



Manchester City striker Carlos Tevez celebrates his second goal against Manchester United during their League Cup semifinal first leg at the City of Manchester Stadium on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Tevez stabs United

**Football**

AFP, Manchester

Carlos Tevez, whose move across Manchester was the source of so much controversy, made the difference as City claimed a 2-1 win over United in the rivals' League Cup semifinal first leg here on Tuesday.

Ryan Giggs's first derby goal since 1996 handed United the lead but Tevez, whose decision to reject United and sign for their wealthy neighbours in the close season was accompanied by such ill feeling, scored twice, taking his tally to 13 goals from his last 11 games.

Tevez was always destined to play a pivotal role in this semifinal, one way or another.

Sure enough, when Craig Bellamy was held back by badly beaten United full-back Rafael five minutes before the interval, it was the Argentinian forward who was handed the responsibility of converting from the penalty spot, one he gleefully accepted with an emphatic finish.

Tevez's gesture to former team mate Gary Neville, sat in his customary position on the United bench, told the defender to be silent and was sweet revenge for the City man having endured a half of baiting and abuse from visiting supporters.

The penalty cancelled out Giggs's early opening goal, which came from United's first attack of note.

Patrice Evra found Antonio Valencia on the right wing. Bellamy appeared to have stiffed the danger with a challenge on the winger but Valencia slipped past the City man and took advantage of Vincent Kompany's failure to cut out the cross.

A near-post touch from Wayne Rooney took the ball away from City keeper Shay Given and Giggs was well placed to convert into an open net from practically on the goal line.

The second half winner was vintage Tevez although it was again the result of poor defending from United, something that has happened with alarming regularity for Sir Alex Ferguson's team this season.

Bellamy's 64th minute cross from the left-

wing caused panic in the visiting defence following a weak punched clearance from Edwin van der Sar.

Pablo Zabaleta did a good job of keeping the ball live, chipping back into the area for Kompany to cross and find Tevez who headed in from close range.

The overwrought pre-match build-up from City was perhaps understandable.

Since they last appeared in a major semifinal, of the 1981 FA Cup, a total of 54 different league clubs have reached the last four of one or other of the two major domestic knockout competitions.

United seemed in the mood to ruin City's planned party but City's response to falling behind was spirited with Shaun Wright-Phillips steaming to the right-hand by-line, delivering a perfect cross with which Tevez failed to connect from six yards.

United started the second half the brighter, looking to regain control of the tie, but their failure to deal with City's corners was increasingly apparent, starting, in the 57th minute, when Evra had to make a timely block to stop Micah Richards shooting in following a Bellamy flag kick.

United responded, with Rooney crossing for Giggs whose header drew an amazing save from Shay Given, falling backwards and almost in his own net, and the England forward then sending a dipping shot rising over the bar from distance.

But, after conceding the second, things might have got worse for United with van der Sar being forced into a solid, diving save to keep out a Wright-Phillips blast following a neat pass into the area from Bellamy.

United would dominate the closing proceedings however and Rooney's one-two with substitute Michael Owen in the 77th minute played him clean in on goal where Given made a fantastic block, Owen then steering the loose ball goalwards where Nedom Onuoha made a simple clearance.

Two minutes later Rooney was again City's tormentor with a twisting run into the area and an audacious shot which Given tipped over. United pressed until the end with Valencia missing a far post volley from an Evra cross and Given saving well once again to deny Rooney.

## Pep renews Barca deal

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola has renewed his contract with the European champions, which expires at the end of the season, for one year, the online edition of daily newspaper El Pais reported Wednesday.

"He and the club have reached an agreement to extend his contract, which was to expire in June, which includes a series of clauses which will allow the incoming president to negotiate terms," it said.

Barcelona have not confirmed the report but the club has called a press conference for 1:30 pm (1230 GMT) which will be attended by Guardiola, Barcelona president Joan Laporta and sporting director Txiki Begiristain.

Guardiola has remained silent on what he wants to do and Spanish media have speculated that the 39-year-old may be waiting to see who will succeed Laporta as president after elections later this year before making a decision.

Laporta said on Monday the club were resigned to rivals trying to lure away Guardiola, who led Barca to an unprecedented six trophies in 2009.

## Loew selects goalkeeping trio for WC

AFP, Berlin

More than four months before the World Cup starts, Germany coach Joachim Loew said Wednesday goalkeepers Rene Adler, Tim Wiese and Manuel Neuer will all travel to South Africa.

