



Manchester United midfielder Ryan Giggs (C) scores past Celtic goalkeeper Artur Boruc during their Champions League encounter at Celtic Park on Wednesday.

# Giggs rescues United



AFP, Glasgow

A late equaliser from Ryan Giggs denied Celtic a famous victory as Manchester United emerged from Parkhead with a 1-1 draw that virtually ensures the defending champions' passage to the Champions League knockout stage.

A memorable first-half strike from Scott McDonald had put the Scottish champions on track for another famous victory in front of their own supporters.

United were a shadow of the side that had cruised to a 3-0 victory in last month's first meeting between the two clubs in group E, but their late pressure finally yielded an equaliser when Giggs finished off a rebound from Cristiano Ronaldo's shot six minutes from the end.

The evergreen Giggs said that the ball had fallen kindly for him.

"They probably deserved the victory but the ball fell for me and yes perhaps it should have been Ronaldo's goal but I had the opportunity and I took it, and it fell for me," said the Welsh wing wizard.

Celtic handler Gordon Strachan was left to reflect on another famous home victory for his side and rejected the criticisms of the previous encounter a fortnight ago when Paul Ince - like Strachan another former United star - had said it was like watching men against boys.

"We are not boys we are men," said Strachan.

"All I asked of the players was that they show some pride tonight (Wednesday) and they did that in

spades." The gulf between the two clubs in terms of resources was reflected in starting line-ups born of the ease with which Celtic had been swept aside at Old Trafford.

The proximity of Saturday's Premier League encounter with Arsenal ensured United's goalscorers on that night, Dimitar Berbatov and Wayne Rooney, both started on the bench while goalkeeper Ben Foster was given the opportunity to make only his second start for the club.

Celtic's desire to stiffen a midfield that had been overwhelmed at Old Trafford resulted in Shunsuke Nakamura being left on the bench while Irish teenager Cillian Sheridan was drafted in to support Scott McDonald in attack.

The Australia striker, operating as a lone striker, had endured a frustrating evening in Manchester, United's superiority and Celtic's cautious tactics ensuring he was denied the slightest sniff of a chance.

Here he had to wait only 13 minutes before some slipshod defending from the trophy holders presented him with the opportunity to give Celtic the lead and he seized it with a finish worthy of the deafening Celtic Park roar that ignited.

Having failed to clear Paul Hartley's inswinging freekick convincingly, United's back four compounded their error by ball-watching as the ball was knocked back into the penalty area.

Unmarked to the left of United's goal, McDonald brought the bouncing ball under control with his chest before producing the deftest of cushioned lob over Foster and into the opposite corner of the net.

Minutes earlier, one of Cristiano Ronaldo's trademark, dipping freekicks had dipped within inches of Artur Boruc's crossbar.

But with the stand-in forward pairing of Carlos Tevez and Giggs failing to make much impression on the home defence, that was as close as United were to come before Nemanja Vidic headed an inviting half-chance over the top of the goal.

That lack of penetration from the holders ensured Berbatov's evening off was curtailed at half-time and the Bulgarian quickly made his presence felt.

Having been involved in the build-up that allowed United to win a corner on the left, the Bulgarian was on hand again when Giggs' delivery was headed goalwards by Vidic but his flick was cleared off the line by Shaun Maloney.

Celtic responded almost immediately through Sheridan, who headed a Hartley corner onto the roof of the net, but Strachan's thoughts were turning towards preserving the lead, the defensive midfielder Massimo Donati replacing the Irish youngster with 25 minutes left.

United's pressure, by that stage, was relentless, and it got more intense when Rooney replaced Tevez shortly afterwards.

Boruc produced fine saves to keep out skidding drives from Ronaldo and Rooney before Celtic's resistance was finally broken with six minutes left when Celtic goalkeeper failed to hold Ronaldo's shot, gifting Giggs the easiest of finishes.

Berbatov might have clinched all three points in stoppage time but his shot slipped just wide of Boruc's right-hand post.

## Ivanovic loses again

AGENCIES, Doha

Ana Ivanovic, the photogenic French Open champion who looked about to become tennis' hottest property only four months ago, looks likely to crash out of the WTA Tour year-end championships after a second successive defeat on Wednesday.

Ivanovic also felt dizzy on court for the second night in a row, and had her blood pressure measured during a two-hour 26-minute 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 loss in humid conditions to Vera Zvonareva of Russia.

