



Newcastle striker Shola Ameobi (R) scores, to make it 1-1 against Manchester City during their Premiership match at St James Park in Newcastle on Monday.

Man City steal a draw

AFP, Newcastle



Referee Rob Styles found himself embroiled in another controversial penalty decision as 10-man Newcastle drew 2-2 with Manchester City at St James Park on Monday night.

Styles, who late last month apologised to Bolton for the penalty decision that condemned them to a 2-0 defeat against Manchester United, showed red to Habib Beye in what appeared a harsh decision.

Beye tackled Robinho on the edge of the box and looked to have taken the ball in a fair challenge but Styles dismissed Beye to change the complexion of the game. Robinho easily put the spot kick past Shay Given in Newcastle's goal.

Newcastle's Nicky Butt told Setanta Sports television on the incident: "I think everyone knows it was not a penalty and everyone makes mistakes and the referee made one there."

Newcastle's stand-in manager Joe Kinnear said of the penalty decision while watching the video playback: "I would just question the

referee's position as you look back there are two players in front of him and I do not know how he could make that decision that quickly.

"If he looks at that (video playback) and then puts his hands up in the air it would be fair enough."

Kinnear added he would like the Newcastle job on a permanent basis. When asked if he would be offered the post for good, he continued: "I don't really know for honest. Of course I want the job. It's a fantastic club and I think it's the best club I have ever worked at and they are a great bunch of players to work with."

"It's a chance to get back into football and I would make the most of it."

Early on Newcastle were in turmoil as City passed repeatedly the ball through them, although they were at least able to hold firm in the final third.

At one point Richard Dunne needed treatment after being caught by his own keeper Joe Hart as the pair tried to prevent Shola Ameobi from reaching Geremi's cross.

Dunne left the field bleeding from his nose to temporarily leave the game at 10 aside, and the Magpies almost took full advantage 10 minutes before the break.

Dunne eventually returned, and played a part in the equaliser when his clearance cannoned off Damian Duff and ran into the path of Shola Ameobi, who controlled before stabbing the ball home.

A 63rd minute Dunne own goal put Newcastle amazingly back ahead although they had played so much time with 10 men.

Geremi swung over a corner but City skipper Dunne only succeeded in poking the ball into the top corner of his own net.

When Stephen Ireland was denied by a superb one-handed, diving save from Given with just six minutes remaining it looked as if the home side would pick up three much-needed points, but the Irish midfielder was to have the final say, finding the net in the 86th minute.

Manchester City were left in 10th spot in the Premiership table while Newcastle remained second from bottom.

Kinnear added: "It was a fantastic performance from 10 men and you could not ask for more. They were totally committed, they played decent football and created clear cut chances and could have won the game with 10 men but there was a lot of tired legs out there. It was a hell of a game."

Compelling ties for English



AFP, Paris

Premier League leaders Chelsea and Liverpool face compelling ties as they reach the midway point of the Champions League group stage on Wednesday.

Chelsea, with four points from their first two games, host AS Roma on the back of their highest ever win under Luiz Felipe Scolari, a 5-0 thrashing at Middlesbrough.

Roma travel to north London anxious for a quick pick-me-up after Saturday's sobering 4-0 loss to Inter Milan at their Olympic Stadium.

With next weekend's Liverpool clash looming, Scolari will be calling on all his big game expertise to get through what the Brazilian describes as his most taxing week since taking over at Stamford Bridge.

"I have been thinking about Roma and Liverpool and yes, this is the toughest week so far," admitted Scolari.

"All weeks are tough but I make them easy because if I thought about things any differently, I would be dead in one week."

"I am happy because against Roma I will maybe have Ricardo

Carvalho, Petr Cech, Joe Cole, Ashley Cole," said Scolari.

"They are coming back at the right time. They are not in the best condition but when we play Liverpool we will be almost at full strength and that is important."

"Roma have changed some players and started the season in not good condition, but now they are better."

"They played well in the last two or three games and we respect them because they have history and quality. They have an intelligent coach and they are improving."

Chelsea head the standings on goal difference from Romanian highflyers Cluj who are away to pointless Bordeaux.

