GERMAN CUP

Bayern enter last four

Football

AFP, Berlin

French midfielder Franck Ribery booked Bayern Munich's place in the last four of the German Cup with a dramatic penalty in the 122nd minute of their quarterfinal win over second-division 1860 Munich.

Ice-cool Ribery, 24, kept his strayed off-side.

It was a tense end to a tense game for ten-man Bayern at the squandered a string of clear matchinthe 203rd Munich derby. chances to win the game before Miroslav Klose won the crucial late penalty when he was tripped.

"That was a dramatic game, it an open goal in the first half. speaks volumes for his coolness that he scored both penalties," said Bayern club manager Uli Hoeness praising Ribery.

men as Bayern's Italian World Cup winner Luca Toni was shown a red card on 84 minutes for a second yellow card, while 1860's Markus Thorandt was shown a red deep in extra time for hacking down Ribery.

"1860 acquitted themselves very well and made life hard for us," said Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

"They were very well organised and I am happy that we kept up the pressure until the very end, even if we struggled to break down their

composure to score the game's are now Borussia Dortmund, VfL only goal when he converted his Wolfsburg, Carl Zeiss Jena and spot kick for the second time after Bayern with the German giants his first successful effort - just clear favourites to lift their 14th seconds before - was ordered to be German Cup title in the final at retaken after two teammates Berlin's Olympic Stadium on April

Bayern face title contenders Schalke 04 on Saturday in the Allianz Arena and the home side Bundesliga, but were given a tough Toni had two goals disallowed

either side of half-time, while teenage striker Tony Kroos missed

Bommel, sent off for a second yellow card in the 1-1 league draw with Hamburg on Sunday, had a Both sides finished with ten fierce shot saved, but he tapped the rebound to the right of the post on 58 minutes.

Hitzfeld introduced stars Ribery and Klose in the second-half, but the 1860 defence held firm until the dying seconds.

1860's best chance fell to midfielder Danny Schwarz, but his header went wide of the post just after the hour mark before the game's dramatic finale.

Earlier in the evening, Wolfsburg also booked their place in the last four with a 2-1 extra-time The German Cup semifinalists win over Hamburg thanks to their Brazilians Grafite and Marcelinho.

majority of the chances - their opponents underfire coach Ronald After Grafite put his side in the Koeman electing to play only Villa lead with a 17th minute penalty, up front - but found Valencia's Hamburg hit back when captain German goalkeeper Timo Rafael van der Vaart unleashed a Hildebrand in commanding form. superb free-kick in the 70th min-He was forced into his first save

It was all-square at full-time, but Marcelinho hit the winner in extra time to put his side in the semifi-

On Tuesday, defending Bundesliga champions VfB Stuttgart suffered the upset of the round when they crashed out after Dutch hardman Mark van losing to second-division strugglers Carl Zeiss Jena 5-4 on penalties.

offender for Barca missing twice within eight minutes in the sec-There was no such banana skin ond-half, although his worst miss for Borussia Dortmund as Thomas was nine minutes from the end Doll's side booked their semifinal when he was one on one with berth with a 3-1 win over 1899 Hoffenheim.

Hildebrand. Thursday's second semifinal pitches Getafe at home to Racing Santander.

SPANISH CUP

on Xavi

AFP, Barcelona

Wednesday.

minutes from time.

Barca ride

A goal well into injury-time by Xavi

gave Barcelona a 1-1 draw at home

to Valencia in their Spanish Cup

semifinal first leg clash here on

solely on winning the Cup after a

disastrous Champions League and

championship campaign - had

taken the lead through Spanish

international striker David Villa 20

in the sixth minute from Xavi in the

same move that had seen efforts by

Barca's French duo Thierry

Samuel Eto'o and Lionel Messi

Henry and Eric Abidal also failed to

break the deadlock with their long

range efforts in the first-half which

Messi, though, was the biggest

blocked by Valencia defenders.

Hildebrand fielded easily.

Barcelona too be fair had the

Valencia - whose season rests

The second legs are on March 19 and 20.



Barcelona forward Samuel Eto'o (R) fights for the ball with Valencia goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand during their King's Cup encounter at the Nou Camp on Wednesday.

