Ribery awarded 340,000 euros damages

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich's France midfielder Franck Ribery will receive 340,000 euros (487,000 US dollars) from his former agent after a ruling by the Swiss Federal Court in Lausanne on Wednesday.

Germany sports agency SID reported the court upheld an earlier ruling that Ribery, 25, was entitled to cancel a contract with former agent Bruno Heiderscheid just before his transfer from Marseille to Bayern Munich in June

Luxembourg-based Heiderscheid had complained to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) claiming Ribery broke his contract and should pay him dam-

But the Lausanne-based CAS, the world's highest court of appeal for sport, ruled last April that because of a previous conviction in 2000, Heiderscheid's criminal record meant his contract with Ribery signed in 2005 was null and void.

The hearing was held under French law, which insists agents must have a clean record to hold a sports licence.

The CAS ruled Ribery must be compensated 340,000 euros in fees already paid to the agent.

Although Heiderschied appealed the decision, the Swiss Federal Tribunal upheld the CAS ruling and announced the decision on Wednesday.

Ribery, currently recovering from ankle surgery, was named German footballer of the year for 2007-08 after leading Bayern to the Bundesliga title.

Gazza back in trouble

AFP, London

Troubled former England footballer Paul Gascoigne was arrested on Thursday in Gateshead, northeastern England, on suspicion of causing criminal damage.

The 41-year-old's arrest is the latest in a series of incidents --Gascoigne has been sectioned under British mental health laws twice already this year, and he has battled alcoholism and depression since his playing days.

In keeping with force policy, Northumbria Police did not name Gascoigne but said: "A 41-year-old man was arrested... this morning on suspicion of criminal damage. Inquiries are ongoing."

Gascoigne -- known to fans as "Gazza" -- made 57 appearances for England, and played for clubs including Newcastle, Tottenham, Lazio in Italy and Rangers.

Considered one of the most talented players English football has ever produced, he is best known for his exploits in the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy where he helped his country to reach the semifinals.

Forlan out for weeks

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid striker Diego Forlan will be out for three to four weeks after suffering a thigh injury during the Champions League match with PSV Eindhoven, the Spanish club said on Wednesday.

The Uruguayan international was taken off injured in the 30th minute of Tuesday's match, in which Atletico thrashed PSV 3-0 in the Madrid club's first appearance in the Champions League group stage for 11 years.

His absence is expected to give French striker Florent Sinama-Pongolle, transferred from Recreativo Huelva, more chance to impress his new club.

'Chelsea will see real United'

INTERNET, undated

Sir Alex Ferguson warned that Chelsea will see the real Manchester United at Stamford Bridge on Sunday despite another lacklustre display, against Villarreal in the Champions League last

Even the introduction of Cristiano Ronaldo as a 62ndminute substitute could not inspire United to victory as they toiled to a goalless draw against the Spanish side at Old Trafford.

Arsenal drew, too, 1-1 in Kiev after a late equaliser from skipper William Gallas.

United boss Ferguson, whose team are already six points behind Chelsea in the Premier League, said: 'There were plus points and we should have won on the chances we created, but we will