Liverpool take on Atletico without the Spanish side's former striker Fernando Torres, the Euro 2008 winner who picked up a hamstring injury in Spain's World Cup qualifier against Belgium last week.

This top-of-the-table clash in Group D only goes ahead in the Spanish capital after UEFA lifted its two-match stadium ban on Atletico for the racist abuse directed at Marseille by their fans on October 1.

Liverpool, on a 15-match unbeaten run, know a win at the Vicente Calderon will virtually seal their place in the knockout stages.

Manager Rafael Benitez said: "We can field a team good enough to beat Atletico."

"We have a few minor injury problems to (Yossi) Benayoun, (Steven) Gerrard and (Robbie) Keane, but I do not expect them to be serious, they should all play on Wednesday."

Roma's weekend nemesis Inter Milan face Anorthosis both clubs locked on points and goal difference at the top of Group B.

Cypriot minnows Anorthosis have proved the surprise package in the group, taking four points from their first two games but are up against it here with Jose Mourinho's Inter buoyant after their four-star display at the weekend.

Anorthosis cannot do any worse than their previous clashes against Italian opposition, both times in the UEFA Cup.

In 1992/93 they were trounced 10-1 on aggregate by Juventus in the first round and three years ago they went down 6-1 overall to Palermo.

Chairman Andreas Panteli though is not getting carried away by his team's dream start, in which they drew 0-0 in Bremen and then beat Panathinaikos 3-1 at home.

Werder Bremen, with two points, take on Greek strugglers Panathinaikos.

Barcelona, unbeaten in Group C, are in Switzerland to take on FC Basel without Malian defender Seydou Keita but Euro 2008 best player Xavi Hernandez is back after sitting out Sunday's 1-0 League win over Athletic Bilbao.

In the Ukraine, Shakhtar Donetsk host Sporting Lisbon.

FIXTURES

European Champions League fixtures on Wednesday (all 1845GMT):

Group A
At Bordeaux, France
Bordeaux (FRA) v CFR Cluj (ROM)
At London, England
Chelsea (ENG) v AS Roma (ITA)

Group B
At Milan, Italy
Inter Milan (ITA) v Anorthosis (CYP)
At Athens, Greece
Panathinaikos (GRE) v Werder Bremen (GER)

Group C
At Donetsk, Ukraine
Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) v Sporting Lisbon (POR)

Group D
At Basel, Switzerland
FC Basel (SUI) v Barcelona (ESP)

Group D
At Madrid, Spain
Atletico Madrid (ESP) v Liverpool (ENG)
At Eindhoven, the Netherlands
PSV Eindhoven (NED) v Marseille (FRA)

Capello likened to Sir Alf

INTERNET, undated

Sir Bobby Charlton has likened Fabio Capello to World Cup-winning manager Sir Alf Ramsey.

Charlton was part of the England squad led to glory by Ramsey in 1966 and he believes the current national team boss shares his former manager's no-nonsense attitude and firm approach with the players.

Charlton told The Independent: "He's the first England manager since Alf who has been the real boss. Bobby Robson got them to a semifinal in 1990 and he's a marvellous character who knew the game backwards but his approach was different, not as firm."

He added: "Alf was ruthless, but he was also a great motivator, a great tactician and a meticulous planner."

"I haven't seen anyone else like that until this man."

"Of all the people mentioned when England were choosing a new manager this time, Capello was the one I picked as most likely to work."

"He's strong, single-minded, and he's only interested in winning, not making friends."

Crisis not affecting sports

INTERNET, undated

With banks battling for survival, markets reporting takeover scrambles and company directors facing penalties for bad performance, it seems trade floors and commerce chambers are beating sports pitches and locker rooms for sheer drama these days. The world of sports - as yet - appears remarkably unaffected by the global market crisis.

Tennis player Andrea Petkovic at least is keeping her focus firmly on her fitness, not on finances.

"To be honest, the economic crisis has not affected me at all," the 21-year-old told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

Petkovic is currently in Italy, trying to return to top form after rupturing the cruciate knee ligament in January at the Australian Open.

After sitting out almost eight months, training and matches, and not so much money, are the top priority of the former top 100 player.