It followed a straight sets loss to fellow Serbian, Jelena Jankovic, the world number one, on Tuesday.

"I have had a virus," said Ivanovic.

"But I don't know why my blood pressure was taken - it frightened me and made me feel worse. I need a miracle to qualify now."

Venus Williams won her second match in two days when she beat Elena Dementieva 6-4 4-6 6-3 to leave herself on the brink of the semis with one round-robin match to play.

Both Williams and Russia's Dementieva had difficulty settling into the match and just one service game was held in the first set.

But the quality of play improved as the match progressed, with many well-contested rallies as each player sought an advantage.

Serving was another matter. Williams struggled with hers throughout the match, three times finishing a pair of double faults and finishing the match with 10 in all.

But it was Dementieva, who in her eight appearances at the season-ending event has won just three of her 18 matches, who crucially double-faulted to give Williams a break for 5-3 in the final set.

Bizarrely, the American then called for a fresh pair of shoes before serving out the match.

It was a good day for the Williams sisters, as Serena then opened up her campaign with a 6-4 6-1 victory over Dinara Safina.

A break of serve in the opening game was enough to take the first set before she proceeded to dominate the second.

Safina struggled on her serve throughout the match - firing a total of 10 double faults - and is now on the brink of elimination after losing to both Williams sisters.

## Pippo extends with Milan

AFP, Rome

Veteran AC Milan forward Filippo Inzaghi has signed a contract extension keeping him at the San Siro until June 2010, the Milanese club said on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old has been at Milan since 2001 having previously spent four seasons at Juventus.

This season he has scored three times in six matches but has seen his first team opportunities limited due to the presence of Ronaldinho, Pato, Andrei Shevchenko and Marco Borriello at the club.

He has won two Champions League titles and one Serie A crown with Milan and is the most prolific scorer in the history of European club competition.

# Do or die for Gunners

AFP, London



Arsene Wenger admits Arsenal face a do or die showdown against Manchester United on Saturday as his spluttering side try to keep their Premier League title hopes alive.

After failing to win their last two league matches against Tottenham and Stoke, Wenger's men trail leaders Chelsea by six points and desperately need a victory at the Emirates Stadium this weekend.

Defeats to Stoke, Hull and Fulham have left the Gunners playing catch-up in the league and the Arsenal boss knows a loss to bitter rivals United would leave their title challenge in tatters.

"I will not tell you that the game is not important. It is a massive game with a massive importance for us," Wenger said. "We play every three days at the moment and every game is massive."

"Manchester United versus Arsenal is always a special one but we know for us it is vital to do well in the big games now. I'm confident we will."

Arsenal will go into the must-win clash on the back of a miserable run of three games without a victory after Wednesday's frustrating goalless draw against Fenerbahce in the Champions League.

The psychological scars of their

weekend battering at Stoke were clear to see as Arsenal wasted a series of chances to kill off the Turkish club and then grew flustered as they laboured to make a breakthrough.

Wenger had been furious with Stoke's heavy-handed approach at the Britannia Stadium and labelled some of their players cowards in the build-up to Wednesday's tie.

The French coach could face an FA probe into his comments but, speaking after the Fenerbahce draw, he claimed officials are victimising his team and insisted he was right to respond to Stoke goalkeeper Thomas Sorensen's taunt that Arsenal are spineless.

Perhaps his anger was stirred by the sight of Mikael Silvestre suffering an elbow from Fenerbahce's Semih Senturk late in the second half.

"I responded to a statement made by a player from Stoke. I congratulated them for their victory but I just wanted to say you don't have to be brave to tackle someone from behind," Wenger said.

"I don't know why I should regret that. I maintain that strongly. It is not bitterness after a defeat."

"Sometimes in England we feel 'he didn't fancy that'. Of course we didn't fancy that because that is not football."

"You can look at the fair play table. We are top of the table. We don't have lessons from anyone on

that. "I am responsible for the behaviour of my team. Of course we are ready to battle but it depends what you mean by battle?"

"We make less fouls than anyone and receive more fouls than anyone. Look at the team that makes less fouls. It is Arsenal. Who gets more yellow cards after four or five fouls? Us."

"Some teams get their first yellow card after 15 fouls. I cannot read the rulebook or something is wrong."

Arsenal could just about afford to watch Robin van Persie miss several chances to beat Fenerbahce because they should still qualify from Group G with a win over Dynamo Kiev in their next match.