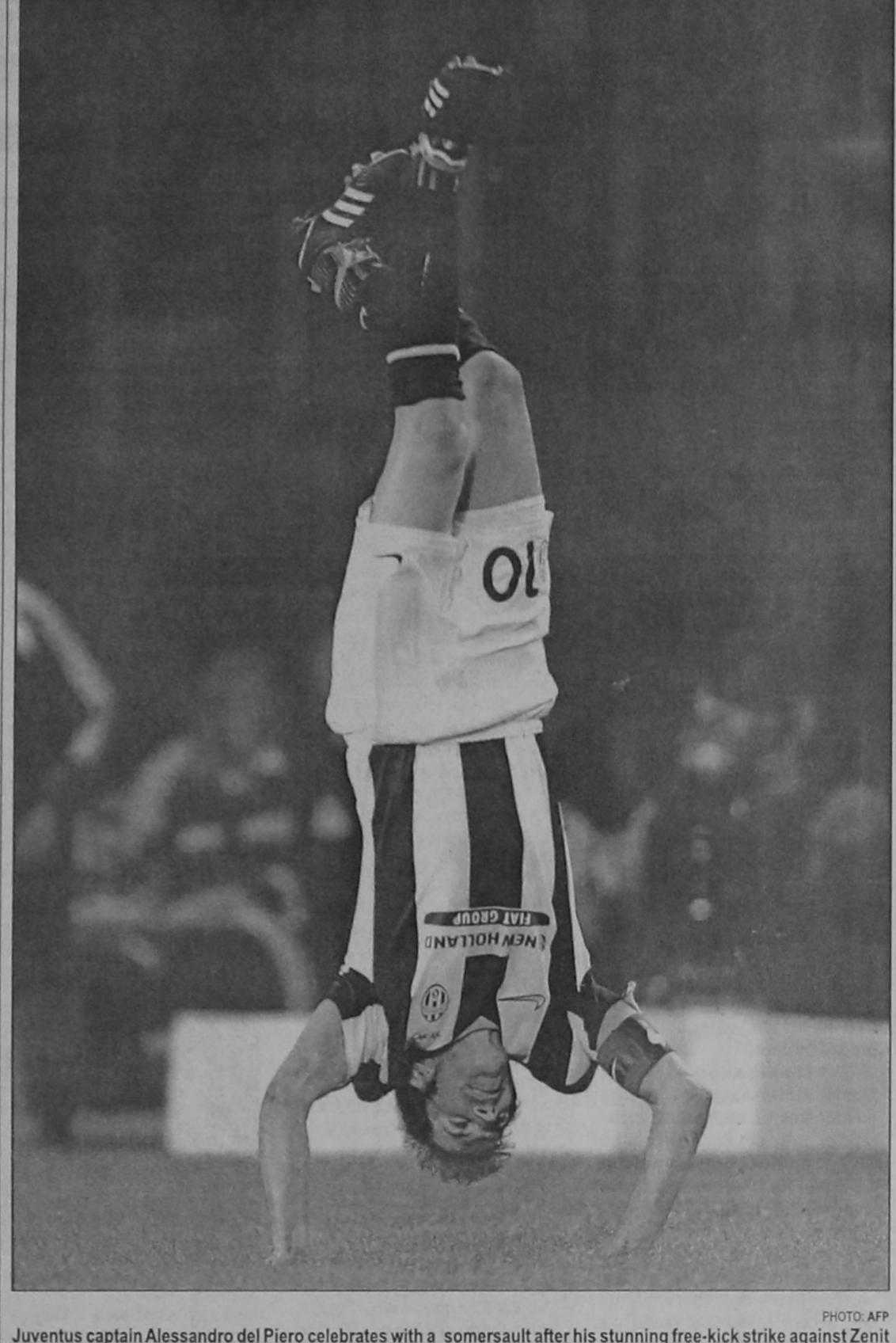
improve on this. We are a bit short in terms of sharpness but the games will bring that on.

Ronaldo, who went close with a header, was given a thunderous ovation by the United fans.

Ferguson added: 'He has had a turbulent summer but he has shown great loyalty for five years.

'It's important for him to realise what a great club he is at and how important he is to the supporters and how important they are to him."

Striker Dimitar Berbatov missed the game with a knee injury and is doubtful for Sunday.



Juventus captain Alessandro del Piero celebrates with a somersault after his stunning free-kick strike against Zenit St Petersburg at the Stadio Olimpicio on Wednesday. Juventus ended a 2-year exile from Europe's premier club competition with a win against the Russian upstarts.

Chelsea hire Wilkins

Football

AFP, London

coach on Thursday following Steve Clarke's move to London rivals West Ham.

