

# Rip-roaring Robben

AFP, Munich



Dutch winger Arjen Robben's strike sealed Bayern Munich's 1-0 victory over Lyon on Wednesday to give the German giants an advantage for the second-leg of the Champions League semifinal.

The first-half dismissal of Bayern's Franck Ribery for a dangerous challenge was cancelled out by Lyon's France defender Jeremy Toulalan also getting sent off just after the break for a second yellow card before Robben's winning goal.

Since joining Bayern from Real Madrid in August 2009, Robben has now scored 20 goals in all competitions, but none so important as his 69th-

minute strike which bounced off the back of team-mate Thomas Mueller and into the net.

All the pre-match hype was around Ribery, who was questioned by French police at the weekend after being involved in the under-age call-girl scandal which has rocked the French football team.

Ribery kept a low profile going into the game, but both he and Toulalan will now miss the second-leg next week back in Lyon.

Having had his chances to score, Ribery was shown a straight red by referee Roberto Rosetti on 37 minutes for a dangerous foul on Lyon's striker Lisandro Lopez as he body-checked the Argentinian while fighting for the ball.

Bayern's fans were braying for blood after Rosetti flashed his red card, especially as Lopez was quickly on his feet after initially writhing in agony.

The game's tempo dropped as Bayern Louis van Gaal reorganised his team into a more offensive formation as it stayed 0-0 at the break.

At the interval, Bayern's defensive midfielder Anatoly Tymoshchuk came on for

## BAYERN MUNICH 1-0 LYON ROBBEN 69'

**Bayern Munich (4-4-2):** Hans-Jorg Butt, Daniel van Buyten, Martin Demichelis, Philipp Lahm, Diego Contento, Franck Ribery, Arjen Robben (Hamit Altintop, 85), Danijel Pranjić (Mario Gomez, 63), Bastian Schweinsteiger, Ivica Olic (Anatoly Tymoshchuk, 46), Thomas Muller

**Lyon (4-5-1):** Hugo Lloris, Cris, Anthony Reveillere, Aly Cissokho, Kim Kallstrom, Miralem Pjanic (Jean Makoun, 56), Ederson (Michel Bastos, 70), Cesar Fabian Delgado (Sidney Govou, 79), Jeremy Toulalan, Maxime Gonalons, Lisandro Lopez

**Red Cards:** Ribery 37, Toulalan 54

**Attendance:** 68,000

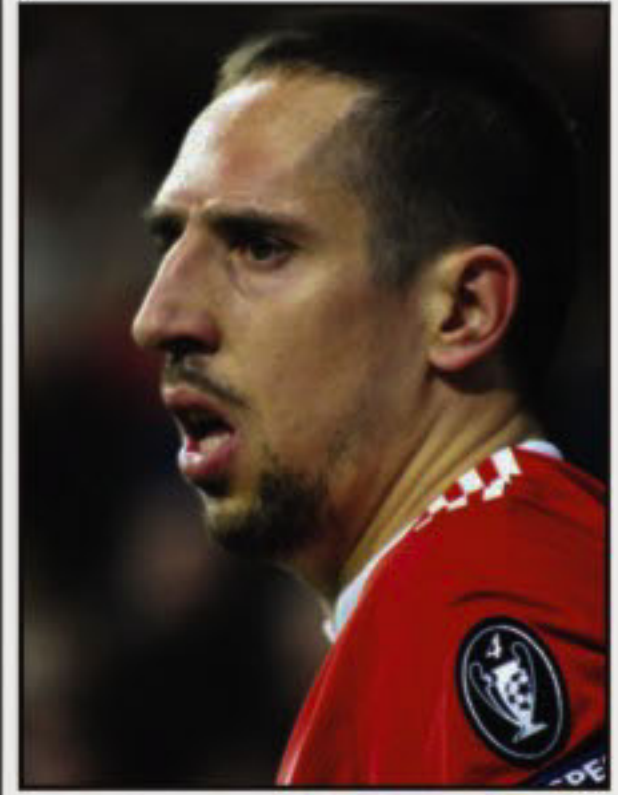
striker Ivica Olic, but Lyon were soon also reduced to ten men when France defender Toulalan seemed to let the occasion get to him.