Jens-Peter Hecht, a former spokesman of the German tennis federation who nowadays runs his own public relations and marketing agency, has also remained calm in the face of global financial turmoil.

"The crisis has not hit me," says the 62-year-old from the northern German town of Lueneburg.

Tennis officials have also said in recent weeks they do not expect global sports to take too big a hit from the worldwide financial crisis.

"We have to be concerned. But sports tends to be recession-pro-

ected. There is always a lot of investment into sports," the head of the women's tour WTA, Larry Scott, told dpa.

Nonetheless, the WTA title sponsor Sony-Ericsson reported third-quarter losses of 23 million euros (30 million dollars) last Friday as turnover dropped 10 per cent to 2.8 billion euros.

In football, West Ham United owner Bjorgolfur Gudmundsson said he remained committed to the English club although he was a major stakeholder in Iceland's Landsbanki which had to be nationalised in mid-October.

The London club may have to reduce its roster but is also reportedly close to signing a new lucrative shirt sponsor deal.

English clubs have not yet suffered despite foreign ownership, but could be hit by a possible recession leading to less money from advertising and sponsorship, according to observers.

"The big question is if we are moving into a recession where the advertising spendings drops and companies are less inclined to pay money for sponsorship," said Uli Hoeneß, the general manager of German champions Bayern Munich.

And where this risk is concerned, the future for Germany's number one club Munich is as unclear as that of lower-league amateur side Hansa Lueneburg, where Hecht is involved.

Nonetheless, Hecht remains cautiously optimistic in his northern German town near Hamburg.

"The big companies would be more affected. We have small local

sponsors. They would not immediately feel the impact," he says.

Hecht has seen the rise and fall of German tennis. He was DTB spokesman in the heydays of Boris Becker and Steffi Graf when big money was generated, but he also saw tennis incomes fall dramatically once the icons retired and no new stars appeared.

The ardent golfer is still responsible for the tournament magazine of the Hamburg tennis tournament which recently lost its prestigious Masters Series status and was downgraded to a tier two event. Production of the magazine largely depends on sponsors.

Apart from tennis, Hecht has organized motorcycle events in Kiel, was the venue media officer in Hanover at the 2006 football World Cup and is in talks about becoming venue boss in Wolfsburg at the 2011 women's World Cup.

But while his sports involvement remains promising, he says his non-sports activities such as PR workshops for local businesses may suffer in case the economy declines.

"Things can happen quickly. The companies may say 'lets scrap this or that.' I may see it seminars organized with the chamber of commerce," says Hecht.

Hecht said he was "thankful" that he has not been hit by the crisis.

He was also glad about taking on a more active role with Hansa Lueneburg where he was getting more involved in the club board, he added: "I will be looking after the money; that it is not being spent in the wrong way."

'Egypt fear no one'

AFP, Johannesburg

The 2010 World Cup - African Nations Cup final round qualifying draw in Zurich Wednesday holds no fears for leading 2008/09 English Premiership scorer Egyptian Amr Zaki.

"Egypt are very optimistic they can make it to the World Cup because we have already proven capable of overcoming any team in Africa," the seven-goal Wigan striker told Egyptian reporters.

"During two successive Nations Cup triumphs we beat the likes of Ivory Coast and Cameroon so our supporters will not tolerate failure to reach the finals this time."

Although the 'Pharaohs' have lifted the Nations Cup a record six times, the North African country qualified for the World Cup only twice and the last time was 18 years ago.

Hassan Shehata, coach of the triumphant 2006 and 2008 teams in the biennial Nations Cup, and sometimes bad boy-sometimes

hero Ahmed 'Mido' Hossam are equally confident although wary of regional opposition.

"We are the reigning champions of Africa so everyone is supposed to fear us, not the opposite, and being among the first seeds will spare us from facing tough opponents like Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Nigeria," said Shehata.

"However, I'm always wary of North African opponents because the rivalry between us is incredible. Being the better team does not always mean you win such matches," warned the coach in an interview.

Striker 'Mido' agreed: "I'd like to avoid the North African teams. Those kind of heated rivalries are usually decided on factors other than just performance."

"World Cup qualifiers that pit countries in the north of the continent against each other often end up resembling a Cairo derby between Al-Ahly and Zamalek, tough and unpredictable."