Wilkins began his career at evercaptain. Stamford Bridge and, while still a teenager, captained Chelsea before moving to Manchester United.

second coaching spell with the club, having previously worked

Scolari after Clarke decided to join up with Gianfranco Zola, another between 1976-1986.

former Chelsea player, at West

This will be Wilkins's first coaching role since he lost his position with the England Under-Ray Wilkins was appointed as 21 side last year when boss Peter at QPR and another west London Chelsea's new assistant first-team Taylor departed and was replaced club in Fulham. by Stuart Pearce.

aged just 17 back in 1973 and a year Former England midfielder later became the club's youngest-

from the old First Division in 1979. he was sold to Manchester United This will be the 52-year-old's with the Londoners receiving a then club record 825,000 pounds.

In all, Wilkins made 198 appearunder former manager Gianluca ances for Chelsea, scoring 34 goals. At United he won the FA Cup while, Now he will assist Luiz Felipe at international level, he was capped 84 times by England

He also played for Italian side AC Milan, Scottish giants Rangers and Chelsea's west London rivals Queens Park Rangers (QPR). He later had brief spells as a manager

Wilkins, while working with Vialli, Wilkins made his Chelsea debut was a member of the Chelsea backroom staff when the club won the FA Cup and Charity Shield in 2000.

He is due to start work immedi-Following Chelsea's relegation ately and arrives at Stamford Bridge with Chelsea top of the Premier League table and in sparkling form following a 4-0 thrashing of Bordeaux in the Champions League.

Wilkins's first match back sees Chelsea up against Manchester United at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, where a win for the Blues would leave them nine points clear of the reigning champions.

Benzema rescues Lyon

CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Lyon

Karim Benzema rescued a draw for French champions Lyon as they drew 2-2 with Italy's Fiorentina in their opening Champions League Group Ematch on Wednesday.

straight domestic titles Lyon have yet to show any real sign of being able to challenge for the Champions League itself, having never been past the quarterfinals.

But they did show character in coming from two goals down to bag a point which may yet prove the difference between the exit door and a place in the last 16.

It appeared that two Alberto Gilardino first half goals would hand the points to the visitors before Frederic Piquionne pulled one back amid controversy as Zauri, playing the home man onside, was still prostrate in the box after an earlier challenge.

Lyon's talented French international striker Benzema then scored with a neat right-foot drive following a short freekick by the ever-alert

The first half had been an even affair but, in typical Italian style, Fiorentina struck just when it seemed the French were getting the upper hand.

Gilardino, completing a fleetfooted, two-pronged Italian attack alongside Romanian star Adrian Mutu, headed them in front after just 12 minutes after a mix-up in the French defence culminated in a botched clearance by Newcastle reject Jean-Alain Boumsong.

Gilardino dispatched Luciano Zauri's ensuing cross with aplomb. Mathieu Bodmer had moments beforehand come within an ace of opening the scoring at the other

end with an effort which came back off the crossbar.

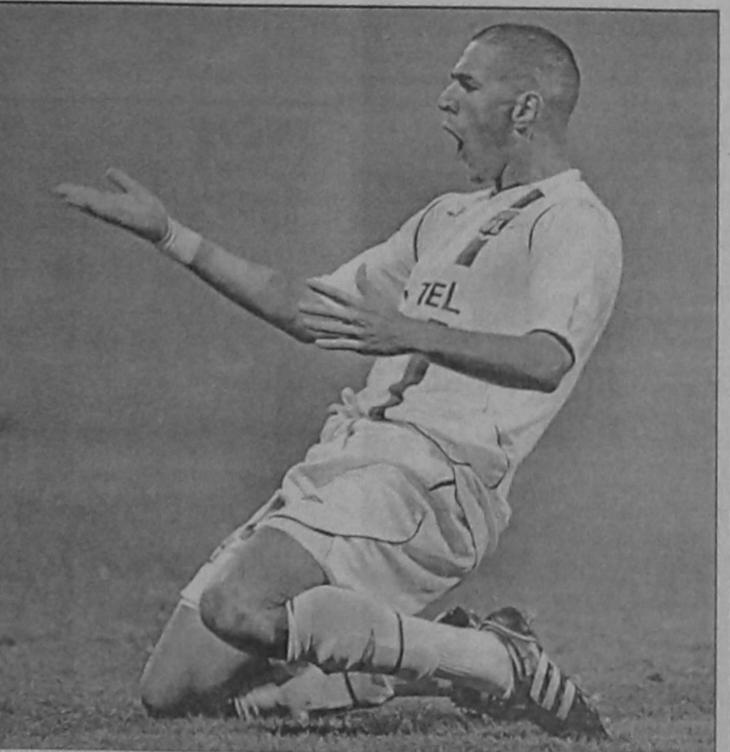
In response to Gilardino's opener, Lyon veteran striker Sidney Govou forced a good save from Fiorentina's French goalkeeper Sebastien Frey.