## Bayern hope for Ribery reprieve

THE GUARDIAN

Bayern Munich are hoping Uefa will show leniency when a decision is made on Franck Ribery's red card last night. Uefa will decide next Wednesday whether Ribery will face any more than the automatic one-game ban.

European football's governing body today confirmed to Bayern that the 27-year-old



will miss Tuesday's second leg and said their disciplinary committee will sit down to discuss the matter the following day.

"He didn't lunge at him with his leg," the Bayern coach, Louis van Gaal, said. "It is a harsh red card, but you can give it. Franck gave the referee the chance to send him off by standing on his foot for longer than necessary. I hope he only gets banned for one match."

Having carelessly left his trailing leg to trip Robben, he sent the Dutchman tumbling to the turf to earn himself a yellow card on 51 minutes.

**"I am very satisfied. I think that we showed Europe tonight how strong we are."**

- Louis van Gaal

Then just three minutes later, he kicked away Bastian Schweinsteiger's leg when challenging for a ball and Rosetti was reaching for his red card before Schweinsteiger landed on the automatic one-game ban.

## Van Gaal quite satisfied

TELEGRAPH

Bayern Munich coach Louis van Gaal believes his side are a formidable Champions League force after overcoming the first-half dismissal of Franck Ribery to beat Lyon 1-0.

"I am very satisfied. I think that we showed Europe tonight how strong we are, we showed that by dominating with 10 men against 11," the Dutchman said after their semi-final first leg meeting.

"I did not think that we would win 1-0 with Ribery getting a red card," said van Gaal.

Lyon then had Jeremy Toulalan sent off for a second yellow card early in the second half to even things out.

"We dominated. I think we created more chances when we were with 10 men against 11. When we were then 10 against 10 I sent in (another striker) Mario Gomez to score a goal faster. We created many chances but scored one goal. That is good," added van Gaal.

