



PHOTO: AFP

Bayern Munich defender Lucio (down) is being congratulated by defensive partner Daniel van Buyten and other teammates after scoring the winning goal in their Champions League clash with Real Madrid at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday.

Capello staying put

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid sporting director Predrag Mijatovic said on Wednesday that coach Fabio Capello would stay at the helm despite his side crashing out of the Champions League on away goals following a 2-1 return leg loss at Bayern Munich.

"He will stay for the moment, yes," said Mijatovic, while saying that Real "have to analyse" where they go from here after the nine-times champions slumped out in the round of last 16.

Capello, without the injured David Beckham, main impetus of the first leg 3-2 win at the Bernabeu, as well as Jose Antonio Reyes, reportedly offered to resign ahead of that game, 48 hours after a dire home goalless draw with Real Betis.

That result and last weekend's draw with Getafe have dealt major blows to already slim hopes of the league title and a first trophy in four seasons.

The club are fourth in the table, six points adrift of leaders Sevilla and five points behind bitter rivals Barcelona, whom they face at the weekend.

Asked about his future following the home leg Capello told reporters: "I don't want to answer that question. Every day there's something happening (according to the

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Metzelder set for Real Madrid?

AFP, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund's German international defender Christoph Metzelder will join Real Madrid on a four-year contract at the end of the season, Bild newspaper reported on Thursday.

The 26-year-old Metzelder went to Madrid on Tuesday to have a medical and finalise contract details, the paper continued, adding he would be on an annual salary of four million euros. No transfer fee was given.

Metzelder, capped 28 times by his country and part of Germany's World Cup squad, had reportedly also been in contact with Italian league leaders Inter Milan.

Bayern dump Real

AFP, Munich



Bayern Munich booked their place in the Champions League's last eight as their 2-1 win sent Real

Madrid crashing out and created a small piece of competition history here Wednesday.

Having bagged the all-important away goals in their 3-2 first-leg defeat, Bayern flew out of the blocks with a lightning-quick goal from Roy Makaay after just ten seconds.

It was the fastest in Champions League history and was followed by a well-taken second-half header from Lucio which sealed the win.

Ruud van Nistelrooy's penalty gave Real a late lifeline, but with the teams all square at 4-4 on aggregate Bayern prevailed on the away goals rule.

The defeat came as a hammer blow to the nine-time European champions.

Real are off the pace in their domestic league and this latest setback leaves coach Fabio Capello in a precarious position although the club said immediately after the defeat that the Italian would stay in charge for now.

Capello said: "Our biggest problem was of course the early goal, which was due to a mistake by Roberto Carlos.

"Who would have thought that something like that would happen? It's hard to get back on terms after

something like that.

"Being knocked out doesn't make pretty reading but we had the chances to score four times against Bayern and we didn't take them."

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld, who only returned to the Bavarian giants in February, was delighted by the chance to continue his search for a third European title after lifting the trophy with Bayern and Borussia Dortmund.

"The victory today gives us a boost and will also put us back in the running for the German title," Hitzfeld said.

"We told ourselves we wanted to send out a message at the start. And when a team creates as many chances as we did, then the determination is there to see."

Bayern got a dream start at the Allianz Arena thanks to Bosnian midfielder Hasan Salihamidzic's quick reactions.

Straight from the kick-off, Salihamidzic robbed Roberto Carlos of possession and supplied an inch-perfect pass for Dutch striker Makaay to side-foot past Real keeper Iker Casillas after just ten seconds.

It eclipsed the previous fastest goal of 20.07sec in the competition's history set by Gilberto of Arsenal against PSV Eindhoven in 2002.

The home side kept the pressure on and Dutchman Mark van Bommel, who was fined by UEFA for making obscene gestures to Real fans in the first leg, picked up a yellow card.

Makaay set Lukas Podolski through on goal in the 21st minute

and the German striker lacked his compatriot's composure and should have done better than to shoot weakly at Casillas.

Both Makaay and Bastian Schweinsteiger went close and Bayern's Belgian defender Daniel Van Buyten so nearly made it 2-0 with half-time approaching as his header forced a point-blank save.