At the other end Hugo Lloris, showing some nervous moments in the Lyon goal after taking over from Gregory Coupet, now of Despite picking off seven Atletico Madrid, did well to tip a piledriver from Sergio Almiron onto the bar as the Italians almost made it two in the 21st matches 3-0.

fine showing from the mercurial Benzema.

minute. There followed a period of neat approach play by the fluent French, but they would pay for their lack of a killer instinct as they went two down on 42 minutes when Gilardino headed in from Felipo Melo's pinpoint cross.

A late effort over the bar from Juninho also had Lyon fans on the edge of their seats but in the end they had to settle for a point - at least an improvement on last year, when they lost their first two



Lyon forward Karim Benzema laps up the applause after his late equaliser during their Champions League match against Fiorentina on Wednesday. Lyon fell two behind at the Stade Gerland but came back to draw thanks to a

Del Piero fires Juve

CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Turin

Juventus marked their return to the Champions League after a two year absence with a hard-fought 1-0 Group H victory over UEFA Cup holders Zenit St Petersburg here on Wednesday.

There was little to choose between the two sides until veteran Italy forward Alessandro Del Piero's swerving 30-yard freekick deceived goalkeeper Vyacheslav Malafeev.

Zenit had more of the ball but failed to take advantage of their chances although their Dutch coach Dick Advocaat vented his fury at Belgian referee Franck De Bleeckere after the game.

"In my opinion he was a little bit impressed by the Italian team," he said wryly.

"But I can understand that, I know how this world works."

Despite the set-back Advocaat was pleased with his team's overall performance.

"I'm disappointed. Today showed that if you don't take your chances, you will lose and that happened in a really Italian way.

"If you saw the game I saw Zenit played the better football but football is about scoring and we failed to do that."

Juve coach Claudio Ranieri showed off his team's attacking strength in depth by restoring Del

Piero and David Trezeguet to the starting line up at the expense of Amauri and Vincenzo Iaquinta, who had started at the weekend against Udinese.

Yet despite the weapons at his disposal, he agreed with Advocaat's assessment of the

"He's right," he admitted. "We knew we were playing a great team

and they proved their worth here. "It wasn't easy, Zenit were stronger than us physically as they are coming towards the end of their

"We weren't fluid, we didn't pass the ball well and we couldn't find the right solution. "It was very difficult, playing on

this (bumpy) pitch was very difficult and because of these difficulties I was delighted with the spirit of sacrifice the team showed."

Zenit had the first clear chance of the match with Danny almost turning home a sweeping move on 11 minutes after Igor Denisov headed Pavel Pogrebnyak's left wing cross back across goal for the Portugal forward, who shot wide with the goal at his mercy.

Minutes later, though, Zenit gave the ball away in midfield and Del Piero almost capitalised, crossing for Trezeguet who disappointingly headed well wide.

Del Piero almost freed his French strike partner in the box on 20 minutes but Trezeguet couldn't quite stretch his leg out far enough to bring the ball under control.

The hosts were gradually getting

the upper hand and on 26 minutes Argentine-born Italy midfielder Mauro Camoranesi clipped the outside of the post with a close range header from a Del Piero free-

Pogrebnyak almost bundled his way through late on in what was a

largely tepid half but that chance, like most others, was snuffed out. Zenit visibly grew in confidence after the break and started to see a lot more of the ball with the previ-

ously ineffective Andrei Arshavin increasingly getting involved. They were denied a freekick on the edge of the Juve box when Denisov went to ground a little too easily under a challenge from

Momo Sissoko. But on 56 minutes Arshavin played in Radek Sirl only for Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon to rush out and block the leftback's

Juve started to come back into things, though, as Denmark midfielder Christian Poulsen forced Malafeev into a sprawling save with a flicked header from a Pavel

Nedved freekick on 74 minutes. Just two minutes later came Del Piero's winning strike.

