



Manchester United forward Carlos Tevez (R) accelerates past Blackburn Rovers defender Ryan Nelsen during their English League Cup quarterfinal at Old Trafford on Wednesday. Tevez scored four goals in United's 5-3 rout of Rovers.

## Tevez routs Rovers

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United stormed into the League Cup semi-finals in style as Carlos Tevez's four-goal haul earned a 5-3 victory over Blackburn on Wednesday.

Sir Alex Ferguson made 10 changes to the United team who won at Manchester City on Sunday but they were still too strong for Rovers at Old Trafford.

Tevez was credited with the first goal nine minutes before the break, although Blackburn's South Africa midfielder Aaron Mokoena was close to turning the ball into his own net.

Nani added a second goal five minutes before the interval from Tevez's assist before South African forward Benni McCarthy pulled one back within two minutes of coming on as a half-time substitute.

Tevez grabbed his second from the spot in the 51st minute before completing his first hat-trick in English football by rounding off a move of real quality three minutes later.

Matt Derbyshire and McCarthy struck in the final minutes to set up a dramatic finale but Tevez eased United through with his fourth goal in stoppage time.

It may have been a second string side, but United were well worth their victory and

Ferguson was also able to give Paul Scholes a run out as the midfielder continues his rehabilitation from a knee injury.

England goalkeeper Ben Foster had a couple of decent early touches as he pushed away Stephen Warnock's header with just three minutes gone after Roque Santa Cruz and Derbyshire had flicked on Paul Robinson's freekick.

But soon United were in control, with Nani providing a constant threat on the left of United's three-man attack.

The Portuguese blasted over and had another effort blocked on the edge of the box before Darron Gibson had a header cleared off the line by Martin Olsson after he had beaten Robinson from Ryan Giggs' corner.

Foster did well to hold a Keith Treacy shot that skidded off the turf and was quick off his line to force Warnock to lift the ball well over the bar after the former Liverpool man latched on to Derbyshire's lofted through-ball.

But United were soon in front after poor Blackburn defending. Giggs lofted a freekick from the right flank to the far post and Tevez beat Mokoena to the ball to bundle it home.

And Nani doubled the lead five minutes before the interval by skipping past Ooijer, exchanging passes with Tevez and then sweeping a shot past Robinson.

Rovers looked like they

might make a game of it after the interval when manager Paul Ince, a former United player, opted to go with two in attack and after Santa Cruz and Jonny Evans failed to make contact with a long ball forward, McCarthy made Gary Neville look weak and slow and powered a shot in to the corner of Foster's net.

But the chances of a fightback were killed off within two minutes when Giggs played Tevez into space and the striker went down under Andre Ooijer's challenge in the box before sending Robinson the wrong way with his penalty.

In the 54th minute, Tevez completed his hat-trick.

Anderson picked the ball up in midfield, fed Giggs, who returned the pass with a back-heel, then swapped passes with Tevez before squaring the ball for the Argentinian to slot the ball home.

Scholes came on for the final 25 minutes as he made his first appearance since suffering knee ligament damage in September and after Giggs sliced wide from five yards, the former England man dragged wide from distance.

Derbyshire pulled another back for Blackburn with seven minutes left and McCarthy clipped in from Derbyshire's cross in added time before Tevez added a fifth for United.

## Henry blames it on running

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona's French striker Thierry Henry, accused by many fans of the Catalan club of not scoring enough goals, said on Wednesday that he did not have to do as much running when he was at former club Arsenal.

"I understand that people want to see me score the goals (that I scored at) Arsenal, but it's not the same here", he said during a press conference in Barcelona.

"When I was at Arsenal I didn't have to run like I run now," he added. "Sometimes you have to work for the team and not just for yourself."

"At Arsenal I would leave the centre to wait for the ball on the wing and keep myself fresh. Here it's the opposite. On the wing you have to make more effort to defend and maybe it means that I'm less sharp in the opposition penalty area."

Henry, who is typically deployed on the left flank in a 4-3-3 formation, has scored four goals in the league this season. Fellow winger Lionel Messi has nine and Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o leads the La Liga scoring charts with 14.

Nonetheless, Henry declares himself "perfectly happy" at Barca and is delighted by the unity in the team this season compared to the last campaign, which ended trophyless for the club.

Barca, who have rediscovered their free-flowing football under new coach Pep Guardiola, currently lead La Liga by four points from Villarreal and have qualified for the knockout phase of the Champions League.

## Keane quits Sunderland

AFP, Sunderland

Roy Keane has left his job as manager of English Premier League club Sunderland, English media reported on Thursday.

The reports followed 24 hours of intense speculation that the former Manchester United star was on the brink of quitting.

There was no immediate confirmation or denial of the reports from Sunderland but, according to the BBC, players and staff have been informed of Keane's exit.

Keane had been in charge of the club for 27 months and guided them into the Premier League in his first season in charge.

He had been under pressure recently however as Sunderland slipped into the relegation zone and the Irishman had recently expressed doubts as to whether he was the right man for the job.