Roma hold Inter

AFP, Rome



Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini couldn't contain his joy after his side scraped a 1-1 home draw against AS Roma to maintain their nine-point lead at

the top of Serie A. Francesco Totti gave Roma a deserved first-half lead with a near post flick from a sumptuous left-

wing cross from Max Tonetto. Interwere reduced to 10 men just past the hour mark after Brazilian left-back Maxwell was stretchered off just moments after Mancini

made his third substitution. But following the late and harsh dismissal of Roma's French centreback Philippe Mexes, Inter captain Javier Zanetti rifled home a rightfoot volley two minutes from time to earn a share of the spoils the league leaders didn't deserve.

It means they still lead Roma by nine points at the top with Juventus, who drew 0-0 at home to Torino in the Turin derby on Tuesday, third a further four points back.

"It's a draw that's worth a victory for the way it was earned" Mancini told Sky Sport.

"Totti scored with their first chance on goal and then that shaped the course of the match. It was very difficult for us with 10 men."

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti was livid with the sending off of Mexes, whose second booking looked ridiculously harsh.

"Speaking reasonably and without anger I have to say that one of Mexes's (bookings) was definitely not a foul," he said.

"It was unfair because the second booking wasn't deserved. Did that turn the game? Well, a goal followed on from it," Spalletti said before suggesting Inter forward Hernan Crespo's theatrical tumble to the ground under minimal contact from Mexes had duped the referee.

In Sicily European champions AC Milan were held to a 1-1 draw by Catania and lost fourth place to Fiorentina who beat Livorno 1-0 at home, thanks to a goal from Senegal forward Ndiaye Papa Waigo.

It was a strange match in

Catania. After an insipid first half with little action and no goals, it sprung to life after the break.

gave Milan the lead with a long range shot that Cirlo Polito should have saved.

salvaged a draw for Catania but they had two goals disallowed, Milan also had one chalked off and by the referee.

here, we went in front but we didn't manage to see out an important cylinders at the moment."

result," he said.

"I'm sorry about the situation we created for ourselves. We were Teenage Brazilian forward Pato taken by surprise by the goal." Ancelotti complained that

tiredness was starting to get to his players, who have played three Substitute Gionathan Spinesi more league matches since the turn of the year than any of their Serie A rivals, due to a fixture backlog related to their involvement in eight yellow cards were dished out the Club World Cup in December. "We can't do any more at the

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti was moment, we have too many disappointed at the two dropped matches and we can't manage them all. Some of our most important "We've missed an opportunity players need to rest, that's the point.

"The team is not firing on all



Inter Milan captain Javier Zanetti jumps for joy after scoring against AS Roma during their Serie A match at the San Siro on Wednesday.

prefer Riquelme AFP, Buenos Aires

Boca fans

Fallen Argentinian football legend Diego Maradona suffered another blow to his prestige on Wednesday when it was revealed that playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme was leading him convincingly in a poll of Boca Junior fans. Maradona who has battled

drugs and weight problems for several years having inspired Argentina to the 1986 World Cup trophy and then to the 1990 final polled just 26.42per cent while 29year-old Riquelme received 33.37per cent of the 65,160 fans that have already voted.

"It makes me really happy that the Boca fans have so much affection for me," said Riquelme, who joined Boca at the end of November from Spanish First Division side Villarreal. Maradona, formerly untouch-

able as the Boca fans sweetheart having had two spells at the club including winning the league title in 1982, can still win the poll as it has another month to run.

Nistelrooy ruled out

AFP, Madrid

Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelroo has been ruled out of Real Madrid's Spanish league away match against Recreativo on Saturday due to an ankle injury, the club said on its Internet site. The 31-year-old is the defend-

league with 12 goals but he has not scored since January 20. Real coach Bernd Schuster however will be able to count on Brazilian

ing champions top scorer in the

duo Pepe and Robinho who returned to training Wednesday after being away due to injury. Pepe has not played since

January 20 because of a problem in his right foot while Robinho has been off the pitch since February 10 with a muscle problem. Real have 56 points from 25

games, two points fewer than nearest rivals Barcelona, after suffering a shock 1-0 home defeat against Getafe on Sunday.

