



In a sensational display of attacking football, Barcelona, on Monday, completely overwhelmed archrivals Real Madrid by a thumping 5-0 scoreline in their El Clasico clash at the Camp Nou. While striker David Villa (top) may have scored twice, it was fabulous Lionel Messi (top L) and mesmerizing Xavi (top R) who were the chief architects of Madrid's destruction. Even youngsters Pedro (L) and Jeffren (R) got in on the act as Pep Guardiola's phenomenal side condemned Madrid coach Jose Mourinho to his heaviest defeat in football.

PHOTOS: AFP

In a Catalan dreamland



THE GUARDIAN



Jose Mourinho always said that his side would lose one day but he did not expect to lose like this - not after enjoying the greatest start of any coach in Real Madrid's history. His team, so impermeable before, were punctured. Five times. They were sunk. A 5-0 victory for Barcelona was described by the Madrid coach as a "historically bad result" for his club - it was the worst defeat he has suffered in his career.

The final whistle arrived amid cheers and oles, plus boos for Sergio Ramos, sent off at the death for a wild scythe at Leo Messi. At last Mourinho could move from the bench where he had been sitting powerless. The chant going round was

inspired by Mourinho's infamous accusation that Messi had play-acted during a Chelsea-Barcelona Champions League clash: "Mourinho, go to the theatre!" He might have wished he had. By his own admission, he had felt "impotent".

There was little comfort in the fact that this Barcelona team are genuinely special. Pep Guardiola's side were imperious, their control breathtaking. Speaking of genuinely special, if this was indeed the game that decided the best player in the world, there can be only one answer. Messi failed to score for the first time in 10 matches but his performance like those of Andres Iniesta, Xavi Hernandez and Sergio Busquets was sublime. There were fewer brilliant dribbles, less fantasy but there was a stunning assuredness and impeccable precision in the passing. This was the Messi who controls the game and then decides it.

For Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, the

RESULT

Barcelona 5 (Xavi 9, Pedro 17, Villa 54, 56, Jeffren 90) Real Madrid 0

most glittering of stars in a match featuring 11 world champions, there was a sense of this being a definitive test. Ronaldo has never scored against Barcelona; Messi is yet to get a goal against Mourinho. The last two winners of the Ballon d'Or, they had scored against everyone else. Ronaldo reached 50 goals for Madrid quicker than anyone in the club's history; Messi had struck 70 in 71 games.

But it was Xavi, the ideologue behind Spain's World Cup success, who opened the scoring after nine minutes. Messi, who spent the match dropping from his

'false No 9' role into midfield, content to play simple passes and keep the ball moving, combined with Xavi. The Argentinian then swept the ball out to Iniesta. His pass into the box found Xavi running though and as the ball bounced fortuitously off his heel, Xavi nudged a volley past Iker Casillas. It was the perfect demonstration of Barcelona's football. Short, clever passing, a man always in support. Even the goalkeeper Victor Valdes refused to hit aimless punts.

Barcelona did things that would be risky for any other side, playing out of the tightest corners. Soon, Camp Nou was roaring oles as their team swept the ball about.

When it looked like Barcelona were playing for its own sake, Xavi speared a wonderful diagonal ball to the left. David Villa collected and delivered a cross that Casillas could only just reach. As the ball squirmed free, Pedro got ahead of

Marcelo to push it over the line and make it 2-0. Almost immediately, it was nearly three when Iniesta's sumptuous assist found Villa clean through but he was fractionally offside.

Madrid had little of the ball but when they did recover possession they broke rapidly and with murderous intent. Ronaldo saw a shot flash wide, a free-kick dip past the post and just before half-time he appealed for a penalty. The referee, Iturralde González, felt Ronaldo had looked for the penalty; replays suggested he may have found it. In the end it was academic and there could be no complaints.

Within two minutes of the start of the second half, Messi had a goal disallowed for offside. He, Pedro and Villa had already made a mess of a superb opportunity. Four minutes after that, Messi slipped an angled delivery through for Xavi. Unfortunately for Barcelona it was

not the only thing that was angled; as Xavi stepped round Casillas he could only hit the side netting.

Barcelona would not be denied. Messi did much the same thing three minutes later and Villa made no mistake. The pass was perfectly weighted and Villa, sneaking in behind Pepe, struck his seventh goal of the season. In a flash, it was eight. Again Messi gave the clever ball. Again, Villa slipped free. This time he toe-poked the ball home.

There was still more than half an hour remaining. For Madrid and Mourinho it was an eternity. Barcelona barely let them see the ball, still less touch it. Barcelona added a fifth in stoppage time when Jeffren finished off Bojan Krkic's cross to complete a miserable night for Mourinho's team. Jeffren had been on the pitch only three minutes. In the second half, Madrid had barely been on it at all.

Almeida gets 3-match ban

AFP, Frankfurt

Werder Bremen striker Hugo Almeida received a three-match ban from the German football federation following his weekend red card against St Pauli - against whom he scored a hat-trick in a 3-0 win.

Almeida, 26, was dismissed ten minutes from time for elbowing St Pauli's Carlos Zambrano in full view of the referee.

Werder will not appeal the ban after Almeida admitted "even though my opponents targeted me throughout the match I should not have reacted like that."

Marica fined, banned

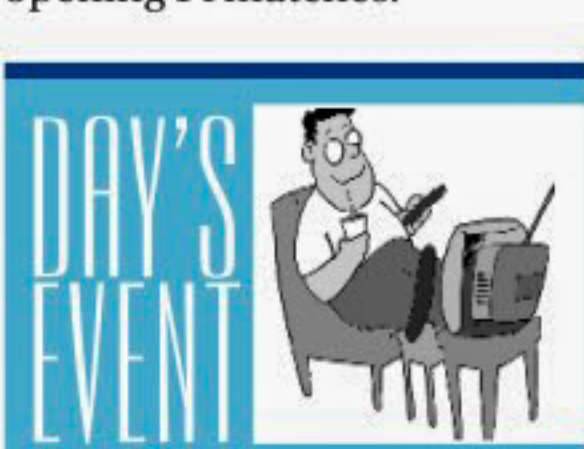
AFP, Stuttgart

Ciprian Marica has been fined 50,000 euros by his club Stuttgart and banned for three matches by the German Football Federation (DFB) after being sent off for insulting referee Wolfgang Starkan "arsehole".

The striker had just equalised Hamburg's opening goal to make the score 1-1 and was protesting to the referee after he showed a yellow card to one of Marica's team-mates.

"His dismissal killed us," said coach Jens Keller. "There will be consequences."

Stuttgart are currently second-bottom in the Bundesliga and have taken only 11 points from their opening 14 matches.



Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
First ODI
Time: 9:00am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur

Jose gracious in defeat

AFP, Madrid



two sides.

Mourinho tasted his first defeat in charge of Real and it was one of the heaviest and most painful of his career in what was his maiden Clasico as Barcelona outclassed their bitter rivals with Spanish World Cup winner David Villa scoring twice in the rout.

"It is a result for one team that played well and punishment for one that played very poorly and we deserved to lose," said Mourinho.

"I don't think you can say the result reflects the difference between the two teams and the championship isn't over today and there is still a lot for us to play for in this league as we are only two points behind."

Real's wounded players have now lost five successive Clasicos to Barcelona, with their last victory coming back in April 2008, and must pick themselves up for Saturday's home match against Valencia.

"We have to show character. I spoke to the players in the dressing room and when you lose 5-0 like today you have to come back with desire to train hard and win matches again," declared Mourinho.

"The next game is Saturday which is a shame because I wish it were tomorrow as that would be

the best thing."

On a personal note it was a disappointing night for Mourinho on his return to Camp Nou, where he used to work as a translator under Bobby Robson and where he became public enemy number one when his Inter Milan defeated Barcelona in last season's Champions League semi-finals.

"Sometimes you come away with good results as I did with Chelsea and Inter Milan but sometimes it doesn't work out," said Mourinho. "I am sad of course because we lost and I expected much more as we had been playing well."

"However, the game is over now and there is nothing much we can do. We are still a work in progress."

For Barca coach Pep Guardiola it was a fifth consecutive Clasico win as he continued his 100 per cent record in the fixture and the 5-0 drubbing goes down as one of the greatest ever Barca wins along with the 6-2 thrashing of Real at the Santiago Bernabeu in May 2009.

"We won the league with the 6-2 in Bernabeu but we are only in November now," said Guardiola. "Real are a strong rival and this will be a tough title fight until the end of the season."

"To beat a team with the most league championships and Champions League titles gives us real satisfaction and we can be happy to stay loyal to our philosophies of attacking and dominating games with style."

"The difference between the two sides is not reflected by the result as it is just one game. Everything went well for us and these games don't happen very often."

Asked if the current Barcelona side was the best ever Guardiola replied: "I am not going to say we are the best Barcelona team ever or that we are the best team in the world. I will let time pass and people can decide that on their own."

IOC to probe bribery



AFP, Zurich

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Tuesday that it would examine any evidence of corruption, after one of its members was named in a BBC report targeting three FIFA officials.

"The IOC has taken note of the allegations made by BBC Panorama and will ask the programme makers to pass on any evidence they may have to the appropriate authorities," the Lausanne-based body said in a statement.

"The IOC has a zero tolerance against corruption and will refer the matter to the IOC Ethics Commission," the world's top sports body added.

A report by the BBC programme late Monday alleged that three members of world football governing body FIFA's executive committee - Ricardo Teixeira of Brazil, African football chief Issa Hayatou and South America's Nicolas Leoz - received secret payments from a sports marketing firm more than a decade ago.

All three are due to take part in the vote to

designate the hosts of football's World Cup in 2018 and 2022 on Thursday, after being wooed by a brace of world leaders and stars from the nine bidding nations.

Hayatou is also a member of the IOC, which oversees the Olympic Games, although he was not specifically named by the IOC.

Asked which of the three the statement referred to, an IOC spokeswoman said: "As for any case, the IOC ethics commission will look at all the information it receives."

The IOC's move contrasted with the stance of world football's governing body FIFA.

It said on Tuesday that it considered the investigations related to the collapse of sports and TV rights marketing firm ISMM/ISL in 2001 to be over.

Six executives from ISL, which was awarded exclusive marketing rights for successive World Cups and other sporting events, were tried for mis-using company money. Three were fined for embezzlement or accounting offences.

However, prosecutors revealed that the evidence opened a trail of suspect payments by the firm through offshore companies, as well as some directly to Leoz.

Carra blow for L'pool

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool were dealt a fresh blow on Tuesday when it was announced that long-serving defender Jamie Carragher was set to be sidelined for three months following surgery on a dislocated shoulder.

The 32-year-old suffered the injury while making his 450th Premier League appearance during their 2-1 loss to Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane on Sunday.

His absence comes with Liverpool already missing inspirational captain Steven Gerrard and Carragher's fellow centre-back Daniel Agger through injury.

"I'll be having surgery at the end of the week," Carragher told the club's website, www.liverpoolfc.tv on Monday.

"The average is about 12 weeks. I'd like to come back before that but I've got to make sure it's right. It will probably be late February or early March when I'm looking to come back."



BT	
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe	First ODI
Live from 9:00am	
NEO Cricket	
India v New Zealand	Second ODI
Live from 3:00pm	
TEN Cricket	
Sri Lanka v West Indies	Third Test, Day 1
Live from 10:30am	
ESPN	
Sportscentre India	Sports News
Live at 8:30pm	
TEN Sports	
Europa League	Sampdoria v Eindhoven
Live from 11:55pm	
Atletico Madrid v Aris	Delayed from 2:00am (Thursday)
TEN Action+	
Europa League	Zenit v Anderlecht
Live from 11:55pm	
Man City v Salzburg	Delayed from 2:00am (Thursday)

Real's reality check

AFP, Madrid



without soul" and unable to answer or pressure their rivals.

"It was the paragon of tiki-taka," the paper said, referring to the quick, short-passing game that allowed Barcelona to dominate the field at the Nou Camp.

"The avalanche of goals serves to clarify the situation: Madrid and Mourinho since his arrival have not won anything yet," AS said, deflating the enthusiasm that has built around the team since his arrival this season.

"Medals from other wars don't count here," the paper added, alluding to Mourinho's boasts of earlier successes in Portugal, England and Italy.

"This proof should be enough to lower Madrid expectations and the tone of the coach which is only tolerable (and even then with difficulty) if Cups rain down from heaven."

Mourinho, 47, was unveiled as Real's new coach at the end of May after leading Inter Milan to an historic treble of successes in Italy's Serie A championship, the Italian Cup and Champions League.

Catalan sports daily Mundo Deportivo said the Barcelona-Real Madrid match will "live on in legend" for the "brilliant" way Barca played, clearly showing "that they are the best team in the world."

"As one fan said, their football should be classed as a world heritage for humanity," Mundo Deportivo said.

Champions Barcelona inflicted a humiliating 5-0 reality shock to Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid, befuddling them with a sublime "tiki-taka" one-touch passing game, Spain's press said Tuesday.

"Reality shock," headlined the Catalan daily El Periodico. "5-0 - Barca humiliates Real Madrid with showpiece game," gloated fellow Catalan daily La Vanguardia alongside a photo of striker David Villa celebrating one of his two goals.

Leading daily El Pais said league champions Barca "humiliated Real Madrid with a demonstration game", to go two points clear of their arch rivals at the top of the Spanish first division.

Sports daily Marca, always close to Real Madrid and ready to back Portuguese coach Mourinho's side, paid compliment to the Barcelona's "memorable symphony" on the pitch.

"An impressive demonstration of the game by the champions, a lesson in class, intelligence and precision," said the number-one Spanish sports daily, adding that it was the "biggest defeat" of Mourinho's career.

Fellow sports daily AS, which also favours Madrid, said Barcelona played against a "Madrid

Manchester City and holders Atletico Madrid are among the sides seeking to wrap up qualification to the last 32 when the Europa league resumes on Wednesday.

Five teams are already assured of their passage from the group stage - Zenit

St Petersburg, Stuttgart, CSKA Moscow, BATE Borisov, and FC Porto.

The first two from each group qualifies with the teams that finish third in their respective Champions League groups entering the fray in February for a competition which climaxes in a May 18 final in Dublin's revamped Lansdowne Road stadium.

The Champions League octet will definitely include defending Scottish Premier League champions Rangers, Spartak Moscow and FC Twente from Holland.

Man City have picked up seven points from their first four matches to leave them second on goal difference to highly flying Polish outfit Lech Poznan, who defeated Roberto Mancini's men 3-1 last time out, in Group A.

The Poles host Juventus, in third on four

points, with City welcoming strugglers Salzburg from Austria.

City will go through with a game to spare if they take all three points at the City of Manchester stadium with Lech if the Poles beat Juventus in Poznan.

In Group B Atletico are placed second, one point shy of Bayer Leverkusen.

The German table toppers can make it if they secure all three points from their encounter with Norwegians Rosenborg, while Atletico will join them if they get a similarly positive result against Greek visitors Aris.

On paper Aris, are up against it with Atletico unbeaten in their last 16 UEFA Cup/Europa Cup home ties, a run stretching back to the 1998/99 season.

Elsewhere on Wednesday Sporting Lisbon require only a draw against French side Lille, in second, four points adrift, to make it out of Group Casleaders.

Zenit St Petersburg, with a maximum 12 points, have sailed into the last 32 as winners of Group G, but any of the three teams in their wake - Hajduk Split, AEK Athens and Anderlecht, are still in the running for second place with only one point splitting the trio.

In Genoa, Group I leaders PSV Eindhoven face Sampdoria needing one point to retain their interest in Europe's second tier club competition.

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE

St Petersburg, Stuttgart, CSKA Moscow, BATE Borisov, and FC Porto.

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FIXTURES

Wednesday (1800GMT)

Lech Poznan (POL) v Juventus (ITA), Manchester City (ENG) v Salzburg (AUT), Atletico Madrid (ESP) v Aris Salonika (GRE), Rosenborg (NOR) v Bayer Leverkusen (GER), Sporting Lisbon (POR) v Lille (FRA), Odense (DEN) v Getafe (ESP), Young Boys (SUI) v VfB Stuttgart (GER), Sampdoria (ITA)