Egypt have a 60 per cent chance of being paired with North African opponents as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are second seeds with west

African duo Guinea and Mali.

Other first seeds are Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria while Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Kenya and Zambia comprise the

SEEDINGS

Seedings for 2010 World Cup-African Nations Cup final round qualifying draw in Zurich on Wednesday: (Based on October FIFA rankings in brackets)

First
Cameroon (1), Egypt (2), Ghana (3), Nigeria (4), Ivory Coast (5)

Second
Guinea (6), Morocco (7), Tunisia (8), Mali (10), Algeria (11)

Third
Burkina Faso (13), Gabon (14), Zambia (16), Kenya (18), Benin (19)

Fourth
Rwanda (22), Togo (25), Mozambique (27), Sudan (30), Malawi (31)

Match dates
Mar 28-29 2009, June 6-7, June 20-21, Sept 5-6, Oct 10-11, Nov 14-15

Note: Egypt fixture on June 20-21 will be switched to July because of clash with FIFA Confederations Cup in South Africa

third tier and Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan and Togo the fourth.

Seeding was originally to be determined by a combination of 2008 Nations Cup placings, 2010 World Cup-Nations Cup second round qualifying results and October FIFA rankings, but the first and second factors were ditched.

The 20 survivors from the second round, which claimed notable casualties in 2006 World Cup qualifiers Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and South Africa, will be split into five groups.

Each country plays its three rivals home and away with group winners going to the 2010 World Cup with hosts South Africa and the top three in each group joining hosts Angola at the Nations Cup earlier that year.

Matches are scheduled for six weekends from next March to November with the exception of a June fixture involving Egypt, which must be delayed one month because of their involvement in the FIFA Confederations Cup.

Scrambled eggs behind Sol's success

AFP, Portsmouth

Scrambled eggs and a massage are behind veteran centre-back Sol Campbell's return to form, according to Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp.

Campbell, whose sharpness and mobility were under scrutiny earlier this season, put in a superb display in the goalless draw against Aston Villa last weekend.

And Redknapp believes Campbell is now reaping the benefits of a training regime especially tailored to bring out the best in the 34-year-old.

That involves usually skipping training on a Monday morning after a match, with a visit instead to the canteen at Pompey's Eastleigh training centre for a plate of scrambled eggs, followed by a massage.

Redknapp said: "I always talk with Sol before Monday's sessions and if he tells me he needs a rest after a tough game that's no problem with me."

"He's a big lad who knows his own body and if he keeps producing like he did against Villa that's great."

"I'm not a believer in making senior players run their socks off in training if a decent rest now and then and a massage - which Sol loves - works better for them."

"Sol showed at Villa that he's back to his best and now he has another big game in the UEFA Cup against Sporting Braga on Thursday to get through."

"If what we do with him keeps bringing the right results then that's all that matters."

Back to Italy for Ronaldo?

INTERNET, undated



Rumours that injury-prone star Ronaldo next year may play again in the Serie A league have gathered steam after an invitation from Siena followed an interview he gave to Brazilian media.

Il Corriere dello Sport Tuesday quoted Serie A mid-level side Siena as ready to welcome the striker to continue his rehabilitation and play part of the current season in the Tuscany town when the transfer market opens in January.

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a knee injury suffered early this year at AC Milan.

Ronaldo has reportedly received offers from Manchester City and Paris St Germain, but he told Brazilian media "there is also an Italian club, which is not Milan, though."

The Milanese Devils did not renew his contract after it expired in June, but Sampdoria, besides Siena, seemed to be keen on the Brazilian.

La Gazzetta dello Sport, however, Tuesday quoted the Genoa club as denying a possible signing of Ronaldo.

Further speculation involves

be sure that the recovery is complete. Then, everything will be clearer, but I don't know anything about Samp and Siena."

Ronaldo, a two-time Golden Ball winner, scored nine goals in the 20 games played at Milan since joining them from Real Madrid in January 2007.

After a couple of minor injuries hindered him in the early part of the 2007-2008 season, he tore the rotula tendon in his left knee during a Serie A game in February.