Leverkusen shot-stopper Adler is his current first-choice, but Loew insists the performances of both Bremen's Wiese and Schalke's Neuer for the national team and their respective Bundesliga clubs means all three will travel.

Loew already has the three goalkeepers he needs for the tournament which runs from June 11 to July 11 and says he cannot imagine another shot-stopper will come into contention.

"The situation is crystal clear," Loew told German magazine Sport Bild.

"We have three goalkeepers who have absolute priority and will travel to the World Cup, because for one or two years they have put in top class performances.

"There is no occasion, I can see, where we favour another goalkeeper as anything other than fourth choice, unless one of them gets injured."

Dortmund's Roman Weidenfeller has been in good form recently with his side up to fifth in the Bundesliga and is the only realistic candidate at this stage who could force his way into contention.

The Germany squad will meet in Stuttgart on Monday for testing and the national team's next game is the friendly with Argentina on March 3 in Munich.

## Neville in FA trouble

**Football**

AFP, London

Gary Neville could face disciplinary action for directing a one-fingered gesture at former team-mate Carlos Tevez after the Football Association confirmed they were looking into an incident in Tuesday night's League Cup semifinal.

Neville made the gesture from the touchline as Tevez celebrated the first of his two goals in Manchester City's 2-1 first leg win over Manchester United at Eastlands.

The Argentina striker's celebrations had included a 'stop talking' gesture to Neville and appeared to be a response to the United defender's pre-match comment that the club had made the right decision in allowing Tevez to leave the club at the end of last season rather than find the 25 million pounds it would have cost to sign him permanently.

Neville is effectively on probation with the FA having been warned about his conduct earlier in the season fol-

lowing provocative celebrations of Michael Owen's late winner for United in the Manchester derby match at Old Trafford in September.

Tevez celebrated his second goal in similar fashion, running in front of the United dugout and cupping his hands behind his ears.

But he failed to get a reaction from United boss Sir Alex Ferguson, who has also expressed the opinion that the striker is not worth 25 million pounds.

"It is just the way these things happen," Ferguson said. "Football can be like that. It can bite you. We have had a few players leave the club and score against us. There is no issue. I am happy with the players we have got."

Tevez has now scored 17 goals for City this season and his team-mate Pablo Zabaleta believes he was fuelled by a desire to make a point to Ferguson and Neville.

"One Manchester United player talked about Carlos before the game so he showed he is top class, a top player," Zabaleta said.

"He is amazing, everyone knows Carlos is a great player. Everyone loves him. This was a special game for him, one he has been dreaming about."

"I am aware of his qualities and think he can give a repeat performance against United next week."

United took an early lead on Tuesday evening through Ryan Giggs, but Tevez equalised from the spot after Rafael pulled back Craig Bellamy and then headed in the winner.

Zabaleta added: "Our reaction was fantastic after we lost the goal. It was a good performance from the team, we played well and showed strong mentality."

"It is a great result for us and an important one for the next leg. It was unbelievable near the end. United kept coming and had many chances but we never stopped working."

"We want to please our supporters and get to the final. There was a lot of satisfaction after the game but we have to show this commitment again next week. You can see we have great players and a strong character."

## IN BRIEF

### Egypt set Spain date

AFP, Benguela

African champions Egypt will take on their European counterparts Spain in a pre-World Cup friendly in June at a venue yet to be agreed on by the teams, officials have disclosed.

Egypt Football Association (EFA) president, Samir Zaher, told reporters here that the Pharaohs have accepted to face Spain on June 4 at a venue in Europe, which will soon be decided.

Egypt coach Hassan Shehata has also accepted this match-up.

"I sat down with Hassan Shehata and he has no problems to play the game," Zaher said.

Both teams last clashed four years ago in another friendly with Spain winning 2-0.

Spain are drawn in Group H of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa along with Switzerland, Honduras and Chile.

Egypt, who remain on course for a third Africa Cup of Nations crown in a row here in Angola, are also billed to face another World Cup-bound team, England, in a friendly in March.

### Westermann blow for Schalke

AFP, Gelsenkirchen

Bundesliga title-chasers Schalke 04 suffered a major injury blow on Tuesday when skipper and German international Heiko Westermann was ruled out for a month.

Schalke, currently second in the table, a point behind leaders Bayer Leverkusen, said that the 26-year-old Westermann has picked up an injury to his left knee.

The central defender, who has 17 caps, is expected to figure in national coach Joachim Loew's squad for the 2010 World Cup.

