ferguson's men would have won easily but for the brilliance of Artur

Boruc in the Celtic goal.

"Scholes, for me, was the man of the match," Ferguson enthused. "He is just fantastic, and his passing won us the game."

"Wayne Rooney had played just one match and 25 minutes of football since the World Cup and it showed. Scholesley, at 31, is in the same position but he has come back and his composure and his passing awareness were phenomenal."

Scholes's renaissance will be a particular comfort for Ferguson after seeing his options in midfield reduced by the loss of Ryan Giggs and Park Ji-Sung for three weeks and three months respectively as a result of a pulled hamstring and ankle ligament injuries.

Celtic paid a high price for recent signing Thomas Gravesen's rustiness, the Danish midfielder's mistakes having led directly to United's second and third goals, and their manager Gordon Strachan was frustrated to have lost the battle of wits with his old boss Ferguson.

"Their chances came from us giving them the ball under pressure and that is disappointing," said Strachan, whose tempestuous relationship with Ferguson as a player at Aberdeen and United was carried over into recriminations in the pair's respective autobiographies.

Strachan added: "I thought my so-called ordinary players were fantastic, it was just that our flair players did not pass the ball as well as they can."

"They stuck at it for the team but the problem is they are going to be waking up tomorrow and living with regrets, and that is a horrible thing

in football."

Ferguson believes Celtic's strength at home means they can progress from a group that also includes FC Copenhagen, and he paid tribute to Strachan's men for their contribution to the game's entertainment factor.

"They came down here and had a real go and they made it a hell of a game."

Rio Ferdinand did his bit to ensure the game opened up by misjudging a Boruc punt to allow Vennegoor of Hesselink in for Celtic's opener, mid-way through the first half.

United equalised from a dubious penalty. Giggs' run into the box appeared to be carrying him into touch when the Welsh winger tumbled in reaction to the lightest of touches from Boruc, suffering his hamstring injury in the process.

Boruc could do nothing about Saha's spot-kick and the Frenchman was similarly assured ten minutes later, slipping a shot under the Polish goalkeeper after Scholes played him in.

Celtic's equaliser came through one of Nakamura's trademark dipping freekicks. But the Japanese midfielder's good work was undone within two minutes of the restart however when Gravesen directed a pass straight to Scholes.

The former England's pass found Saha, whose strike was superbly saved by Boruc.

But the rebound spun into the path of Solskjaer, who was left with a tap-in for his first European goal since suffering a career-threatening knee injury at Panathinaikos three years ago.

Lippi rejects Italy role



REUTERS, Milan

Italy's World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi has rejected the idea of a return the national team in a supervisor capacity.

Guido Rossi, the head of the Italian Football Federation, had floated the idea of Lippi taking on such a role at the head of the federation's technical department.

"I will never be a supervisor because that is not my trade," said the former Juventus coach who led Italy to victory on penalties over France in July's World Cup final in Berlin before standing down.

Lippi gave backing to his replacement, new Italy coach Roberto Donadoni, who has come under criticism following the poor start to the Azzurri's Euro 2008 qualifying campaign.

"I respect him a lot and I am convinced he will find a good rela-

tionship with his players," Lippi said in comments reported by the news agency ANSA.

Italy drew at home to Lithuania and then lost 3-1 to France in their opening Group B games but Lippi said the world champions would find their form again.

"I have no doubt that they will get back to great form and that Roberto will be able to bring the best out of them - he is a great lad. He was a kind of coach on the field when he was a player," he said.

Lippi has previously said he intends to return to club coaching but confirmed he was in no hurry to get back into the game just yet.

"At the moment I am still enjoying the aftertaste of the World Cup which I think will last a good while yet. It would be daft to take on a club after one or two weeks of the season," he said.

"I have had some calls from non-Italian clubs but I didn't meet with any club directors," said Lippi, who would be high on the list of any top European clubs who might change coach in mid-season.

Lippi had been linked with Manchester United during the World Cup but rejected the rumours by pointing out his lack of English language skills.