He had suffered a similar incident, twice undergoing surgery, in his right knee during his stint at Inter Milan. In November 1999, he badly damaged his knee tendon, which tore completely as he returned to the pitch in April 2000.

Injuries aside, Ronaldo remains an incredibly prolific striker, boasting 278 goals from the 422 games he played with Cruzeiro, PSV Eindhoven, Barcelona, Inter, Real and Milan.

Rivaldo vows to help Uzbeks



AP, Tokyo

World Cup winner Rivaldo has committed to fulfilling his contract at Uzbekistan club Bunyodkor regardless of the outcome of today's Asian Champions League semifinal against Australia's Adelaide United in Tashkent.

The 36-year-old Brazilian, a former world player of the year, signed with the Uzbek club on a 12-month deal last month and will need to play a pivotal role if Bunyodkor are to overturn a 3-0 deficit from their away match at Adelaide.

News reports in Brazil suggested Rivaldo would be leaving after the ACL semifinals, but he said he

wanted to stay in Uzbekistan and help develop the football league.

"I have heard about these rumours but I am not going to leave now for Brazil," Rivaldo told the Asian Football Confederation's official website.

"I have played for the strongest clubs in Europe and my aim is to share my experience and knowledge with the local players."

Adelaide warmed up for the return leg with a 1-0 win over Queensland Roar in an A-League match on the weekend and are aiming to become the first Australian club into the ACL finals.

Australia only joined the Asian confederation after the 2006 World Cup, after leaving Oceania.

Whoever win in Tashkent, a Japanese rival is a certainty in the final. Defending champion Urawa

Reds, who beat Sepahan FC of Iran in last year's final, were 1-1 with J-League rivals Gamba Osaka in the first leg.

Manager Gert Engels is hoping his lineup can rebound at Saitama from a shock home loss to Vissel Koba on the weekend, which dented their J-League title ambitions.

Engels has some selection dilemmas with first-choice goalkeeper Ryota Tsuzuki and midfielders Hajime Hosogai and Takahito Soma missing the match due to suspensions after picking up yellow cards in each of their last two Champions League games.

Gamba had a 3-2 win over Urawa earlier in the J-League season and coach Akira Nishino is confident it can happen again.

Bunyodkor added it to their

playing stocks by luring Rivaldo to work with coach Zico, who was working in Japan last year.

Bunyodkor extended their lead in the domestic league following a weekend win but Zico's lineup must lift their goalscoring rate if it is any chance of progressing to the continental club championship and a shot at the Club World Cup in December.

Zico said his players had given away a big lead in the first leg, but it was not impossible to come back.

"Football is football and we have 90 more minutes. Many, many times I have seen a team change a result in a game and I hope that in Tashkent, it is possible for my team to get a win," Zico said.

"It is important to play the 90 minutes with heart and emotion and put the ball in the net."

Bremen suffer injury woes

AFP, Athens

Werder Bremen will be without goalkeeper Tim Wiese, striker Daniel Jansen and midfielder Aaron Hunt for Wednesday night's Champions League game against Panathinaikos.

Goalkeeper Wiese, who broke into the Germany squad earlier this month, damaged his leg when he slipped collecting a cross in training on Monday.

"It looks like a torn muscle," said Bremen coach Thomas Schaaf.

"There is no point in risking him for the game on Wednesday."



RONALDO

"Half a season would be enough for us," Siena president Giovanni Lombardi Strovati said. "Then he could move to another club, possibly a big one."

"At Siena he could play and have fun for a while. For us it would be a wonderful operation as far as our image is concerned."

The 32-year-old striker is training with Flamengo in Rio De Janeiro as he completes recovery from surgery he underwent to treat

Croatian first division outfit Hajduk Split has become the first in the Balkans country to be listed on the stock exchange to resolve a financial crisis, a club statement revealed Tuesday.

Some 6300 shareholders, including over 30 companies, bought shares in the club worth 11.3 million euros (14.9 million dollars), the statement said.

"To all of us who invested money in Hajduk it is important that the club soon becomes a successful enterprise," one of the shareholders, Janko Andabec, told local media.

The southern city of Split to which the club owned 19.5 million euros (25.8 million dollars) took a 57 per cent stake in the company.

Split listed on stock exchange

AFP, Zagreb

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