Zenit, who seemed to have missed their chance, had one last opportunity as Arshavin burst past two tackles and into the box but centre-back Giorgio Chiellini stood his ground and stopped the little magician in his tracks.

Chopra grateful to Keane

AFP, Sunderland

Sunderland striker Michael Chopra publicly expressed his gratitude to manager Roy Keane for giving himself time to sort out his life away from football.

The 24-year-old played for the reserves on Wednesday after a three-game ban imposed for a preseason sending-off.

Unflattering stories about Chopra's marriage to Heather Swan, who starred in the British television 'reality' show Wags Boutique, appeared in several tabloid newspapers.

But, with the backing of both his wife and Keane, Chopra spent time at the Sporting Chance Clinic in Hampshire, southern England, set up by former England defender Tony Adams. "I'm playing with a smile on my

face again. It's down to me to work hard now and get my place in the team," he told Sunderland's official website after scoring in the reserves' 2-1 win over Liverpool.

"I had a week away trying to sort myself out, and I'm pleased the gaffer let me do that. I'm grateful to

Now Chopra hopes he can get into Keane's team for Saturday's Premier League north-east derby clash with Middlesbrough at the Stadium of Light.

"I would love to be involved against Boro, but we will see what the gaffer does because he's got good options.

"If he picks me, I will be going on the pitch full of confidence.'

Rosicky still to regain full fitness

AFP, Prague

Arsenal midfielder Tomas Rosicky said Thursday he was still some way off full fitness after suffering renewed problems to the thigh injury that has kept him sidelined since January.

"My return is still going to take some time," Rosicky told the CTK news agency.

"Each treatment runs the risk of bringing complications," the 28year-old explained. Rosicky's downbeat bulletin will

disappoint his club manager Arsene Wenger who in August said he hoped to have Rosicky back playing by September.

Rosicky has been out of action since leaving the pitch in a FA Cup tie against Newcastle last season. In Prague the media are specu-

fact trigger a premature end to the player's career. "Let's hope the career of 'little Mozart' doesn't resemble that of the composer - spectacular but

lating whether the injury could in

France set Argentina date

short," wrote the Dnes daily.

AFP, Paris

France will play a friendly against Argentina in Marseille on Febuary 11, 2009, the French football federation (FFF) announced on Thursday.

The two countries last met in a friendly in Marseille in February 2007, with the South Americans running out 1-0 winners thanks to a goal from Javier Saviola.

France play Romania on October 11 in a 2010 World Cup qualifier. They currently sit fourth in Group Seven after one win and one defeat.

Schuster must be blind: Hughes

INTERNET, undated

Mark Hughes last night told Real Madrid manager Bernd Schuster to stand back and watch as Robinho and Manchester City scale the heights after his old teammate rapped the Brazilian for defecting to Eastlands.

Schuster, who played alongside

penalties last time out in the tournament in Jutland, but Hughes season. said: 'Getting into the group stage "It was my first goal in the is key. European football is impor-Champions League which is great tant for our development. If we get for me but the main positive is that a sustained run to the latter stages, we won," said Ramos. who knows?

"We have to concentrate on the 'We're trying to go in the right league now and then there is the direction and that's what Robinho big game at St Petersburg. You has seen. He's come to a club he can't afford to slip up in this comfeels is going places." petition if you want to go all the showed as a misdirected pass

Win pleases Klinsmann they bid to win the European title the game and we could have been for the first time since 2001. 2-0 up at half-time.

CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Bucharest

Bayern Munich coach Jurgen Klinsmann was pleased to take three points from Romania on his Champions League debut as a Daniel Van Buyten header inflicted a 1-0 defeat on Steaua Bucharest.

puts Bayern top of Group F alongside Italian side Fiorentina, who drew 2-2 with French champions Former Germany coach Klinsmann took over Bayern's

helm on July 1 and was pleased his

side got off to a winning start as

Wednesday night's result here

"It is always important to start

with three points and the team earned it," said Klinsmann. Van Buyten rose above the Steaua defence on 15 minutes to

head a free-kick from Bastian

Schweinsteiger into the home side's net and his goal was enough to seal the win. Bayern striker Luca Toni wasted a number of chances in the firsthalf to increase the lead as the German giants sat back after the

break and defended their advan-"We knew it would be anything

but easy to win here," added Klinsmann.

"In the first-half, we controlled

"After the break we played a little bit too defensively and we fell back a little bit too far."

With the home side hitting the post twice, Steaua coach Marius Lacatus was disappointed his team failed to break Bayern's defence. "I am sad a little bit," he said.

"We had hoped to counterattack, but we did not manage this. "After conceding the early goal, we had to be more aggressive and

again it was something we didn't

manage to do. "In addition, we were unluckynot to take our chances.

"Bayern are a strong opponent with good players and we could not always stop them."



Bayern Munich striker Lukas Podolski (R) rides a challenge from Steaua Bucharest defender Dorin Golan during their Champions League clash at Bucharest on Wednesday. Podolski came on as a second-half sub and saw him

BATE was always going to be an

easy obstacle but Real's next

group match is a tough trip to

Russia to face UEFA Cup holders

Schuster criticised his team for

taking their foot off the gas against

- such as Zenit and Juventus -

Real ease past BATE

would punish them.

CHAMPS LEAGUE

team home with a single goal victory.

AFP, Madrid

As expected record nine-time European champions Real Madrid defeated Belarus unknowns BATE Borisov 2-0 in the Champions League Group H opener at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday

tition after crashing out to Roma at the first knockout stage last

rounds and their debut could not have been much more difficult. The visitors kicked off and their nerves - for most of them this was the biggest game of their lives -

Dutch international Rafael van

der Vaart made his Real

went straight out of play.

With just six minutes gone Guti, a three-time Champions League winner with Real, should have scored but his chipped effort Zenit St Petersburg on September

Guti quickly made amends though sliding a terrific 10th minute pass to Ramos, who slot-BATE and stressed stronger teams ted the ball home. BATE goalkeeper Sergei

> Veremko was peppered with shots as van Nistelrooy and Raul drove

went wide.

Diarra in defensive midfield. Real had conceded five goals in their first two league matches but the defence was comfortable

Although Borisov rarely threatened Real must have seen Romanian debutants CFR 1907 Cluj defeat Roma 2-1 on Tuesday and wanted a second goal to avoid the chance of a similar upset.

The home crowd were

demanding more goals and on 56 minutes van Nistelrooy struck bundling the ball in after Raul's effort was well saved. Minutes later BATE defender

Anri Khagush was sent off for two bookable offences.

In a David versus Goliath con-"After we went 1-0 up and saw Hughes at Barcelona, has criticised test the latter came out on top with that our rivals were not in the fierce efforts narrowly wide. Robinho's 34 million pound move a first Champions League goal position to respond we seemed to Fernando Gago hobbled off from Sergio Ramos and a strike to 'a mediocre club'. stop, "lamented Schuster. injured on the half hour mark so from Dutch striker Ruud van But City's manager, who sends "We lacked the second or third Schuster introduced Mahamadou Nistelrooy helping Real collect the out Robinho against UEFA Cup goal to control the game and I am first-round hosts AC Omonia in three points. not happy about that. In another Nicosia expects Schuster to revise Real have won back-to-back match it could cost us dearly." league titles but have not his opinion. Captain Raul, the all-time topadvanced past the last 16 stage He said: 'Maybe in the next few scorer in the Champions League against the visitor's blunt attack. since 2004 and their coach Bernd years we can change Bernd's view with 61 goals, returned after recov-Schuster is under pressure to have on Robinho's decision to join us.' ering from a heel problem while an impact on this season's compe-City only sneaked through on Ramos came back in defence and

> BATE had worked their way through all three qualifying

Champions League debut.