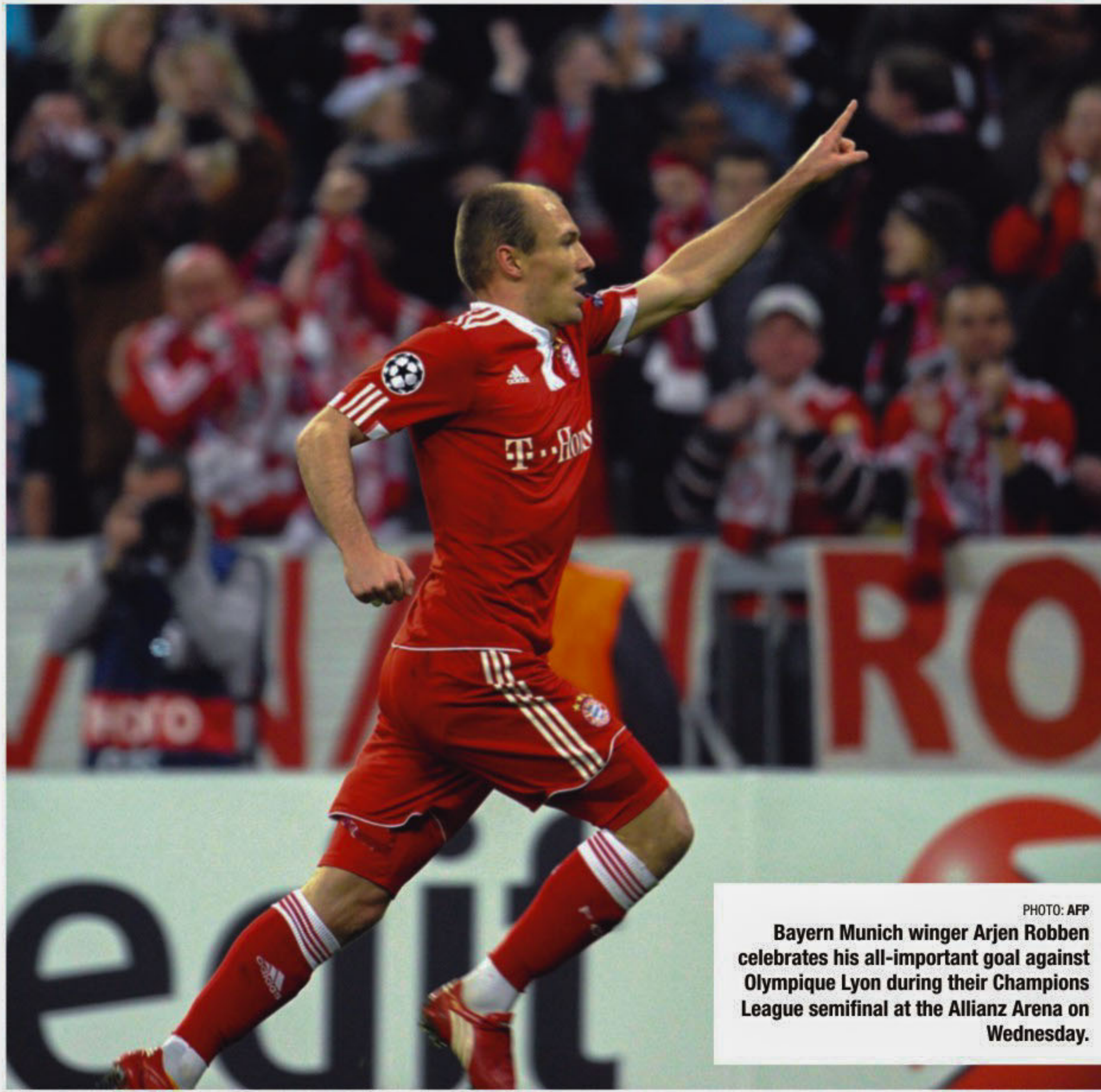


PHOTO: AFP  
Bayern Munich winger Arjen Robben celebrates his all-important goal against Olympique Lyon during their Champions League semifinal at the Allianz Arena on Wednesday.

## KEY STATS

	Bayern	Lyon
Shots (on target)	16(4)	4(1)
Corners	9	3
Possession	67%	33%
Yellow Cards	1	1

pitch on 54 minutes.

Lyon coach Claude Puel immediately brought on Cameroonian midfielder Jean Makoun for Miralem Pjanic to bring on fresh legs, while van Gaal brought in German striker Mario Gomez for midfielder Danijel Pranjić on 63 minutes.

Gomez, who has struggled for confidence since his transfer from Stuttgart more than 18 months ago, missed a clear

header created by Robben, but the pressure finally told for Bayern.

Robben launched his shot from well outside the penalty area on 69 minutes and the ball deflected off the back of Mueller to beat Lyon goalkeeper Hugo Lloris.

Despite the French side's efforts, Bayern stayed in control and will take a slender advantage to Lyon for the second-leg on April 27.

## Cris refuses to blame road trip

THE GUARDIAN

The Lyon captain Cris refused to use his team's 800km, 10-hour road journey as an excuse for the 1-0 defeat to 10-man Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League semi-final last night.

"This is not an excuse," the Brazilian told www.rmc.fr. "If players are hiding behind it, they are not ready to play a European Cup match."

"There was a good atmosphere in the stadium. It was still a semi-final of the Champions League. Many

players do not have the chance to play this kind of meeting. We should enjoy it."

"Throughout the game, it was not good, really. In the second half, we went back a little too quiet. We did not take advantage of our [numerical] superiority."

He added: "We had an opportunity to score and leave with a good result. In my opinion, we should have given more. Being 100% in a game like this is not enough."

"We know we did not produce a good game. Now we have a week to work. The return leg will be completely different."

## Villa climb to sixth

AFP, London



Aston Villa climbed into sixth place in the English Premier League and in sight of a spot amongst Europe's elite next season as they edged Hull nearer relegation with a 2-0 away win on Wednesday.

Gabriel Agbonlahor's first-half goal and James Milner's penalty 14 minutes from time saw Villa to a win that left the Midlands club just three points behind Tottenham Hotspur, who currently occupy fourth place and the last spot on offer to English clubs for next season's Champions League, with three games to play.