The Turks however realistically needed a win to keep their slim hopes alive, although their coach Luis Aragones is adamant they can still go through.

"You always have a chance in football," he said. "We are going to work hard to turn this around and qualify. You can't say anything is over and done with."

"We want to win in the Champions League against other good teams. That is always our aim."

"We had plans to score against Arsenal but we had a quick attacking team in front of us. If we had been quicker on the counter attack we could have done better things."

# Finale tough for TV experts

INTERNET, undated



While Britain's Lewis Hamilton won the Formula One world title in the most dramatic fashion a prize for spot-on television coverage of the drama in Brazil could also go to the UK. True to the Anglo-German set-up of the McLaren-Mercedes team, the ITV crew, along with Germany's RTL network, were among the race leaders when it came to explaining the unfolding drama in Sunday's thrilling - but for many, confusing - final laps.

Both broadcasts are likely to be shown again on Saturday at Mercedes' traditional season-ending Stars and Cars show with the whole team in Stuttgart.

As TV footage from around the world started appearing on internet sites such as YouTube in the post-race days it became obvious that viewers in some other countries were not so fortunate with their commentators in the dramatic finale.

When Hamilton dropped to sixth place with three laps to go behind the German Sebastian Vettel the title seemed to belong to Brazil's Felipe Massa.

But Hamilton then passed Germany's Timo Glock to go back into fifth on the final turn and claim the title as Massa's Ferrari team and the crowd were already celebrating.

The last-lap drama has been rated one of the most dramatic moments in world sport.

ITV's Martin Brundle and James Allen were fully up to this task. They even realized that Hamilton's fortune hinged on the fate of Glock,

who had stayed on dry-weather tyres amid increased rainfall.

"It's all down to whether Glock can handle the rain," said former Formula One driver Brundle as soon as Vettel had passed Hamilton.

Brundle and Allen were then also on top of the action when it mattered.

"Is that Glock, is that Glock? It is. That's Glock," shouted Brundle.

James said: "My goodness me. Hamilton is back in position again... The Ferrari boys are celebrating, they think they have won. They are wrong. They absolutely haven't."

The Germans from RTL were almost as alert.

"Watch out, Glock is on slicks," said former racing driver Christian Danner as the final lap approached. But he and fellow-commentator Heiko Wasser believed that Glock was too far ahead of Hamilton to be caught.

Not quite as quick as Brundle, they began shouting. "There is Timo Glock" just as Hamilton passed the German driver's Toyota.

"Now he is on his way to the title after all."

German pay-TV channel Premiere also realized, after a brief moment of apparent surprise, that Hamilton had passed Glock and what it meant for the race and the championship. But it took commentator Jacques Schulz and Marc Surer, another former F1 driver, until after the finish to recall that Glock had actually been on slicks.

There was some momentary doubt when Schulz, who had correctly proclaimed Hamilton world champion, said: "Timo Glock it was he overtook? Right?"

"Why was Timo Glock so slow,

Why?" Surer wondered.

In Brazil, Galvao Bueno was also perfectly aware what Hamilton's return to fifth place meant for his man Massa, as he simply said: "Na ultimate curva" ("the last corner") over and over before counting the drivers across the line.

At that stage Dutch TV man Olav Mol from RTL 7 was completely lost.

"Lewis lets it slip again for the second year," screamed the Dutch commentator as Hamilton was already shown to have crossed the line in the fifth place he needed to win.

"The disappointment of the McLaren team," he said to pictures of Hamilton's ecstatic pop star girlfriend Nicole Scherzinger - only to realize another few seconds later that "Hamilton is fifth after all. Hamilton is world champion" and shouting a profanity in English.

Mol has since acknowledged his mistake on his web-log. "The last stage was hectic. I completely missed the fact that Glock dropped, went off his line or slowed down. The TV pictures showed the rejoicing Massas..."

Croatian HRT commentators and those from Spain did slightly better but they did miss the deciding manoeuvre and only realized the outcome when Hamilton was listed as fifth on the screen.

The Spanish were about to announce Glock as fourth-place finisher, but when the three letters "VET" (German Sebastian Vettel) followed by "HAM" appeared they realized what had happened.

"Hamilton world champion," repeated one of the commentators while the other wondered, "What happened to Glock?"

## C LEAGUE RESULTS

AFP, Paris

European Champions League results on Wednesday.

