



PHOTO: AFP

Sevilla right-back Daniel Alves (L) is over the moon after scoring a late winner in their top-of-the-table Primera Liga clash against Barcelona on Saturday.

FIERY CLASH AT ANDALUCIA

Sevilla depose Barca

REUTERS, Madrid



Ten-man Sevilla fought back from a goal down to beat Barcelona 2-1 at home and move to the top of the Primera Liga in an explosive encounter on Saturday.

Ronaldinho headed Barca in front after 13 minutes and when Sevilla defender Aitor Ocio was sent off in the 28th for bringing down the Brazilian for a penalty the home side looked to be out of the match.

But Ronaldinho's spot-kick was saved and Sevilla's Alexander Kerzhakov levelled before a

The outstanding Daniel Alves put the Andalucians in front with a freekick early in the second half, and

Barcelona soon lost their numerical advantage as Ludovic Giuly and Gianluca Zambrotta were sent off.

Sevilla are top with 50 points, one ahead of Barcelona who dropped to second.

"We can't cry over one defeat. It was an important game and we let slip a great opportunity, but one match does not decide the league," Barca coach Frank Rijkaard told a news conference.

A Fernando Morentes goal gave third-placed Valencia a 1-0 home win over Celta Vigo and moved them to 46 points.

The former Liverpool striker volleyed home from Hugo Viana's cross after 67 minutes for his 10th goal of the season.

But it was a laboured performance from Quique Sanchez Flores's side, who had goalkeeper Santiago Canizares to thank for a last minute save from Celta's

Fernando Baiano.

Real Madrid, who are fourth on 43 points, host local rivals Getafe at the Bernabeu on Sunday.

Rijkaard kept Cameroonian striker Samuel Eto'o on the bench and started with an attacking trio of Ronaldinho, Giuly and Lionel Messi in Seville.

After a cagey opening Italian fullback Zambrotta broke the offside trap down the right flank and crossed from the byline for Ronaldinho to plant a powerful header just inside the post.

Ronaldinho won himself a penalty, knocking the ball round centreback Ocio, and running round the other side of the player, only to be tripped from behind as he went to shoot in the area.

Ocio was sent off, but goalkeeper Andres Palop blocked the Brazilian's penalty with his legs.

Sevilla's Brazilian fullback Alves

was a continual threat down the right and as halftime approached he crossed low into a crowded area for Kerzhakov.

The Russian striker controlled and spun to fire a left-footed shot low past Victor Valdes.

Alves put Sevilla in front with a superb freekick which seemed to get a slight deflection off the wall in the 61st, and a minute later Barca were reduced to 10 men as Giuly was harshly sent off after tussling for the ball with Alves.

Zambrotta soon followed Giuly off the field as he collected two yellow cards inside a minute in the 76th and only profligate finishing prevented Sevilla from scoring again at the end.

Police had to go into the stands at halftime to break up fighting between Sevilla fans.

England striker Wayne Rooney could be in doubt for Manchester United's Champions League last 16 second leg clash with Lille at Old Trafford on Wednesday after injuring his knee, United manager Sir Alex Ferguson said on Sunday.

Rooney is to have a scan on his knee to ascertain the extent of the damage he suffered when he was tackled by Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher in United's last minute 1-0 win on Saturday.

Rooney had to go off following the tackle, though, his absence was more than compensated for by his replacement O'Shea scoring the decisive goal.

"Wayne will go for a scan," Ferguson told the club website.

"It was a bad tackle - Carragher got him right on the knee. We'll have to see how he is."

United lead Lille 1-0, though, the match promises to be a tense affair after Ferguson rounded on the French players for the way they reacted after Ryan Giggs goal from a freekick which the home side claimed was unfair as they were still arranging their wall.

Rooney unlikely for Lille

AFP, Manchester

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'No need of stars'

AFP, Port of Spain

Pakistan shrugged off the absences of strike bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif when they arrived for the World Cup.

The 1992 world champions saw both Shoaib and Asif limp out of contention last week just two days after all-rounder Abdul Razzaq was also ruled out through injury.

However, a team spokesman insisted that replacements Mohammad Sami, Yasir Arafat and Azhar Mahmood will rise to the challenge.

"His passing remains first rate and his ability at set-pieces is still undiminished."

"Beckham knows how to play international football. Yes, he did not play well for England over the past couple of years, but I think he was more of a victim of the way the team played rather than a cause of it."

"But we have some excellent replacements in Mohammad Sami who is one of the fastest bowlers in the world and Yasir Arafat. The team morale is as good as anything

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Down The World Cup Lane

1996: Dogged by controversy

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

ers (Holland, Kenya, United Arab Emirates), then seven more to reduce the remaining Test nations to one winner.

All

could

have

been

avoided

, and a genuinely competitive group programme installed, by discarding the idea of quarterfinals and going straight to a last four. Presumably, the attraction of four big crowds, four big television games, was too great, but this was a decision taken on flawed grounds. The people were not all fooled; the group games in Pakistan, particularly, drew very small crowds.

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