## Bayern face stern test

AFP, Berlin



The title credentials of surprise German league leaders Hoffenheim will face their sternest examination yet on Friday when the village side travel to the home of reigning champions Bayern Munich.

Bankrolled by local businessman Dietmar Hopp, Hoffenheim have risen from the depths of Germany's amateur leagues and currently top the table by three points from Bayern after 15 games.

Key to their impressive start to life in their first season in Germany's top flight has been the form of Bosnian striker Vedad Ibisevic, who tops the Bundesliga scoring charts with 17 goals.

The 24-year-old's prolific form in front of goal has led to speculation linking him with a move away from the club, but he insists he has no intention of leaving.

"All that (speculation) makes me proud, but next season I'll still be wearing the Hoffenheim shirt," he said.

As for his opponents on Friday, Ibisevic refuses to be cowed by their reputation.

"We can beat Bayern", he asserts with confidence. "We're

not going to Munich just to visit their stadium."

The Bayern side that confronts Ibisevic and his teammates will be a very different side to the one that limped into action at the beginning of the season.

New coach Jurgen Klinsmann was swept into the Bayern hotseat on a tide of optimism after taking Germany to the 2006 World Cup semifinals, but a return of just two wins in his first seven league games suggested all was not well at the Allianz Arena.

Bayern's inauspicious start to the season included a humiliating 5-2 home defeat at the hands of Werder Bremen, but since influential midfielder Franck Ribery returned to the

side their form has improved dramatically.

The Frenchman was in inspirational form as the Bavarian giants surged to the title last season, but missed the opening weeks of this campaign with an ankle injury sustained at Euro 2008.

Bayern have recorded seven wins in 10 league games since his return at the end of September.

Ribery, meanwhile, is relishing the prospect of taking on Hoffenheim in front of a 69,000 sell-out.

"The whole of Germany is waiting for this one," he said. "I just hope we can win it."

Bayern Leverkusen led the table from Hoffenheim until the end of November, when consecutive defeats at Arminia Bielefeld and at home to Bayern saw them slip to fourth.

Leverkusen travel to Borussia Monchengladbach on Saturday to face a side sitting second from bottom and with the worst defensive record in the division.

A late Marko Pantelich header earned Hertha Berlin a 2-1 win at home to Cologne last weekend that took them up to third in the table.

They travel to Schalke 04 on Saturday, while last season's runners-up Werder Bremen - who thrashed Eintracht Frankfurt 5-0 last Saturday - will look to plunder another haul at basement club Karlsruhe.

### FIXTURES

**Friday**  
Bayern Munich v Hoffenheim (1930 GMT)  
**Saturday**  
(1430 GMT unless stated)  
Schalke 04 v Hertha Berlin, Eintracht Frankfurt v Bochum, Karlsruhe v Werder Bremen, Energie Cottbus v Stuttgart, Arminia Bielefeld v Borussia Dortmund, Borussia Monchengladbach v Bayer Leverkusen  
**Sunday**  
(1600 GMT unless stated)  
Wolfsburg v Hannover, Cologne v Hamburg

## Mido angry at FA

Football

AFP, London

Middlesbrough striker Mido has blamed the Football Association for the Islamophobic chanting which has been directed at him for the second year in a row while playing against Newcastle.

The Egyptian was the target of abuse last weekend and he believes the FA's lack of action when it happened last year contributed to a repeat this season.

"They kept chanting disgusting words, racist words about Islam and unfortunately, this is the second time that the same fans have done this," Mido told Egyptian television station Al Hayat.

"It happened again because after the first time the English FA did nothing. I considered this as an invitation from the English FA to the Newcastle supporters to repeat such shameful acts."

"I can assure you that nothing is going to happen this time again. The English FA said that they will be investigating the issue and will make use of the latest technology to stop such racist abuse of players but I feel that nothing will happen."

"I am asking the English FA to take serious action to stop

such things. These chants are not directed at me as a person but it is directed at Islam."

The FA said it could only ask police and the club

involved to act if the perpetrators could be identified.

"Our position on these matters always is that any

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## Huntelaar reassures Real

AFP, Madrid

Dutch international striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar reassured new club Real Madrid on Wednesday that his ankle injury is improving as he arrived in Spain following his transfer from Ajax Amsterdam.

"I hope to be back as soon as possible. I'm training very well, without problems, running without difficulty and touching the ball," he said.

Under the terms of the transfer deal worth 27 million euros (34 million dollars), Huntelaar will remain with the reigning Spanish champions until June 30, 2013.

But the 25-year-old is currently out of action after damaging ankle tendons during a match against Sparta Rotterdam in early November and is not expected to be fit again until the middle of December.

He arrives at the club at a time when it is plagued by injuries, with fellow Dutchman Ruud van Nistelrooy out for the rest of the season after a knee operation and Pepe, Wesley Sneijder and Miguel Torres all struggling with muscle strains.

Defenders Christoph Metzelder and Mahamadou Diarra joined the injured list on Tuesday.