Defeat left cash-strapped Hull three points from safety and on course for a return to the second-tier Championship.

And the loss was made worse by the sight of striker Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink being carried off on a stretcher after a clash of heads with Villa's David Dunne, although the Hull forward did regain consciousness.

Hull gifted Villa their opener when Ibrahima

Sonko and then Paul McShane saw attempted clearances charged down and Agbonlahor curled a shot into the top corner from a tight angle.

Stilyan Petrov then twice went close to doubling Villa's lead before Hull missed an excellent chance in the 24th minute.

Vennegoor of Hesselink, played in by Kevin Kilbane, saw Villa goalkeeper Brad Friedel block from eight yards out.

Kilbane then had a shot saved on the follow-up by the American and then, with only James Collins to beat on the line, saw his second attempt deflected over the bar by the Villa defender's arm.

Early in the second half, Hull had another great chance to equalise but defender Steven Mouyokolo, right in front of goal, scuffed his shot and Friedel turned the ball over the bar.

There was then a lengthy stoppage after Dunne clashed heads with Vennegoor of Hesselink from the subsequent corner.

And Villa punished Hull's wastefulness when Milner, after being fouled by George Boateng, scored from the penalty spot in the 76th minute.



PHOTO: AFP  
Aston Villa striker Gabriel Agbonlahor is ecstatic after scoring the opening goal against Hull City during their Premier League encounter at the KC Stadium on Wednesday.

## 'England not favourites'

AFP, London

Former England football star John Barnes insists it is unrealistic to expect England to win the 2010 World Cup.

The ex-Liverpool left winger said Spain and Brazil are the undisputed favourites to lift the trophy in South Africa this July - and England have no divine right to be considered likely champions.

Barnes, who played in England's run to the 1990 World Cup semifinals - their best performance since their 1966 triumph - also urged fans not to heap pressure on the team's youngsters, and reckons David Beckham's absence could actually boost England's chances.

"It isn't a foregone conclusion. We have no divine right to win it or to get to the final and there are teams who have been better than us," Barnes told AFP.

"Spain and Brazil are the two favourites, and rightly so."

"However, England are playing with a lot of confidence, stability and consistency which means they will get through the group stages will get through to the latter stages."

"But if we play Brazil in the semifinals, are we going to beat them?"

"We can, if we play to our highest level and our big players perform all the time."

"So it's unrealistic for us to expect to win it, although we can win it and we can do very well, but we have to respect the other teams."

Every two years when the major international tournaments come around, England loves to whip itself up into a football frenzy, before outrage, heartbreak and misery take over when they get knocked out.

Barnes, who won 79 caps between 1983 and 1995, knows plenty about the pressure that comes with an England shirt.

## Man Utd top of football rich list

SOCCERNET

Manchester United has been named as the world's most valuable football club for the sixth year running, while Real Madrid sit second and Championship club Newcastle United come in 20th in the latest data released by Forbes Magazine.

Seven of the magazine's top 20 clubs, ordered by revenues generated and ignoring profit margins, come from England, where the Premier League is the most indebted league in Europe according to UEFA.

Arsenal (3rd), Liverpool (6th) and Chelsea (9th) trail United in the top ten, while Tottenham (12th) and Manchester City (19th) join surprise inclusion Newcastle in the top 20. European champions Barcelona came in fourth and Bayern Munich ranked at No.5. AC Milan (7th) were the highest team from Italy, while Lyon and Marseille represented France, the fifth nation in the top 20.

The top five clubs generated 86% of the combined revenues of the top 20 clubs, a statistic that may explain why some clubs have racked up massive debts in an effort to reach or remain at the very top of the football tree.

United, who have now topped the table for six years, were valued by Forbes at £1.19 billion after a 2% fall from last year. Peter Schwartz, a business sports writer for Forbes, praised United's resilience as "one of the world's biggest sporting brands".

He said: "The club has really established itself as one of the top brands in world

sport. New kit deals and great marketing has seen them maintain their status despite all the problems of the global recession."

Real Madrid were forced to settle for second place - despite signing Cristiano Ronaldo from United last summer. The world's 20 most valuable clubs generated a combined £422 million in operating income last season, a Forbes spokesman said.

Combined revenues grew by £23.4 million to £3.57 billion for the 2008-09 season, Forbes said.

"The top five clubs took in 86% of the total because their worldwide following allows them to grab much more sponsorship and media revenue," a spokesman added.

Broadcast rights account for 42% of the revenue of Europe's top 20 clubs.

## HIGHEST EARNING PLAYERS

Name	Value (\$)
David Beckham	40 million
Cristiano Ronaldo	30 million
Kaka	25 million
Ronaldinho	25 million
Thierry Henry	24 million
Lionel Messi	20 million
Frank Lampard	17 million
John Terry	16 million
Zlatan Ibrahimovic	16 million
Steven Gerrard	15 million

(figures are earnings per year including endorsement deals)  
Source: Forbes

## TOP TEN CLUBS

Club	Value \$million
1. Manchester United	1835
2. Real Madrid	1323
3. Arsenal	1181
4. Barcelona	1000
5. Bayern Munich	990
6. Liverpool	822
7. AC Milan	800
8. Juventus	656
9. Chelsea	646
10. Inter Milan	413

## IN BRIEF

### Roma-Inter in Cup final again

AFP, Rome

AS Roma and Inter Milan will contest the Italian Cup final for the fifth time in six years after Roma reached the trophy match despite a 1-0 defeat at Udinese in Wednesday's semifinal second leg.

Roma triumphed 2-1 on aggregate due to their 2-0 win at home in the first leg back in February.

Alexis Sanchez scored the only goal of the game nine minutes from time but that wasn't enough to take the relegation threatened club past the Serie A leaders.

The Cup has been held in Rome for the last three years with Lazio triumphing last season and Roma doing so in the previous two years.

### Pompey out of Europe

AFP, London

Portsmouth will not be allowed to play in the Europa League next season after the English Football Association and Premier League told the FA Cup finalists their late bid to register for the tournament had been rejected.

Avram Grant's team would have qualified to play in Europe next season after reaching the FA Cup final against Chelsea as the Blues will already be in the Champions League.

But Portsmouth had failed to apply for the required UEFA club licence before Pompey's surprise run to the final and the club's administrators were told on Thursday that any late application for the licence will not be considered due to the financial problems.

A joint statement from the FA and Premier League said: "The FA and Premier League have confirmed to the administrators of Portsmouth Football Club that they shall not consider any late application for granting of a UEFA Club Licence for the 2010-11 season."

The decision means that the team who finish seventh in the Premier League - currently Liverpool - would play in the Europa League instead.

### Milan to play with Fire

AFP, Chicago

Italian powerhouse AC Milan will meet the Chicago Fire of Major League Soccer on May 30, the US club announced Wednesday.

The match will be part of AC Milan's North American tour following the Serie A season, which also includes matches at DC United on May 26 and against the minor-league Montreal Impact on June 2.

AC Milan, third in Serie A, won the only prior meeting against the Fire 3-1 in 2005.

The Italians' lineup could be trimmed of star power with the match coming only two weeks before the World Cup opens in South Africa.

Gianluca Zambrotta, Andrea Pirlo and Gennaro Gattuso figure to be called upon by the Azzurri in defense of the World Cup crown.

### Moyes rubbishes United link

AFP, London

Everton manager David Moyes has dismissed reports that he is set to succeed Sir Alex Ferguson as boss of Manchester United.

It was claimed this week that Ferguson has told the Old Trafford board that he wants Moyes to replace him at the end of next season, when it is believed the United chief will finally retire after 25 years in charge.

Moyes has an impressive record during his eight-year spell at Everton, leading the club to a top four finish in the Premier League in 2005 as well as reaching the 2009 FA Cup final.

But the Scot has moved to play down his chances of taking over from Ferguson at United.

"It was Mark Hughes, Steve Bruce and Roy Keane being mentioned not long ago," Moyes told the Daily Record.

"What I will say is I think it will be a terrible day when Sir Alex does finish."

"He is someone all the football managers look up to, they all respect him."