

## REAL EDGE BAYERN Tie evenly poised

AFP, Madrid



Two typically opportunist strikes by Spanish international Raul boosted Real Madrid's sagging confidence Tuesday as they edged out Bayern Munich 3-2 at the Bernabeu to put one foot in the Champions League quarter-finals.

All time tournament top scorer

Raul

scored twice in the opening

half hour, sandwiching a consolation by Lucio for Bayern, and Ruud

van Nistelrooy completed the

scoring in an explosive first period.

But a late, late goal by Mark Van

Bommel

gave the Germans a

potentially priceless second away

goal as they look to turn things

around on home soil in a fortnight.

The match pitted two of the most

successful sides in the history of

European football against each

other, Real's nine titles a record

and Bayern's four bettered only by

the Spaniards, AC Milan's six and

Liverpool's five.

But the form of Real and Bayern

this season has been mediocre and

both currently place fourth in their

domestic leagues.

Real have stumbled from one

bad showing to another while a

deadly Bayern run cost

Felix

Magath

his job and saw the

Bavarians send out an SOS call to

former coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

Hitzfeld coached Bayern to

glory in 2001 having also led

Borussia Dortmund to the 1997

crown - but the defeats have kept

on coming.

Raul, struggling to recapture the

form that brought winners medals in

1998, 2000 and 2002, gave Real

the lead in the tenth minute with his

55th

Champions

League

goal,

sliding home past Bayern keeper

Oliver Kahn

at the second attempt.

Bayern regrouped and Brazilian

star Lucio

nodded the equaliser

midway through the first period to

stun the packed home crowd.

Facing the prospect of their

Italian coach Fabio Capello resigning

with the club likely headed for a

fourth year without a trophy, Real

dig in and promptly went back in

front 28 minutes.

From David Beckham's corner

on the right Ivan Helguera headed

goalwards and Raul bundled the

ball home.

But there was no doubt the

hosts' appetite as they snapped

into every tackle in a first half showing

by a side knowing it needed to

win against a side which appears to

have forgotten how to.

As Real began to look comfortable

on the ball for the first time in

weeks, their rivals resorted to

strong-arm tactics and Martin

Demichelis was booked for a late

foul on Gutti.

After a goal on his return helped

Real win at Real Sociedad,

Beckham and his teammates were

dire in Saturday's home goalless

draw with Betis.

Capello insists the team needs

overhauling and has already sold

Ronaldo.

But Beckham, having made just

two starts in the group phase, is

back in favour after being dropped

for a month for opting to join Los

Angeles Galaxy in the summer.

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