Ireland to face

Colombia in a friendly at English Premier League Fulham's Craven Cottage ground on May 29, the Football Association of Ireland has

to the Republic's 2010 World Cup qualifying programme.

Trapattoni takes up his new post on May 1 after he sees out the Austrian League season with Red Bull Salzburg, currently third in the

The veteran Italian boss will first conduct a week-long training camp in Portugal ahead of a friendly with Serbia at Croke Park on May 24.

of 39 on February 12, 2005. publication house Anyaprakash. Colombia, who are also due to play France in Paris on June 3.

Boro scrape through With penalties looming in the but in the end we have been very fell to former England striker James

AFP, Middlesbrough



side had enjoyed a huge towards the goalkeeper who,

Middlesbrough '

winner sent them into the last eight of the FA Championship outfit, Cardiff. Cup with a 1-0 win over Sheffield

uninspiring contest on points but it still took a bizarre own goal by Sheffield United goalkeeper Paddy Kenny to separate the two sides in Wednesday night's fifth round replay.

second period of extra time, Boro's Egyptian striker Mido fired in a boss Gareth shot that took a deflection off Chris Southgate Morgan and looped over Kenny admitted his and onto the post. The ball bounced straight back

caught unawares, contrived to after a freakish fumble it over his own line, effecextra-time tively handing Boro a quarterfinal home tie against another

win but obviously the longer it Boro had marginally shaded an went on the more it looked like it would be decided on penalties," Southgatesaid.

character. They have done that all season and they have done it again. We had the chances to wrap it up

fortunate with the goal. "It was a classic FA Cup goal but I straight at goalkeeper Mark

the way and they have a lot of Another good block by Morgan Premiership quality players in their denied Alves early in the second half Southgate handed striker scoring his first goal in Boro on 65 Afonso Alves his first start since his minutes after being fed by Julio 12.7-million-pound capture in the Arca.

January transfer window and it was a promising full debut from the a low right-foot shot which Kenny-"We had plenty of chances to Brazilian, described as "a real didwell to hold. threat" by his delighted manager.

clever turn by Alves forced from Matthew Kilgallon but his "But we have shown a lot of free-kick and it took a fine block by Morgan to prevent him firing Boro into the lead soon afterwards.

The visitors best early chance

Beattie, who fluffed his volley have to pay credit to Sheffield. Over Schwarzer after being found by the two games they pushed us all Gary Naysmith's cross.

and the Brazilian came close to

Cutting inside, Alves unleashed

The Brazilian was denied As early as the ninth minute, a once more by a superb challenge defender Derek Geary to concede a lack of a goal did not prevent him from being warmly cheered when he departed with just over a quarter of an hour left.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

EPL flop hurts Gerrard

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Not even a sixth European Cup will make up for the disappointment of Liverpool's failure to mount a serious challenge in this season's Premier League title race, Reds captain Steven Gerrard has admitted.

In a candid interview, the England midfielder has revealed the depth of his dismay that, having started the campaign with such high hopes, Liverpool now find themselves in a battle for fourth place with the likes of Everton and Aston Villa.

"If you asked most of our fans, they would rather see the title than the European Cup at Anfield,'

SPORTS REPORTER

Wednesday.

Bangla Academy.

organisers, journalists and fans.

Indian newsman Rupak Saha.

long, long time.

"Looking at the league table hurts. This time last year we were third and Arsenal were fourth, and that is the way the season ended. It hurts to see where Arsenal are now." Gerrard recognises that an on-

form Everton and a revitalised Villa will push Liverpool hard in the race for fourth place but he refuses to accept it will be a significant achievement if they are held off. "I don't think that the fans

would accept fourth as an accomplishment and for me it's not nearly good enough," Gerrard told LFC magazine. "We need to improve dramati-

cally and even if we do finish fourth, it doesn't mean we have had a good season." Gerrard added: "In the position we are right now."

Book on Munna published

Gerrard said. "We've not won it in a we find ourselves now, fourth is the least that is acceptable. But we have bigger ambitions than that.

> "The only way we can fulfil those ambitions is in the Champions League. And I am not going to pretend that even winning that trophy - and we are a long way away from it at the moment - will make up for the disappointment of the league campaign.

> "I'm pretty gutted every time I look at the table and see the gap between us and Arsenal at the top, and even the gap between us and second and third.