"Even those who arrive are injured," joked Real defender Michel Salgado.

Huntelaar has scored six goals in the Dutch first division this season after finishing as top scorer last season with 33 goals in 34 games played. He has also taken over from van Nistelrooy in the Dutch national side.

## Lazio knock Milan out

AFP, Rome

Lazio fought back to claim an extra-time 2-1 Italian Cup win over 10-man AC Milan on Wednesday and claim a place in the quarterfinals.

Milan had Brazilian star Emerson sent off in the 69th minute but they still took the lead at the San Siro through Andriy Shevchenko in the 77th minute.

Lazio levelled in the dying moments when Giuseppe Favalli brought down Goran Pandev and Argentine Mauro Zarate scored from the penalty spot for his first goal since November 9.

Pandev grabbed the winner in the second minute of extra-time when he followed up a snapshot from Zarate, which had been parried by Milan keeper Dida, to score and secure Lazio's first win over Milan at the San Siro in five years.

They will now face either Fiorentina or Torino for a place in the semifinals.

Football

AFP, Watford

League Cup holders Tottenham showed no signs of wanting to relinquish their trophy as Darren Bent came off the bench to secure a 2-1 win over Watford in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Harry Redknapp's side trailed to Tamas Priskin's early goal for the struggling Championship club at Vicarage Road.

But Roman Pavlyuchenko equalised from the penalty spot just before half-time and Bent snatched the winner when his near-post effort caught out Watford keeper Scott Loach with 14 minutes to play.

For the third successive season Tottenham have reached the semifinals and Redknapp, who took Portsmouth to FA Cup glory at Wembley last season, is on

course for a return to the English national stadium with his new club.

Watford's new manager Brendan Rodgers was hired by Jose Mourinho as Chelsea's youth team coach during the Portuguese's time at Stamford Bridge. But even pre-match text messages from the 'Special One' couldn't help Rodgers mastermind a cup shock in his second game in charge.

Tottenham received a boost as midfielder Jermaine Jenas returned from a toe injury, while Michael Dawson came in for Ledley King, Jamie O'Hara replaced David Bentley and Fraizer Campbell started in place of Bent.

Those changes left Tottenham stuck in a lethargic stupor in the early stages. Watford are no strangers to the latter stages of cup competitions after reaching the semifinals in both the League and FA Cup in recent years.

They seized the initiative and Tommy Smith tested

Heurelho Gomes with a long-range effort.

It was a warning Tottenham failed to heed as the hosts took the lead in the 13th minute.

Jon Harley started the move by tackling Aaron Lennon and racing forward. His pass picked out Smith, whose cross found Priskin with his back to goal and the Hungarian striker turned to shoot low past Gomes.

That finally sparked Tottenham into life and Loach saved at full stretch from Lennon, then kept out the winger's clever chip moments later.

Pavlyuchenko took advantage of a mix-up between Leigh Bromby and Jay DeMerit to smash a fierce strike off the crossbar.

But the Russian didn't have to wait long for a goal as Jenas was fouled by Ross Jenkins in the penalty area on the stroke of half-time and Pavlyuchenko stepped up to

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Sevilla striker Luis Fabiano (R) celebrates with teammate Renato after scoring a goal against Partizan Belgrade during their UEFA Cup tie at the Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium on Wednesday. Sevilla won 3-0.

## Twente scalp Schalke

AFP, Paris



FC Twente into the UEFA Cup last 32.

McClaren, who was sacked after England's dismal failure to reach the Euro 2008 finals, saw his side beat German visitors Schalke, managed by former Twente coach Fred Ritten, 2-1 to clinch one of the three qualifying places from Group A.

Rob Wilaert and Kenneth Perez scored the goals for the Dutch side while Gerald

Asamoah's late strike for Schalke was just a consolation and left the German team relying on other results next week if they are to go through.

In the night's other game in the same pool, Manchester City, who had already made sure of their place in the last 32, were held to a 0-0 draw at home by Paris St Germain.

City have seven points, one more than Twente, but the draw with PSG was overshadowed by a groin injury suffered by Brazilian winger Elano.

"We hope he has not compromised himself too much with the injury," said City boss Mark Hughes.

"It's a blow because we are a little bit light in midfield. We cannot afford to lose too many bodies there."

In Group D, Italian side Udinese made it three wins in three with a 2-1 victory over Dinamo Zagreb and also

reached the next stage.

Fabio Quagliarella struck in the fifth minute before Christian Obodo made the game safe with eleven minutes remaining. Igor Biscan reduced the deficit in injury time for the Croats.

Former Liverpool striker Milan Baros scored a 69th-minute penalty to give Galatasaray a 1-0 win at Hertha Berlin and guarantee the Turkish side a spot in the next round from Group B.

Watched by Berlin's huge Turkish expat community, Czech international Baros made no mistake from the spot beating Jaroslav Drobný in the Hertha goal after Steve von Bergen had handled a Harry Kewell cross.

Unheralded Slovakian side Metalist Kharkov also made sure of qualifying from the same section with a 1-0 win at

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