Asked about his English he replied "It is a little bit better".

Scaloni joins Santander

REUTERS, Madrid

Argentine midfielder Lionel Scaloni has agreed to join Racing Santander on a one-year contract, the Primera Liga club said on Wednesday.

The 28-year-old, who was a member of Argentina's squad at the World Cup finals in Germany, had negotiated a release from his contract with Deportivo Coruna at the end of August.

Scaloni joined Depor from Estudiantes de La Plata in 1998 and was in the side that won the league in 2000 and the King's Cup in 2002.

Strachan rues missed chance

AFP, Manchester



Celtic boss Gordon Strachan claimed poor passing had cost his side the chance of a famous Champions League victory over Manchester United here on Wednesday.

The Scottish champions went down to a 3-2 defeat after taking an early lead through Dutch striker Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink.

Louis Saha put United ahead with a first half double but Celtic got back on level terms before the break with a Shunsuke Nakamura free-kick only to concede defeat to an Ole Gunnar Solskjaer strike within two minutes of the restart.

"It is disappointing," said Strachan, who played with distinction for United for several years.

"If our passing had been better it could have been different."

"Their chances came from us giving them the ball under pressure and that is disappointing."

Strachan added: "I thought my

so-called ordinary players were fantastic tonight, it was just that our flair players did not pass the ball as well as they can.

"They stuck at it for the team but the problem is they are going to be waking up tomorrow and living with regrets, and that is a horrible thing in football."

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson paid tribute to Celtic for their contribution to an open, entertaining encounter but insisted his side could have won much more comfortably.

"Credit to Celtic for the way they set about the match because you see teams come here and play five across the back and five in midfield. They came down here and had a real go and they made it a hell of a game."

"But we encouraged them with the mistakes we made at the back, particularly for the first goal (Rio Ferdinand misjudging a punt upheld by Artur Boruc). We did fantastically well to get ahead and then gave them another slack goal."

"But in the sum total of the game we could have scored ten to be honest."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN	20 One of the Gersh-wine
1 —to-riches	1 Fire up the engine	21 Fair share, maybe
5 Queue	36 "If — a Hammer"	22 Sheltered
9 Abbr. on some cross-word clues	37 Chic no more	23 Air out
12 Needle case	38 On top of the world?	24 Sus-pended
13 Valhalla VIP	40 Earth	26 Sahara-like
14 Ostirh's cousin	42 Ms. Gardner	27 Lair
15 South American nation	43 Retribution	28 Erstwhile elvers
17 Pen point	48 Drenched	29 Bargain
18 Obtains	49 List-end-ing abbr.	31 Harbor structures
19 Blouse resembling a sailor's shirt	50 Option from Howie	34 Dance syllable?
	51 Compass pt.	35 Ailment
	52 Judicious	37 Chart format
	53 Egg center	38 Chess piece
		39 It takes the cake
		40 Unseen obstacle
		41 Leer at
		44 Greek vowel
		45 Ultra-modern (Pref.)
		46 Nev. neighbor
		47 Wapiti

Solution time: 21 mins.

KOOP	DIS	DATA
INGROATE	OMEN	
METAPHOR	COCK	
SAL	GEISHA	
DOVEL	ELL	
EGAD	CHAPELS	
ERR	BRINE	AHA
ENTRANT	SLOP	
HACK	STEE	
SHRANK	KIT	
LOUT	PHILORE	
OPEC	OVERLAYS	
WISH	TEE	EKES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13				14	
15				16					17	
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25				26	27				28	29
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42				43	44			45	46	47
48				49				50		
51				52				53		

CRYPTOQUIP

U P X Z A P Q J P Q I Z J Z A H P H

L Z Q R M A A D P O , Q J P R M A P

L Z Q B Z Q H Z X L D X Q H M Q

J P A U A D O B P H J Z I P A .
Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF SOMEBODY WERE TO HUMILIATE HUMORIST SAHL, I SUPPOSE HE WOULD REALLY BE MORT-IFIED.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: I equals W

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.