Group E

At Glasgow

Celtic (SCO) 1 (McDonald 13)

Manchester United (ENG) 1 (Giggs 84)

At Aalborg

Aalborg (DEN) 2 (Curth 54, Due 81)

Villarreal (ESP) 2 (Rossi 41, Franco 75)

Group F

At Lyon

Lyon (FRA) 2 (Juninho 44, Reveillere 89)

Steaua Bucharest (ROM) 0

At Fiorentina

Fiorentina (ITA) 1 (Mutu 11) Bayern Munich (GER) 1 (Borowski 78)

Group G

At Kiev

Dynamo Kiev (UKR) 1 (Milevsky 21) FC Porto (POR) 2 (Rolando 69, Lucho 90+2)

At London

Arsenal (ENG) 0 Fenerbahce (TUR) 0

Group H

At Madrid

Real Madrid (ESP) 0 Juventus (ITA) 2 (Del Piero 17, 67)

At Minsk

BATE Borisov (BLR) 0 Saint Petersburg 2 (Pogrebnyak 34, Dani 90+4)

## Adams offers Bergkamp coaching job

AFP, London

Portsmouth manager Tony Adams has offered former Arsenal teammate Dennis Bergkamp the chance to return to the English Premier League by taking up a coaching job at Fratton Park.

Adams is keen to finalise his back room staff in the wake of being appointed manager after Harry Redknapp's move from Pompey to Tottenham.

The ex-Arsenal skipper said he has already spoken to former teammate Martin Keown about a possible role at the club, and plans to talk to Bergkamp, who is currently working with the youth team of Dutch giants Ajax.

"I'm meeting with a few people and having conversations with a couple of old friends. I've had a positive meeting with Martin (Keown)," Adams told the Portsmouth News.

"Then there's Dennis (Bergkamp), who is taking the youth team at Ajax and is a good, good man."

"I've not spoken to him but there are a few people I still need to talk to. I've got some good people still at the club, which is great but I need my people in and the sooner I can do that the better."

Bergkamp is said to be keen on a return to England, where he spent the best part of a decade with the Gunners, from 1995 to 2006.

Adams meanwhile is still looking for his first victory as manager of Pompey, who face Sunderland this weekend.

# Point satisfies Bayern



AFP, Munich

Midfielder Tim Borowski said Bayern Munich deserved the point from their 1-1 draw at Fiorentina as the German giants took a step closer to the Champions League's last 16.

A 40,000 full house at Florence's Stadio Artemio Franchi on Wednesday saw Adrian Mutu volley the Italians into an early lead, but Bayern raised the pace in the second half and Borowski slotted the equaliser on 78 minutes.

Bayern are now level at the top of Group F with Lyon and on course for the first knock-out round.

"We've deserved the point, and we should probably even have won it at the end," said Borowski, who is also a German international.

"We never really got going in the first half, especially with our tackling."

"Instead of imposing ourselves on the game, we let Fiorentina play. That was our biggest failing."

"In the second half we overran them, we were almost different class."

However, the Munich camp felt the display as a whole was below par and Bayern's Dutch captain Mark van Bommel said his side need to improve their performances.

"We didn't play well in the first half, we showed too much respect and deserved to be a goal behind," said the Dutchman.

"After we equalised, we could have gone on and won, but we can't be satisfied with the way we've played."

But coach Jurgen Klinsmann was relatively happy with the performance.

"It wasn't bad, even in the first half," he said.

"We expected Fiorentina to put us under a lot of pressure."

"Most of the time, we succeeded in neutralising them, with the exception of their goal."

"We largely controlled the game and let the ball do the work, but we lacked the decisive edge when it mattered."

"At half time, we spoke about needing to find another gear and summoning up the desire to go out and score the goal we wanted."

"In the second half, you sensed it was only a matter of time before we forced one over the line."

With two games left, against Steaua Bucharest on November 25 at Munich's Allianz Arena and Lyon away at the Stade de Gerland on December 12, Bayern could not afford to come away from Florence without a point.

"We wanted to avoid defeat, so 1-1 is just fine," said Germany striker Miroslav Klose.

"We didn't have enough courage in the first half."

"We allowed ourselves to be pushed deep and we lost the loose balls."

"It was better in the second half. We played higher up the field and won most of our tackles."

"That made it a lot easier for us."



Bayern Munich midfielder Tim Borowski (R) shoots to score the equalising goal against Fiorentina during their Champions League tie at the Artemio Franchi Stadium on Wednesday.