Capello switched Brazilian Emerson for Guti to add some spark in midfield and the Spanish international went close, but van Nistelrooy was too weak with a header moments later and Raul forced a save.

Podolski earned a yellow card for a stray tackle as the first-half finished 1-0, but Van Bommel stretched Casillas straight from the re-start.

A superb save from Bayern captain Oliver Kahn denied van Nistelrooy after Raul floated over a well-timed cross.

But Bayern put the result beyond doubt in the 66th minute when Brazilian defender Lucio headed Willy Sagnol's corner past the diving Casillas.

There was still drama in the match as Robinho was brought down in the penalty area by Lucio with ten minutes left and van Nistelrooy drove his penalty past the diving Kahn.

Both sides went down to ten men when van Bommel and Mahamadou Diarra earned themselves red cards

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Henry injured again

AFP, London

Thierry Henry faces several weeks out of action after suffering stomach and groin injuries during Arsenal's Champions League exit against PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday.

Henry will have a scan on Thursday to determine the seriousness of the problems but Gunners manager Arsene Wenger expects his captain to be sidelined for at least three weeks.

The France striker's injury is the latest blow in a miserable few weeks for Wenger's side, who have crashed out of the Champions League and FA Cup as well as losing the League Cup final.

Henry had only come on as a second half substitute in the 1-1 last 16 second leg draw, that saw Arsenal go out 2-1 on aggregate, as he was struggling to recover from foot and hamstring problems that had kept him out for three matches.

Wenger said: "He got injured and he will be out now for a few weeks. It is a different injury. He has torn his stomach muscle and his groin. We will scan it tomorrow."

"I thought he did it when he crossed the ball but I'm not sure. It is sad for him. He has had a very difficult season."

Dislocated shoulder ousts Silvestre

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United have confirmed that defender Mikael Silvestre suffered a dislocated shoulder in their Champions league win over Lille at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

The club gave no indication of how long they expect the former France international to be out of service but Chelsea's Khalid Boulahrouz was sidelined for three weeks after a similar problem.

Silvestre, who was chosen by Sir Alex Ferguson in preference to Gabriel Heinze for the last 16 second leg tie, fell heavily late on and was taken to hospital for a scan after the final whistle.

United made it through to the quarter finals by beating Lille 1-0 to make it 2-0 on aggregate.

The setback rules Silvestre out of Saturday's FA Cup quarter-final tie at Middlesbrough and the Premiership home game against Bolton on March 17 after which the domestic campaign is halted for a two-week international break.

It is the latest in a series of injuries over the past 10 days for Ferguson and his team.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has been ruled out until the end of the month following minor knee surgery.

Darren Fletcher will be sidelined for two months with ankle ligament damage, while Louis Saha could be out for four weeks after damaging a hamstring in training on Tuesday.

In addition, Henrik Larsson, Wednesday's goalscorer, plays the last competitive game of his 10-week spell at the Riverside Stadium this weekend, with all attempts to persuade the Swede to stay on having failed.

Down The World Cup Lane

2003: Distinct African flavour

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Africa displayed its true colour and spirit as they hosted their first, and the eighth cricket World Cup. The journey of this tournament began at Cape Town on February 8, 2003 with a magnificent opening ceremony. After two opening salvos were thwarted by weather in the last two World Cups, organisers got support from the Gods up above as over a billion viewers witnessed a grand beginning for the event hosted by South Africa mainly but with matches also being held in Zimbabwe and Kenya.

The tournament proper had fourteen teams, two more than the previous World Cup. Bangladesh were making their first World Cup appearance after achieving their Test status while Kenya got automatic qualification thanks to their one-day team status. Canada were making a comeback to big time cricket while Namibia and Holland also qualified through the ICC Trophy.

Everything was in place for hosts South Africa to take charge from the onset as they faced West Indies in Cape Town a day after the opening ceremony.

All was going their way but when Jacques Kallis dropped Brian Lara early on, all hell broke loose!

Lara climbed to the top of his powers that evening and smashed the hosts' attack to bits. His century gave West Indies an impetus to win as they withstood a late onslaught from Lance Klusener to prevail by three runs.

But the tournament was not all

fine for the organisers with New Zealand and England pulling out of matches in Kenya and Zimbabwe citing security worries and giving the hosts walkover victories. The tournament ran into further controversy with two Zimbabweans Andy Flower and Henry Olonga branding black armbands in protest of their country's political situation.

Action on the pitch was one sided in pool A but things were tight across town in pool B.

Sri Lanka, not the highest rated team in the competition, handed New Zealand a 47-run defeat. In the group's next match, Canada shocked the world by their win against Bangladesh by 60 runs. Little known paceman Austin Codrington took five wickets to clean up the Tigers. There was more ignominy for Bangladesh a week later against the Lankans as left-armers Chaminda Vaas took four wickets in the first over of the innings including a hat-trick off the first three deliveries.

But the fight for the top spots was still up for grabs as New Zealand started coming back to form with wins against West Indies and South Africa. Captain Stephen Fleming smashed a superb 134* against South Africa as the tournament started slipping for the hosts. But for New Zealand, security issues kept them away from their match at Nairobi and the Kiwis had to hand a walkover to Kenya. Steve Tikolo's men then beat Sri Lanka in another massive upset and they were looking clear for a place

in the second phase.

Unknown quantities from Canada kept on impressing as opening batsman John Davison slashed, pulled and slammed the Caribbean attack to all corners of the Centurion with the fastest hundred of World Cup competitions. After their loss against Kenya, the Lankans bounced back with a close win against West Indies.

Kenya completed their move to the Super Six phase with a 32-run win over Bangladesh but the real drama awaited as the hosts were having a do-or-die battle against Sri Lanka. And once again, they goofed up big time with skipper Shaun Pollock's misinformation to the batsmen at the crease. The game was stopped by rain and then ended on a tie but that meant Sri Lanka were through. Tears trickled with the rain as another World Cup eluded the Proteas.

In Pool A, Australia ran amok with easy wins against all sides but their game against England was a close affair. Journeymen Andrew Bichel turned on a match-winning performance to give the defending champions an all-win record in the group phase.

Ashish Nehra and James Anderson gave good accounts of their bowling prowess with two beautiful efforts. Pakistan legend Wasim Akram took his 500th ODI wicket against the Netherlands but his team failed to make the second round as Zimbabwe and India accompanied Australia to the Super Six.

AFP, Milan



Milan beat Celtic 1-0 here on Wednesday to book their place in the quarter-finals of the Champions

League, but they needed extra-time before breaking the Scottish side's brave resistance.

Celtic were under almost constant pressure from the first whistle, but what they lacked in technique they more than made up for in spirit and held the six-time European champions to a goalless draw after 90 minutes, leaving the last 16 tie deadlocked at 0-0 on aggregate.

But after repelling attack after attack, the visitors, roared on by a raucous army of travelling supporters, finally succumbed in the third minute of the first-half in extra-time.

Kaka, who had seen a shot come back off the bar in normal time, ran from his own half at a tiring Celtic defence and evaded a late lunge by Stephen McManus before sliding the ball past Artur Boruc.

Kaka insisted his side were worthy of a place in the last eight given their performances over the two legs.

"Celtic are an experienced team and they put us in difficulty, but if you look at the two games, we deserved to go through," he said.

"I am delighted with what I did and what the team has achieved. I'm going home happy."

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted Celtic had given his team a real battle.

"We knew it would be tough, but I thought we coped with it well," he said.

"We gave away little and created a lot. We suffered at times, but the joy of going through makes it worthwhile."

Asked if he thought Milan could win the Champions League, he replied: "With Real Madrid, Inter Milan and Barcelona out, it shows that there are no guarantees in the Champions League."

"Anyone of the eight teams left has a chance. It's very open."

Celtic coach Gordon Strachan had nothing but praise for his gallant players.

"If there was a Champions League trophy for sheer guts and determination, we'd win it," he said.

"We must improve our technique if we want to push forward, but we are certainly on the right road."

"The tournament has been a great experience for us and we will learn from it."

Milan's starting line-up included seven of the team that played in the 2003 Champions League final in which they beat Italian rivals Juventus on penalties.

Milan came close to taking the lead in the fourth minute when Clarence Seedorf fed Kaka in space, but the Brazilian's curling right-footed shot was clawed away by Boruc's fingertips.