"We believed we had the players to challenge for the title, and we wanted that one more than any other trophy available to us. I still believe we have the squad to be a hell of a lot more competitive than

Eduardo leaves hospital

AFP, London

Arsenal striker Eduardo da Silva has been released from hospital following the broken leg he suffered in a tackle last weekend, the English Premier League side said Wednesday.

Eduardo has now been released from hospital, where he had been since sustaining his injury against Birmingham City," an Arsenal statement said.

"The club can confirm that

"Eduardo would like to once again thank everyone for the overwhelming messages of support he has received."

The 25-year-old Brazilian-born Croatian striker fractured his left fibula and dislocated his ankle after a studs-up tackle from Martin Taylor which saw the Birmingham City defender sent off just minutes into Saturday's 2-2 league draw at St Andrews.

The incident was deemed so horrendous the host broadcaster covering the match refused to show replays of the tackle during the game.

Eduardo, whose injury has ruled him out of the remainder of Premier League leaders Arsenal's season and the Croatia side that will play in the Euro 2008 finals in Austria and Switzerland, underwent surgery on Saturday in Birmingham before being trans-

ferred to a London hospital. Taylor received death threats after the challenge, especially from Croatian fans furious at being deprived of a star player for a major

tournament. One website specifically set up after the incident has already received 27,000 messages directed at the former Blackburn player.

Birmingham's security personnel had to restrain Croatian journalists who ran on to the road and tried to force their way into Taylor's car as he left the club's training ground on Monday. Birmingham manager Alex

McLeish condemned the reaction, saying. "I've heard about the death threats and you are going to ridiculous proportions if that is the case. There are some crazypeople in the world."

Arsenal said Monday they hoped Eduardo would make a full recovery from his injury after nine months.

FRENCH CUP Lens clinch a thriller

Football

AFP, Paris

Lens will face fellow relegation match, which you get occasionally candidates Paris Saint Germain in football," said the former the French League Cup final after they won an astonishing semifinal man, who guided Strasbourg to 5-4 over Le Mans on Wednesday. final which PSG won.

lead in the second-half only for Le in distinct danger of being relegated, grabbed the winner a min- Auxerre. ute from the end of extra-time

days ago.

Papin, whose side are just a place above the relegation zone only on goal difference, breathed a huge sigh of relief.

"That was a completely mad above the relegation places. Marseille and AC Milan marksthe First Division last term and It will be a rematch of the 1998 then replaced Guy Roux at Lens after only a few weeks of this cam-Lens, coached by former French paign.

striking great Jean-Pierre Papin, had "The cherry on the cake is that to come from behind twice to take this is the match we needed and what looked like an unassailable 4-2 the club showed real soul."

PSG had been the first to book Mans to strike twice in a minute to their place at the March 29 final at the Stade de France when they However, Lens, who like PSG gained a much needed morale boost are former French champions but to their traumatic season on Tuesday thanks to a 3-2 victory over

However the match featured through Malfen midfielder Sidi yet another alarming mistake by Keita - a retharkable return after PSG's France 'keeper Mickael he had been taken ill during a Landreau, who punched the ball match and sent to hospital only 10 into his own net to let Auxerre back into the match at 2-1.

Landreau's error comes hot on the heels of two costly errors in the last two league matches which sees PSG lie only three points | The Republic of Ireland will face

"That gives us a new dimension and new hope," said PSG coach Paul Le Guen, who has adopted a low key approach and allowed club president Alain Cayzac to do most of the explaining and excuses which the latter admits he finds tiring

"However, given the league position we have to move on but at least this is a win we can enjoy. "With regards to Landreau, he

will be in goal for the next match (on Sunday away to secondplaced Bordeaux) and I hope he doesn't make a fourth error." PSG looked to have wrapped

the tie up after the first-half with headers by Colombian international defender Mario Yepes and former Portuguese marksman Pauleta putting them 2-0 up. However, Landreau's error

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Colombia AFP, Dublin

announced The game will be new manager Giovanni Trapattoni's second in charge and will conclude what officials hope will be an "intensive" period of preparation in the run-up

This will then be followed with the game in London against



Cover of 'King Back Monem Munna'