



Nantes goalkeeper Fabien Barthez stops a penalty shot during the French cup match against Sedan at the Louis Dugauguez Stadium in Sedan on Tuesday.

## GERMAN CUP Takahara lifts Frankfurt

REUTERS, Berlin

Naohiro Takahara struck twice to lead Eintracht Frankfurt through to the semi-finals of the German Cup in a 3-0 derby win away to Kickers Offenbach on Tuesday.

Frankfurt, who lost to Bayern Munich in the final last season, took an early lead as second division Offenbach with a Michael Fink goal and Japan striker Takahara made it 2-0 with a wonderful far-post volley in the 61st minute.

Offenbach were forced to take risks and Frankfurt took advantage as Takahara tapped into an empty net at the end of a swift break 11 minutes after his first.

Nuremberg came through a tight all-Bundesliga battle to book their place in the last four, beating Hanover 4-2 on penalties after 120 goalless minutes.

Substitute goalkeeper Daniel Klewer was the Nuremberg hero. Coach Hans Meyer sent Klewer on with a minute to go and the penalty specialist obliged by saving two of the Hanover efforts in the shoot-out.

VfL Wolfsburg won the other all-first division tie on Tuesday, beating Alemannia Aachen 2-0 thanks to first-half goals from Diego Klimowicz and Marcelinho.

VfB Stuttgart, in second place in the Bundesliga, will look to stay on the trail of a domestic double when they play their quarterfinal at home to Hertha Berlin on Wednesday.

The semifinals will be played from April 17-18, with the final set for May 26 at the Olympiastadion in Berlin.

## Keane appeal rejected

AFP, London

Tottenham's Robbie Keane had his claim for wrongful dismissal rejected by the Football Association (FA) on Tuesday.

The Republic of Ireland international picked up the first red card of his professional career when he was sent-off for a deliberate handball in Sunday's 4-1 Premiership win against Bolton.

Keane was furious with referee Graham Poll after his 36th-minute dismissal for handling Ivan Campo's header on the line.

The ball struck Keane's chest before appearing to hit his arm as it dropped, and Poll issued a straight red card.

Keane's red card marked the end of an action-packed game from the Spurs' stand-in skipper -- he scored two goals and also set up Jermaine Jenas before receiving his marching orders.

He will serve the one-match suspension with immediate effect meaning he will miss Sunday's Premiership match against West Ham.

## Gerrard looks to derail United

INTERNET, undated

Steven Gerrard insists Liverpool are determined not to allow Manchester United to 'win the title at Anfield'.

If United beat Liverpool on Saturday, it will give them a 12-point lead over current Barclays Premiership champions Chelsea and, in the Reds skipper's eyes, virtually end the race for the championship.

And although Liverpool cannot win the title themselves this term and are looking to secure Champions League qualification, Gerrard is adamant their bitterest rivals will not take their biggest step yet towards the title under the noses of the Kop.

Gerrard said on his club's official website: "They will be coming to Anfield this weekend looking for maximum points because that would virtually win them the league."

"We've got to make sure we get the points and keep the title race going for as long as possible. It's not over at the moment and that's why this is a massive game for both clubs."

He added: "It hurts to say this, but they have been playing some really good attacking football this season. They are also really hard to beat because they have some great defenders."

"The rivalry for this fixture has got bigger and bigger over the years and the games are built up more and more. As a player, these are the games you want to play in."

"But I am in the city among all the banter and I know our fans are desperate to take the three points this weekend."

# Fowler considering MLS switch

## Football

AFP, London

"We've spoken, but as of yet there's nothing been settled. He's really just dipping his foot in the water here. It's something he's thinking about."

Beckham is getting 250 million dollars over five seasons at the Galaxy and Nicol is worried that other European-based players may think they too will get big deals if they move to Major League Soccer.

However, Beckham's deal is a exception outside of the normal salary cap rules.

The salary cap is limited to one million dollars per team, per season, with each team allowed to sign one player outside the cap.

Nicol has some money to spend after selling Clint Dempsey to Fulham in January, but not the kind that was spent on Beckham.