### Senderos mulls Celtic switch

AFP, London

Arsenal defender Philippe Senderos believes a loan move to Celtic could help resurrect his dream of playing for Switzerland at this year's World Cup in South Africa.

"I am very honoured that a big club like Celtic are interested in me and a loan deal right now would suit me perfectly," said Senderos, who has fallen down the Gunners central defensive pecking order behind William Gallas and Thomas Vermaelen.

"My main priority is to get back playing regular football," said Senderos. "I really miss that."

"The World Cup this summer is a really big thing for me. I know that if I'm not playing regularly my chances of playing in South Africa will be badly affected."

"It would be my second World Cup and I want to get the best possible build-up to it."

"Unfortunately, I haven't played a lot of football recently and that's why I feel I have to leave Arsenal."

"Hopefully something will be in place over the next few days but I'll wait and see."

## Ghana scrape thru'

AFP, Luanda

Ghana avoided the ignominy of becoming the first World Cup qualifiers not to make it past the Africa Cup of Nations first round thanks to a little help from a legend's son.

Missing Michael Essien and a score of first choice players the four-time champions still managed to book their place in the quarterfinals with a 1-0 win over 10-man Burkina Faso here on Tuesday.

The only goal came from French-based Andre Ayew, son of one of Africa's most decorated players, Abedi 'Pele' Ayew, three-time Africa Footballer of the Year and a member of Marseille's 1993 Champions League-winning side.

Ghana's reward was a last eight date with hosts Angola at Luanda's 11 November stadium on Sunday.

Algeria, the Group A runners-up, face Group B winners Ivory Coast, with Burkina Faso down and out.

The main news off the pitch on day 10 of the competition

came from Cabinda where Mali despatched a letter of protest at Monday's goalless draw between Angola and Algeria.

The shared point put those two sides through from Group A at the expense of Mali, who cried foul.

That attitude incensed the Mali team who wrote to organisers the Confederation of African Football (CAF) to make an official complaint.

"We are lodging a vehement protest against the behaviour of the Algeria and Angola teams," the Mali Football Federation president Boubacar Thiam wrote in the letter, a copy of which has been seen by AFP.

"In fact the second half of the game was a total non-match, the two sides systematically refusing to play in order to maintain the score at 0-0 which was sufficient for qualification."

He continued: "This anti-sporting behaviour is contrary to the ethics and the fair-play policy put forward by FIFA and CAF must condemn it with the utmost vigour."

"It does a disservice to African football and to the game in general. We hope that

CAF will take the necessary disciplinary measures."

Thiam cited as a precedent for his protest a similar incident at the Africa Cup of Nations Youth Championships in 2001 match against Cameroon and Egypt who received no points as punishment after a scoreless draw.

There was encouraging news meanwhile from South Africa concerning the state of health of Kodjovi Obilale, the goalkeeper injured in the deadly gun attack on the Togo team bus on January 8.

His condition is stable and he is responding well to treatment," said Erin Smylie, spokeswoman for Milpark Hospital, a private facility where the 25-year-old is being treated.

Obilale was shot in the back and abdomen on January 8 when separatist guerrillas in the Angolan enclave of Cabinda opened fire on Togo's convoy as they entered the country to compete in the tournament.

The team's assistant coach and its squad media officer were killed in the shooting, which prompted Togo to withdraw from the competition.

## 'Ribery should stay'

AFP, Munich

Dutch midfielder star Arjen Robben said on Wednesday Frankfurt Ribery should stay at Bayern in Munich, despite the Frenchman being a target for Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Having played his last game in Bayern colours on October 3, the Frenchman is expected to take part in Saturday's Bundesliga clash at Werder

Bremen and ex-Real player Robben has urged his midfield partner to stay in Munich.

Ribery has been courted by Real despite having a Bayern contract until June 2011, but Robben says the Frenchman should stay to help Munich who face Fiorentina in the last 16 of the Champions League on February 17 in Munich.

"It is his choice, but I hope that he stays here," Robben told sports press agency SID, having signed for Bayern for 24 million euros (36.8 million US dollars) last summer.

"Here he is the big star, there he is one of many, otherwise the

two clubs are almost the same associations."

While Bayern are third in the table and unbeaten after 11 games, while Bremen have lost their last four and are five games without a win.