Daniele Bonera came to Milan's rescue 60 seconds later, the defender's last-ditch block denying Jiri Jarosik an almost certain goal.

Kaka then spurned a golden opportunity when he dragged a shot wide after an incisive run from his own half which had left two Celtic defenders for dead.

Milan maintained the pressure at the start of the second half with Seedorf screwing an effort wide and Andrea Pirlo driving a free-kick straight into Boruc's grateful hands.

Milan were making all the running, but a rare moment of relief for Celtic came when Jarosik stole possession and cleverly released McManus down the left. The tenacious midfielder burst towards the area, but his low cross was easily intercepted.

Jarosik made way for combative Danish midfielder Thomas Gravesen as Strachan looked to bolster his midfield, before Milan veteran Filippo Inzaghi saw his

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Fergie fancies Athens glory

AFP, Manchester



Sir Alex Ferguson defiantly predicted that Manchester United can cope with a mounting injury crisis as his side chase a repeat of their 1999 treble of Premiership, FA Cup and Champions League trophies.

A 1-0 win over Lille here on

Wednesday sent United into the last eight of the Champions League with Henrik Larsson signing off in his final home match of his two and a half month loan spell by heading the 71st minute winner.

But it was a far from convincing display by Sir Alex Ferguson's side and the night was further marred by a serious injury to back-up defender Mikael Silvestre, who was taken to hospital with a suspected dislocated shoulder.

The former French international joins his compatriot Patrice Evra, strikers Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Louis Saha, and midfielder Darren Fletcher on United's growing list of sidelined players.

To add to Ferguson's worries, Paul Scholes has to serve a three-match domestic suspension and Larsson will return to Helsingborg in Sweden after Saturday's FA Cup quarterfinal at Middlesbrough.

"We were hoping of course that Henrik would score on his last appearance here and it was a fantastic cross from Cristiano Ronaldo," Ferguson said before paying generous tribute to the veteran Swede's contribution during his brief cameo in England.

"He has been a pleasure to work with. To see a player at 35 training as he does, always trying to learn something has been fantastic. Unfortunately he has to go back but he has promised Helsingborg he will and he has his family too. I've spoken to the lad but he's going back and that's that."

Ferguson admitted the injuries would stretch his squad but insisted the resilience of United's defending so far this season augured well for the battles to come.

"It has been a bad week for us apart from the results (they beat Liverpool 1-0 in the last minute of their Premiership match last Saturday).

"They have been good and that creates a great purpose about the team. No matter the run-in we have I think we have the purpose and quality in the squad to go the whole way."

Ferguson insisted he did not mind who United draw in the quarter-finals, with Chelsea and Liverpool both possible opponents.

"It is important for us to be there because we have had two bad years of not getting to that stage but of course the last eight is not our aim. We want to go as far as we can."

"There is not a lot between the teams left in. Barcelona had a spell last season when everyone was saying 'Christ I hope we don't get them'. Nobody is saying that this season."

Lille coach Claude Puel insisted he had no complaints about his side's elimination, despite the controversy over the first leg, which as he does, always trying to learn something has been fantastic. Unfortunately he has to go back but he has promised Helsingborg he will and he has his family too. I've spoken to the lad but he's going back and that's that."

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PHOTO: AFP

AC Milan midfielder Kaka (R) stabs home the winning goal after a surging run from midfield during extra-time in their Champions League knockout tie against Celtic at the San Siro on Wednesday.

Champions League			UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Qualified Tuesday, March 6			
	Chelsea	2 v 1	FC Porto
Win on aggregate 3-2			
	Lyon	0 v 2	AS Roma
0-2			
	Liverpool	0 v 1	FC Barcelona
Liverpool win on away goals 2-2			
	Valencia	0 v 0	Inter Milan
Valencia win on away goals 2-2			
Wednesday, March 7			
	Milan	1 v 0	Celtic Glasgow
1-0			
	Arsenal	1 v 1	PSV Eindhoven
1-2			
	Manchester Utd.	1 v 0	Lille
2-0			
	Bayern Munich	2 v 1	Real Madrid
Bayern win on away goals 4-4			