"Through the sale of Clint we have some money available," he

said.

"But the problem we have is that, because of the type of money David Beckham has got, a lot of people think everybody has that kind of money, which is not the case."

Fowler's hopes of extending his Anfield career have been threatened by the arrival of Andrey Voronin from Bayer Leverkusen as the Ukrainian international will join a striker line-up that comprises England international Peter Crouch, fiery Welshman Craig Bellamy and Dutch star Dirk Kuyt.

And Nicol admits that Fowler is just testing the water.

"He's getting his ducks in a row. Whether he gets a contract at Liverpool or whether he moves on, he's dipping his foot in the water," said the Revolution boss.

# Nadal survives Baghatis test

## Tennis

AFP, Dubai

of this match because I was practising well."

Nadal next plays Igor Andreev, who was Russia's Davis Cup hero earlier this month, while Federer, who also struggled to get through the first round in three sets Monday will play Daniela Bracciali.

Another seed to go out was David Ferrer, the number four from Spain, who was beaten 7-6 (15/13), 6-1 by Robin Soderling, the improving Swede, despite having five set points in a 28-point tie-breaker.

This followed the departure the previous day of another Spaniard, the fourth-seeded Tommy Robredo, which means that both seeds in the third quarter of the draw are out. If Nadal reaches the semifinals he will have an unused opponent.

Two other seeds, Nikolay Davydenko of Russia and Tommy Haas of Germany did well to survive, after looking in trouble for different reasons.

Davydenko was ambushed by Younes El Aynaoui, the 35-year-old wild card from Morocco who was seeking only his fifth win on the main tour in more than three years after a long sequence of injuries.

Davydenko eventually survived 6-7 (2/7), 7-5, 7-5, but only after El Aynaoui, serving brilliantly and taking all sorts of well-judged risks with his excellent forehand, had recovered from deficits of 1-3 in the second set and 1-4 in the third, and fully tested the phlegmatic third seed's temperament.

Haas had just flown all the way from Memphis, where he won the title, which has a ten-hour time difference, arriving at 1.30 am on the morning of his match with Radek Stepanek, the top 20 Czech. Yet the fifth-seeded German prevailed 6-4, 6-3.

"I survived a 17-hour journey," said Haas on court after his jet-lag defying success. "Who cares what time it is if you are playing all right?"



A relieved Rafael Nadal signs autographs for his fans after winning a closely-contested second-round match against Marcos Baghatis in the Dubai Duty Free Open on Tuesday.

## FRENCH CUP

# Nantes, Marseille in semis

## Football

AFP, Paris

Former France goalkeeper Fabien Barthez was the hero for new club Nantes as he helped them reach the French Cup semifinals on Tuesday with a 6-5 win on penalties over Sedan, as his former club Marseille crushed Brittany minnows Vannes 5-0.

In his first penalty shootout since last year's World Cup final loss to Italy, Barthez, 35, produced the crucial save after the tie had ended

1-1 after extra time when he punched out Sedan's sixth penalty from Nicolas Marin.

Barthez has never won the French Cup being runner-up with Marseille last season. He made several key saves as the Canaries reached their sixth semifinal in nine years. They won the event in 1999 and 2000.

The loss was a blow for Sedan who had not lost a French Cup tie at home since 1995.

The hosts had taken the lead after 14 minutes when former Nantes striker Gregory Pujol's header beat Barthez.

But Sedan did not have time to savour their lead when a bad clearance saw striker Claudio Keseru grab the equaliser just a minute later.

Marseille had no such problems with Vannes with Mamadou Niang putting them ahead after just one minute at the Stade Velodrome.

Toifilou Maoulida doubled their account after 31 minutes when he converted a penalty, and scored his second after 66 minutes.

Djibril Cisse's 61 minute penalty and a Mickael Pagis effort a minute into extra time completed the scoreline.

# Del Piero apologetic

## Football

INTERNET, undated

going to check on his condition following the final whistle."

Campedelli suffered ankle ligament damage and initial reports suggest he'll be out for at least a month.

Modena Coach Bortolo Mutti slammed Del Piero for the tackle that he felt deserved a dismissal, especially as Juve went on to win 1-0 in the final minute.

"It's great to win again on our travels after a series of fairly disappointing results," continued the Italian international.

"At this stage of the season it is crucial we speed up our progress and to do that just winning at home is not enough. I'm content with the

victory and my own performance, as at the moment I am playing well."

Serie B fixtures are generally spread out over Saturday afternoon with a Friday and Monday evening game.

However, the Lega Calcio has today announced that Juventus will play on a Sunday in their top of the table clash with Piacenza on March 4.

"Now we face this appointment with Piacenza and playing on a Sunday almost gives me a sense of nostalgia," smiled the former Serie A star.

# Ferguson hails United firepower

AFP, Reading



Sir Alex Ferguson has seen virtually everything during his long and successful career but even the Manchester United manager was stunned by his side's early goal spree in their FA Cup win at Reading.

United scored three times in the first six minutes of a fifth round replay at the Madejski Stadium on Tuesday and eventually edged into the quarterfinals with a 3-2 victory.

Ferguson's team, who will visit Middlesbrough in the quarterfinals on March 10, went ahead through Gabriel Heinze's second minute strike before Louis Saha and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer increased the lead in a frantic opening.

However, Reading recovered to mount a marvellous fightback with goals from Dave Kitson and substitute Leroy Lita and they nearly got an equaliser when Brynjar Gunnarsson hit the crossbar in the last minute, leaving Ferguson to admit he had never seen anything like it.

Ferguson said: "I think it was a fantastic cup tie and credit to both sides, anyone turning up to watch that game would not have left disappointed."

"It was the best ever start I have seen and three goals in six minutes

as they allowed Solskjaer a clear 50-yard run on goal, forcing Steve Coppell to admit he perhaps got his early match tactics horribly wrong.

Coppell said: "I wanted to keep things tight early on and after the start we had I would question myself and maybe we should have gone gung-ho from the first whistle."

"It made me sink into my seat a little but we got ourselves back into the game and I could not question my players' efforts."

"They worked and grafted and tried to create chances and we came very close to sending it into extra time."

"I could not blame our goalkeeper because he made some good saves and some great interventions from crosses. I am not prepared to blame anybody and I have only praise for my players."

Coppell insisted Reading's fightback showed exactly why they have made such a good impression in the Premiership this season.

He added: "It is not often you say there can be honour in defeat but that is the position we are in tonight. I have to compliment my players. They are all warriors."

"They didn't lay down and die, they got back up again and fought, which is one of the best qualities to have."

And the Royals failed to learn their lesson for United's crucial third

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## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
43 Ant. 2 Bosc or Barlett  
1 Likely 44 Choir  
4 Moose's rendition  
7 Very good, in rapssack  
11 Acknow-edge 2/28  
13 Greet the villain  
14 Dissolute one  
15 Gandhi's wrapper?  
16 Ovine comment  
17 Advan-tage  
18 Monkey's uncle?  
20 Insipid  
24 Reason for an inhaler  
28 Iceman?  
32 Bone that supports the tongue  
33 "American" —  
34 Moisten  
36 Grooving on  
37 Donates  
38 Relaxes  
39 Relaxes  
40 Spelling  
41 Treeless

**DOWN**  
43 Ant. 2 Bosc or Barlett  
44 Choir  
45 Gossamer  
46 Greek consonant  
50 Goya subject  
53 Taxi  
55 Midday  
56 "The Good Earth" heroine  
57 Leading lady?  
58 Entangle-ment  
59 Unpaid bill  
60 Storm center  
61 Ems' neighbor  
64 Addition-ally  
65 Hodges of baseball  
66 Iceman?  
67 Bone that supports the tongue  
68 "American" —  
69 Hill dwellers  
70 Chic, to Austin Powers  
71 Beerlike beverage  
72 Critter seen by sets?  
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86 VIP  
87 Almost black  
88 Vanished  
89 Lycanthrope's arouser  
90 Hill  
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