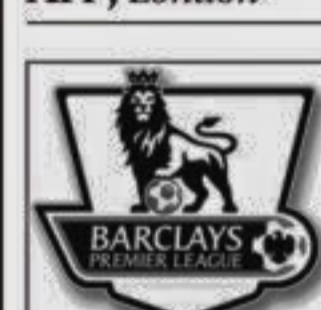
Saturday's game in Bremen promises to be a battle royal and Robben says it is important they have Ribery in the side after the Frenchman's knee injury.

"It is important for the team that he returns and I will be glad when he does, Franck is a world-class player," said Robben.

And Germany defender Philipp Lahm says Ribery's presence raises Bayern's game.

## Harry eyeing Ruud

AFP, London



Tottenham Hotspur manager Harry Redknapp said Tuesday

he was pondering bringing Real Madrid striker Ruud van Nistelrooy back to the Premier League in a loan move.

The 33-year-old former Manchester United forward is struggling to get into Real's first team and his lack of match practice is threatening his chances of making the Dutch squad for this year's World Cup finals in South Africa.

However, it would appear Russia striker Roman Pavlyuchenko would have to leave Spurs to make room for van

Nistelrooy, who was most recently linked with Turkish giants Galatasaray and whom he declared an interest in joining.

"It's interesting but it depends what the deal is," said Redknapp on Tuesday of the possibility of van Nistelrooy coming to White Hart Lane.

"The chairman would deal with that side but he's an interesting player. He was fantastic in England and a great goalscorer."

"If he was available it could be of interest. It's not impossible... if it was right we could be interested," added Redknapp ahead of Wednesday's league match against Liverpool.

On the subject of Pavlyuchenko, Redknapp said: "Pav is looking to move. He was tremendous in training this

morning. Only if someone came in and it was a good offer though, otherwise it would not be possible."

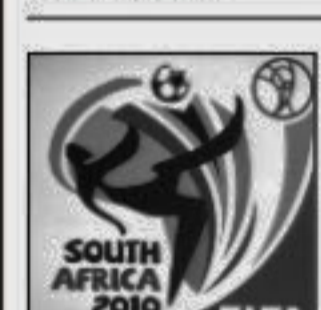
Pavlyuchenko's chance of a move have dimmed of late with Spartak Moscow refusing to pay 15 million pounds and Zenit St Petersburg have cooled on the idea of taking the forward on loan.

Meanwhile Redknapp denied he'd made an approach to Manchester United for goalkeeper Ben Foster.

"As for Foster, I never made any offer whatsoever. Ben's a good keeper but I'm looking for back-up. Foster and David James (the Portsmouth goalkeeper who has been linked with Spurs) want to go to World Cup - not sit on the bench as a number two."

## Kaiser slams ticket cost

AFP, Berlin



Germany football legend Franz Beckenbauer has slammed the cost of World Cup

ticket prices and said fans here are put off by the travel costs to South Africa as well as security risks in the Republic.

Beckenbauer, who captained Germany to World Cup success in 1974 and coached the winning side in 1990, says few German fans can afford the expensive tickets and are put off by South Africa's reputation for crime.

Only 6,700 of the 21,000 tickets allocated for German fans have been bought by supporters here eager to see their heroes play against Ghana, Serbia and Australia in

the group stages.

"Not only are there doubts by those thinking of travelling there, because of security, but the tickets are too expensive," Beckenbauer, who is on FIFA's executive committee, told German broadcaster Sky.

"What normal person can afford 5,000 to 6,000 euros for one week?" he added without specifying how he reached the figure.

The cheapest ticket for the tournament's first game, South Africa against Mexico in Johannesburg on June 11, costs 140 euros (200 US dollars), according to the FIFA website.

The most expensive ticket for the final on July 11 is 630 euros (900 US dollars) while the cheapest ticket for a group stage game is 56 euros (80 US dollars), while accommodation is said to be expensive for the tournament.

While organisers are making every effort to ensure fans safety at the World Cup, the first to take place on the African continent, Beckenbauer says there are still safety issues.

"The organisers are doing everything to ensure the event has the best security," said the former Bayern Munich defender.

"They are prepared for nearly every type of attack, they can't do more."

"But no country in the world can now say they are 100 per cent safe."

And Beckenbauer even offered advice for fans travelling to the tournament.

"People need to be watching out everywhere they go," said Beckenbauer.

"It's best to be over-cautious, stay in groups whenever possible."



Brazil and Real Madrid star Kaka (R) and his wife Caroline Celico attend a concert of US singer Alicia Keys at Royal Theatre in Madrid on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP