



Real Madrid striker Gonzalo Higuain is ecstatic after scoring the second goal against Espanyol during their Primera Liga encounter at Bernabeu on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## FFF defends Evra ban

AFP, Paris

The French Football Federation (FFF) on Tuesday denied having unfairly targeted Patrice Evra, after the player said he was still awaiting an explanation for his five-match international ban.

"We're not against him, we're treating him as we'd treat anyone," the FFF's legal director, Jean Lapeyre, told AFP.

"Between the meeting of the (FFF appeals) committee and the moment when we formalise the decision and dispatch it, there's a bit of time. You can't do it in 24 or 48 hours.

"It's a complex case. It's obvious that we can't rush it through in less than two weeks."

The FFF appeals committee on September 9 upheld the five-match ban handed to Evra for his role as captain in the France squad's refusal to train at the World Cup in South Africa.

The players boycotted an open training session in protest at the exclusion from the squad of Nicolas Anelka after he clashed with then coach Raymond Domenech.

"We've made good progress," continued Lapeyre.

"I dare to hope that it could be finalised this week. That's the aim. But it takes time. Every word is weighed."

Speaking to Canal+ television on Sunday, Evra explained that his lawyer was yet to receive the reasons for the appeals committee's decision.

"It's difficult to make an appeal as I still don't know why I've been punished," said Evra, on the subject of a possible appeal to the French National Olympic and Sporting Committee (CNOSF).

## Togo coach apologises

AFP, Lome

Former Togo coach Bana Tchanile has apologised for taking a team of impostors masquerading as Togo internationals to play in a friendly against Bahrain, an act that saw him hit with a three-year ban.

Former national coach Tchanile was the man behind one of the most embarrassing episodes in the west African country's sporting history when he pitched up in the Bahraini capital of Manama for the September 7 match.

Bahrain won the game, a warm-up for the West Asian Football Federation Championship, 3-0, only for it to later emerge that they had beaten a bunch of fraudsters.

An inquiry was launched last Thursday into the affair by the Togolese football authorities who promptly banned Tchanile from all activities relating to football for a period of three years.

"I'm aware of the mistakes I've made," Tchanile said Tuesday. "I present my sincere apologies to the president of the republic, all the Togolese people and the president of the Bahrain Football Association."

"I've received a three-year ban. I'm obliged to accept it in a gesture of sportsmanship."

## Mainz stay top

AFP, Berlin



Bundesliga leaders Mainz 05 beat Cologne 2-0 on Tuesday to stay top, while Bayern Munich face an anxious wait to hear the extent of Franck Ribery's knee injury from their late 2-1 win at Hoffenheim.

Having been stunned by a goal after just 36 seconds, Bayern hit back as Ribery's fierce long-range shot was followed up by Thomas Mueller on 62 minutes before Munich defender Daniel van Buyten's late winner.

But Mueller's equaliser could be costly as Ribery had to be helped off with what looked like a painful knee injury on 64 minutes as he fell awkwardly after taking his shot.

With Bayern facing Basel in next Tuesday's Champions League match, Munich coach Louis van Gaal will be hoping the Frenchman can face the Swiss.

Bayern got off to the worst possible start when they conceded the fastest goal in Hoffenheim's history.

The defending champions were stunned as midfielder Sebastian Rudy beat Munich's defence on the right and squared for Hoffenheim's Vedad Ibisevic to score before Bayern hit back.

Van Gaal is set to sign a year's extension to his contract to stay with Bayern until 2012, according to Wednesday's edition of German daily Bild.

## Ribery out for month



AFP, Berlin

France midfielder Franck Ribery is expected to be out for at least four weeks with an ankle injury and to miss Bayern Munich's next two Champions League games, it was revealed on Wednesday.

The winger had to be helped off after an hour of his side's 2-1 win over Hoffenheim in the Bundesliga on Tuesday after falling awkwardly and an MRI scan in Munich on Wednesday revealed he has torn ligaments in his right ankle.

Ribery, who missed five months of football last season with a knee injury, will miss Bayern's Champions League games at Basel next Tuesday and home to Romania's FC Cluj in Group E.

"I had feared worse," said Bayern coach Louis van Gaal after hearing the news.

"Our misfortune is a blessing in disguise. Now we can look to getting Ribery cured properly."

Ribery is expected to be in a plaster cast for the next ten days, then will wear a special cast for a further ten before he can begin light training.

If his recovery goes according to plan, Ribery is expected to return to team training in the second half of October.

With Dutch winger Arjen Robben likely to miss the rest of 2010 with a thigh injury, Ribery's set-back means Bayern have now lost two key playmakers.

"Of course, Franck is a very important player for us," said Bayern's director of sport Christian Nerlinger.

"But it is much harder now for him to deal with the situation."

Having coached Bayern to the German league and cup titles last season, van Gaal is in his second season with Munich.

"Nothing is signed. All I can say is that we are very happy with the work of Louis van Gaal," said Bayern's sporting director Christian Nerlinger.

The result in Hoffenheim lifts Bayern up to seventh while the hosts are second.

Mainz picked up their fifth straight win to keep their 100 per cent record and open a five-point lead with their win over Cologne.

The hosts took the lead when substitute midfielder Lewis Holtby's header beat Cologne goalkeeper Faryd Mondragon on 72 minutes before he scored his second in added time.

Champions League side Werder Bremen slumped to their second consecutive league defeat when they were beaten 4-1 at Hanover.

Bremen face defending holders Inter Milan next Wednesday in Italy, but Thomas Schaaf's side are lacking in confidence after following up Saturday's defeat at home to Mainz with this loss in Hanover.

An own-goal by Germany defender Clemens Fritz after just 10 minutes put Bremen on the back foot until captain Torsten Frings converted a penalty after 36 minutes to put his side level.

Hanover reclaimed the lead when Ivory Coast striker Didier Ya Konan scored in the 53rd minute before defender Christian Schulz scored the second on 79 minutes.

To add insult in extra time, Hanover's Norway striker Mohammed Abdellaoue added the fourth.



Bayern Munich star Franck Ribery walks on crutches on his way to seeing the team doctor in Munich yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ribery trained hard in pre-season and looked to have recovered well from his groin operation in June and Nerlinger says the defending champions need their playmaker back as soon as possible.

"We all want him to return

and play like he did at the start of the season, without injury.

"He has trained well and given everything."

"This recent injury is a setback, but only a small one and he will recover very quickly."

## Ujfalusi gets 2-match ban

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid's Czech defender Tomasz Ujfalusi was Tuesday slapped with a two-match ban for a tackle on Barcelona star Lionel Messi that has left the Argentine sidelined with an ankle injury.

Spain's football authority, the RFEF, handed down the ban for "dangerous play", the club said on its website.

The Czech will now miss Atletico's games against Valencia and Real Zaragoza.

Messi was stretchered off in the final minute of Sunday's match, which Barca won 2-1, following the robust tackle from the Czech, who was sent off for the challenge.

Barcelona said Monday that Messi, the reigning FIFA World Player of the Year, will miss at least the next two matches after suffering ligament damage to his ankle.

Ujfalusi has apologised to Messi, saying he had "tried to go for the ball", but was "unlucky as my foot stepped on his ankle".

## Portugal appoint Bento

AFP, Lisbon

Paulo Bento was on Tuesday named coach of Portugal until the end of Euro 2012, the Portuguese Football Federation announced.

"Paulo Bento and his technical team will sign a contract until July 2012," the federation said.

Bento, 41, a former defensive midfielder who won 35 caps for Portugal, will succeed Carlos Queiroz, who was sacked earlier this month after some disciplinary run-ins with the federation and a string of poor results.

Bento's appointment came after Real Madrid refused to release Jose Mourinho to take up the role temporarily.

Portugal have made a poor start to their Euro 2012 qualifying campaign, drawing 4-4 with Cyprus and losing 1-0 to Norway to leave them in fourth place in Group H.

They face Denmark and Iceland in October.

## Kahn ready to succeed Kalle

AFP, Berlin

Ex-Germany captain Oliver Kahn is studying as a possible successor to replace Karl-Heinz Rummenigge as chairman of the board at Bayern Munich, it was revealed on Wednesday.

The 41-year-old is eyeing up the post as boss of Bayern with Rummenigge set to step down as chairman when his contract expires on December 31, 2011.

"I'll be studying for the next two years," the former goalkeeper Kahn told German magazine Sport Bild.

Meanwhile, Bayern coach Louis van Gaal is expected to sign a contract extension to keep him as coach of Munich until the end of the 2012 season.

# Real at the summit

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid moved to the La Liga summit with a flattering 3-0 home win over Espanyol at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday with Gonzalo Higuain and Karim Benzema netting their first

goals of the season after Cristiano Ronaldo had opened the scoring.

The win means Real maintain their 100 per cent home record under coach Jose Mourinho and move one point above Valencia at the top.

Ronaldo got the opener on 28 minutes converting a fortunate penalty before Argentine Higuain scored his first goal of the campaign 11 minutes from time.

With three minutes left substitute Benzema bagged his first league goal just six minutes after coming on.

It was a heated game in which both sides had players sent off with Real defender Pepe sent off on the hour mark before Espanyol had defender Ernesto Galan dismissed three minutes later for crunching Ronaldo.

Espanyol were reduced to nine men when defender Juan Forlin was sent off in the closing minutes for complaining about Benzema's goal.

Mourinho brought in Frenchman Lass Diarra for Sami Khedira in defensive midfield but stuck by his 4-2-3-1 system with two holding midfielders, Mesut Ozil as playmaker and the speedy Ronaldo and Angel di Maria supplying Higuain.

It was visitors Espanyol who had the first chance after six minutes with Jose Callejon drilling a left-footed volley narrowly wide of the post.

A minute later his opposite number Carlos Kameni pulled off a terrific save to thwart di Maria pushing the Argentine's shot over the bar.

Espanyol were holding their own with some slick passing but came unstuck in the 28th minute in an unfortunate incident.

Ronaldo smashed a free-kick into the Espanyol wall and the referee pointed to the penalty spot with Luis Garcia penalised for

blocking the shot with his hand.

It was harsh on Espanyol with Garcia unable to get out of the way of Ronaldo's fierce drive and the striker was harshly booked for his action.

Ronaldo slotted the spot-kick home to Kameni's left but was forced to retake the penalty after stopping his run up midway through the action.

The Portuguese star put the retake in exactly the same spot with Kameni diving the wrong way again.

Real were more comfortable in the second half but suffered a setback on the hour when Pepe collected a second yellow for fouling Callejon.

Mourinho was pondering playing with one man less but three minutes later the numbers were evened up when Galan was shown a straight red card for a late challenge on Ronaldo.

Espanyol players were furious with the decision but rolled up their sleeves to give Real some hairy moments as they held a slender one-goal advantage.

Higuain put the game to bed on 79 minutes accepting a Ronaldo pass before slotting past Kameni with his left foot and Benzema completed the scoring.

Earlier Athletic Bilbao registered their first home league win at San Mames defeating Real Mallorca 3-0 on Tuesday to go fourth in the Spanish top-flight.

Bilbao lie three points behind leaders Real, and their next match is at home to champions Barcelona on Saturday night.

In other matches, Osasuna produced their first league win of the season with a 3-1 home triumph over promoted Real Sociedad on Tuesday.

Barcelona go in search of their first league home win of the campaign on Wednesday when they host Sporting Gijon at Camp Nou.

The defending champions, lying in seventh, will be without star man Messi for the next two league matches due to his ankle injury, however, the Argentine could be back for the Champions League match at Rubin Kazan on September 29.

### RESULTS

**Athletic Bilbao 3** (David Lopez 44, Dominguez 62-pen, Inigo Perez 90+2)  
Real Mallorca 0

**Osasuna 3** (Pandiani 38, Camunas 42, Aranda 72) Real Sociedad 1 (Tamudo 16)

**Real Madrid 3** (Ronaldo 28-pen,

# Bees sting Everton



AFP, London

Third tier Brentford knocked Premier League Everton out of the English Football League Cup on penalties in the shock result of the third round on Tuesday.

The Bees, 19th in League One, came from a goal behind against the Merseysiders, 19th in the top flight, to come back to 1-1 at full-time.

Extra-time could not separate the sides and come the penalty shoot-out Brentford held their nerve, with the west London team on target with all four of their kicks and Everton missing twice to spark a joyous pitch invasion at Griffin Park.

Brentford keeper Richard Lee saved Jermaine Beckford's spot-kick with the scores at 3-3 before Charlie MacDonald, who had earlier missed a penalty in normal time, scored to put the pressure on Phil Jagielka, who fired his shot at the post.

Full-back Seamus Coleman had earlier given Everton a sixth-minute lead but Gary Alexander headed Brentford level four minutes before half-time.

Penalties also played their part across the capital as Samir Nasri scored twice from the spot in extra-time as Arsenal beat North London rivals Tottenham 4-1.

Henri Lansbury had given the Gunners, who had manager Arsene Wenger serving a touch-line ban, a first-half lead at White Hart Lane, Robbie Keane equalised just after the interval.

Nasri struck twice after he had been brought down by Sebastian Bassong and Marouane Chamakh pulled back by Steven Caulker.

Andrey Arshavin added a fourth goal. The only concern for Wenger was an injury to Kieran Gibbs.

### RESULTS

**Birmingham 3** (Hleb 24, Zigic 26, Gardner 28) Milton Keynes Dons 1 (Wilbraham 80)

Brentford 1 (Alexander 41) Everton 1 (Coleman 6) -- after extra-time, 1-1 after 90 mins

**Brentford win 4-3 on penalties**

**Burnley 1** (Elliott 45) Bolton 0

Millwall 1 (Morison 62) Ipswich 2 (Priskin 23, McAuley 45)

Peterborough 1 (Mackail-Smith 7)

**Swansea 3** (Sinclair 5, 41, 78)

Portsmouth 1 (Lawrence 82)

**Leicester 2** (Morrison 3, Dyer 43)

**Stoke 2** (Higginbotham 23, Jones 79) Fulham 0

Sunderland 1 (Gyan 41) **West Ham 2** (Piquionne 35, Obinna 59)

Tottenham 1 (Keane 49) **Arsenal 4** (Lansbury 15, Nasri 92-pen, 96-pen, Arshavin 105) AET, 1-1 after 90 mins

**Wolverhampton 4** (Milijias 83-pen,

"We have to check, that is the only disappointment of the night, because Gibbs had a very good game," he said.

"It is a metatarsal again, it is the one next to the one he had broken, the second one, so we hope we have good news tomorrow morning, because that would be a massive blow to us."

Burnley, now in the Championship, made it an unwelcome return to Turf Moor for former manager Owen Coyle as they beat his Premier League Bolton side 1-0 thanks to Wade Elliott's

45th minute volley, ruled a goal after the linesman informed referee Mark Clattenburg the ball had crossed the line.

Stoke beat Fulham 2-0 after goals from Danny Higginbotham and Kenwyne Jones while another all Premier League clash saw West Ham win 2-1 away to Stoke City.

Nigeria international Victor Obinna gave West Ham their first victory over Premier League opposition this season with a 2-1 win at Sunderland.

The 23-year-old struck 14 minutes after the break after Sunderland's record signing Asamoah Gyan had earlier cancelled out Frederic Piquionne's opener for the visitors.

Wolves suffered a fright before winning 4-2 in extra-time against Notts County.

Birmingham City scored three goals in four first-half minutes as they beat MK Dons 3-1 at St Andrews while Ipswich beat fellow Championship side Millwall 2-1.

Former Chelsea winger Scott Sinclair scored a hat-trick as Championship Swansea beat League One Peterborough.

Elsewhere first-half goals from Michael Morrison and Lloyd Dyer saw Leicester beat 10-man Portsmouth 2-1.

Championship strugglers Pompey had Richard Hughes sent-off before Liam Lawrence pulled a goal back at Fratton Park.



Arsenal winger Samir Nasri (L) squirms away from Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Sandro Ranieri during their League Cup tie at White Hart Lane on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP