



Real Madrid playmaker Kaka heads the ball during a training session in Madrid yesterday on the eve of their Champions League quarterfinal against Tottenham Hotspur.

PHOTO: AFP

Spurs' mission impossible Raul wary of Inter

AFP, London



Harry Redknapp insists Tottenham will go down fighting even though they face a mission impossible against Real Madrid in the Champions League quarterfinal second leg on Wednesday.

Redknapp concedes his side are massive underdogs after losing the first leg 4-0 in Spain last week, but the Spurs boss will accept nothing less than total commitment in the return at White Hart Lane.

The chances of an astute tactician like Real coach Jose Mourinho allowing his team to surrender such a substantial lead are extremely slender, yet Tottenham can draw some belief from their exploits earlier in the competition.

They came back from 3-0 down to beat Young Boys Berne in the qualifying round and almost drew with Inter Milan in the San Siro despite falling 4-0 behind with 10 men and Redknapp will remind his players of that before kick-off.

"I look at the whole season with how it has gone and I think that we are not out of it yet. Nothing is impossible. Who knows what can happen," Redknapp said.

"The crowd already know that on Wednesday we will give it a hell of a go.

"But Real Madrid can pick you off if you aren't careful because Cristiano Ronaldo can pick up the ball and run 80 yards with it and you think: 'Oh, my God.'

"Real might have beat us 4-0 with 11 men, they are capable of doing something like that. They have dangerous players, fantastic players."

If this is the end of Tottenham's first Champions League campaign since 1962 Redknapp is adamant there will be no regrets that they have fallen short of the Wembley final.

Memorable wins over Inter Milan and AC Milan were the undoubted high points, but remaining in the competition for at least a round longer than Arsenal was also a sweet sensation for a club who had spent years in the shadow of their north London rivals.

"I have nothing to wipe away, the Champions League has been fantastic for us," Redknapp said.

"Nothing compares to the Champions League, it is different class. It's on absolutely another level.

"It has been an amazing achievement at the club and the crowd have seen some fantastic football this season, it don't get much better."

While Redknapp will be without Peter Crouch, suspended after his reckless and costly red card in the first leg, the other perceived villain of the first leg - Spurs winger Aaron Lennon - is fit to feature after recovering from the

illness that forced him to pull out just minutes before kick-off at the Bernabeu.

Tottenham fans will also be under the microscope after Real's former Arsenal striker Emmanuel Adebayor, who scored twice in the first leg, accused them of chanting racist abuse at him during the Bernabeu clash.

Even though the tie is all but over and Real face a must-win match against Barcelona this weekend, Mourinho is unlikely to risk resting his key players against Spurs as he looks to take the club into the last four for the first time since 2003.

Mourinho, who has won the Champions League with Porto and Inter Milan, knows his employers at nine-time winners Real regard the competition as the only true judge of a manager and the Portuguese coach could do with delivering the club's first triumph since 2002 as his first season in Spain has been a stormy affair.

However, Mourinho insists he is not obsessed by winning Europe's elite club prize again.

"I'm passionate about doing things well and making people happy. Winning a Champions League trophy is something that truly has an impact on the fans," Mourinho told Uefa.com.

"Until the end of my career, I will always be trying to win it one more time, but without it ever becoming an obsession."

AFP, Berlin



Veteran striker Raul says his Schalke 04 side need to be wary of wounded Inter Milan as they look to finish off the Champions League holders at home in Wednesday's quarterfinal, second-leg.

Schalke shocked Inter with a 5-2 win at the San Siro stadium last Tuesday in the first-leg to put the Bundesliga side on the verge of a semi-final against either Manchester United or Chelsea.

Ex-Real Madrid star Raul, 33, who scored his 70th Champions League goal at Inter, says the Germans still need to concentrate to make sure they reach the last four.

Inter have to win at least 4-0 in Gelsenkirchen to stay in the competition and the Italians' star striker Samuel Eto'o and play-maker Wesley Sneijder will be looking to test Schalke's Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer.

"We need to keep our feet on the ground and show Inter respect, because they will be looking to turn it around in Germany," said Raul.

"We'll have to perform well again to ensure we reach the last four."

Inter coach Leonardo has called Argentine defender Walter Samuel into his squad, only five months after a knee operation on his cruciate ligament, and Dutch star Sneijder is expected to play, despite suffering from 'flu.

Milan's ex-Bayern Munich defender

Lucio is available again after missing the first leg with suspension, while Schalke are without Peru striker Jefferson Farfan, who picked up his fifth yellow card at the San Siro last week.

Schalke have consistently saved their best form for Europe this season, as their placing of ninth in the German league testifies, but coach Ralf Rangnick says any talk of the semi-finals is premature.

"We are not in the semifinals just yet, but we have a pretty big chance now," said Rangnick, who only took charge last month after Felix Magath was sacked.

"Had someone told us before the (first-leg) match that we would beat Inter by three goals, we would have had declared him crazy.

"We had a real chance and we took it, but now we have to focus."

Schalke warmed up for the Inter visit by beating relegation-threatened Wolfsburg 1-0 at their Veltins Arena stadium on Saturday, while Inter laboured to a 2-0 Serie A win over Chievo at the San Siro last weekend.

Inter's coach Leonardo insists the holders can still hope to progress against Schalke, despite needing to score four goals in Germany.

"For me, everything is possible. I think it and so do the players, all of them," he said.

Inter will need to a near-miracle to take their place in the semi-final, but Schalke's defence has been erratic on occasions this season and Neuer will need to be at his best to make sure the Royal Blues march into the last four.

Silvio dreams of C'Ron

AFP, Rome

AC Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi said he would not rule out trying to lure Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo to the San Siro in the next transfer window -- if his club win the league title.

"Ronaldo at Milan? Dreaming isn't forbidden, and sometimes dreams come true," Berlusconi, who is also the embattled prime minister of the country, told Italian channel Italia 7 Gold.



BTV/ Neo Cricket
Bangladesh v Australia
Third ODI (D/N)
Live from 2:00pm
SET Max
Indian Premier League
Kings XI Punjab v Chennai Super Kings
Live from 4:30pm
Pune Warriors v Kochi Tuskers Kerala
Live from 8:30pm
TEN Sports
UEFA Champions League
Schalke v Inter Milan
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)
TEN Action+
UEFA Champions League
Tottenham v Real Madrid
Live from 12:45am (Thursday)
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News

Zlatan gets 3-match ban

AFP, Rome

AC Milan's Sweden striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic was handed a three-match ban on Monday after a foul-mouthed tirade at a linesman during his side's 2-1 win at Fiorentina over the weekend.

Sporting judge Gianpaolo Tosel said Ibrahimovic, who had already picked up a yellow card during the game before being sent off, had shown "inappropriate behaviour against the other side... and made an offensive statement."

The 29-year-old had only just returned from a two-game ban for striking Bari's Marco Rossi in the ribs.

He aimed a rant filled with expletives at a linesman after a throw-in decision went against him.

He was duly dismissed by the referee and walked off without protest.

However, afterwards he apologised and even insisted that he had not sworn at the linesman.



PHOTO: AFP

Liverpool striker Andy Carroll (L) jumps for joy after scoring the opening goal against Manchester City during their Premier League encounter at Anfield on Monday.

Carroll sinks City

AFP, Liverpool



Record signing Andy Carroll delivered a blow to Manchester City's Champions League ambitions as Liverpool cruised to a 3-0 victory over Roberto Mancini's side at Anfield on Monday.

Carroll helped himself to his first two goals in a Liverpool shirt since joining from Newcastle for £35 million in the January transfer window.

Dirk Kuyt also netted on a torrid night for City, who lost captain Carlos Tevez to a suspected hamstring injury ahead of Saturday's FA Cup semifinal with neighbours Manchester United at Wembley.

Mancini's expensively-assembled side has now failed to win any of their last six Premier League away games and remain fourth in the table.

The Italian is under pressure to qualify for next season's Champions League.

It was hard to believe judging by their first half performance, but City had arrived at Anfield boasting more clean sheets than any other team in the Premier League.

Yet hopes of a 15th were undone by a shambolic first half defensive display as Liverpool laid the foundations for a seventh win in 12 league matches under Kenny Dalglish with a dominant first half display.

Five-nil winners over Sunderland in their previous game, City were given a taste of their own medicine as they found themselves 3-0 down by half time.

City had already been handed a seventh minute warning of Liverpool's rampant

mood by Luis Suarez, the Uruguay forward's powerful low shot striking the post after the faintest of touches by keeper Joe Hart.

But Hart was unable to keep out England team-mate Carroll's majestic finish six minutes later.

It came after Tevez had originally lost possession, Raul Meireles' ambitious long-range effort cannoning off Vincent Kompany straight to Carroll, whose left-foot 25-yard finish flew past Hart into the net.

The joy on Carroll's face told its own story. Having arrived at Liverpool injured, the expensive signing has endured a long and frustrating battle to get fit. But this was pay back time.

A City victory would have taken them above Chelsea into third place and left confidence sky high ahead of next weekend's FA Cup semi-final.

But their evening went from bad to worse. No sooner had they fallen behind than Tevez threw off the captain's armband after damaging his hamstring before disappearing down the tunnel.

Then Mancini saw his players capitulate as City went from one goal down to trail 3-0 in the space of 60 seconds.

Soon after Fabio Aurelio had been fortunate to escape a red card after an ugly two-footed challenge on Adam Johnson, Liverpool doubled their lead in the 34th minute through Kuyt's well-executed low finish just inside the area.

The inquest was still going on in the City defence when Carroll got the better of Aleksandar Kolarov to head Meireles' cross beyond Hart.



Bangladesh v Australia
Third ODI (D/N)
Time: 2:00pm
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium
National Cricket League
SECOND PHASE
(Four-Day Match, Day-4)
Dhaka v Sylhet at Chittagong
Rajshahi v Barisal at Fatullah
Bangladesh A v South Africa A
(2nd 4-day Match, Day-1)
Venue: Pietermaritzburg
Independence Cup Football
Arambagh v Soccer Club Feni
Time: 4:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National

SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION

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