

Trabzonspor stun Inter

AFP, Paris



Manchester United and rivals Manchester City both failed to get off to winning starts on Wednesday in the Champions League as they were both held 1-1 by Benfica and Napoli respectively.

Napoli at least managed to grab a point away from home, better than their Serie A rivals and 2010 champions Inter Milan, who suffered a stunning 1-0 home defeat at the hands of Champions League debutants Turkish side Trabzonspor.

Trabzonspor were only in the group stage because rivals Fenerbahce were kicked out over a domestic match fixing scandal.

There were no such problems for other former champions Bayern Munich and Real Madrid as the Germans secured a fine 2-0 away win at Villarreal while Real beat Dinamo Zagreb 1-0 away.

Napoli took the lead with a brilliant effort as Edinson Cavani slotted home after a great run by Christian Maggio only for Aleksander Kolarov to level minutes later with a superb freekick.

RESULTS

Manchester City (ENG) 1 (Kolarov 74)
Napoli (ITA) 1 (Cavani 68)
Villarreal (ESP) 0 Bayern Munich (GER) 2 (Kroos 6, Rafinha 75)
Lille (FRA) 2 (Gow 44, Pedretti 56) CSKA Moscow (RUS) 2 (Doubnits 72, 90)
Inter Milan (ITA) 0 Trabzonspor (TUR) 1 (Celustka 75)
Basel (SUI) 2 (Frei 39, 84-pen) Otetel Galati (ROM) 1 (Pena 58)
Benfica (POR) 1 (Cardozo 23)
Manchester United (ENG) 1 (Giggs 41)
Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 0 Real Madrid (ESP) 1 (Di Maria 52)
Ajax (NED) 0 Lyon (FRA) 0

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United also started well against Benfica but last season's finalists failed to take their chances, whereas Paraguayan striker Oscar Cardoso made no mistake for the hosts to break the deadlock.

Cardoso controlled Nicolas Gaitan's delightful pass and fired home from the edge of the box.

United leveled just before half-time through the evergreen Ryan Giggs as he cut in from the right and fired home from outside the box - to set the bar ever higher for the oldest player to score in the competition as at 37 years and 289 days he beat his own mark set in April.

The Welsh great also set another benchmark making it 16 Champions League campaigns he has scored in, breaking the mark he shared with former Real Madrid icon Raul.

Inter just could not break down the Trabzonspor defence and the hosts were left stunned when Czech right-back Ondrej Celustka gave the visitors the lead in the second-half.

Trabzonspor's former Turkey national coach Senol Gunes said the difference had been that his players were not intimidated by their star studded opponents.



Trabzonspor players are over the moon after their stunning victory over Inter Milan in the Champions League at San Siro on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Arch-rivals tie goalless

AP, Cordoba

Brazil and Argentina drew 0-0 on Tuesday in a friendly featuring only locally-based players.

The match gave new Argentina coach Alejandro Sabella a chance to look at some new faces before Argentina open World Cup qualifying on October 7 against Chile. Argentina play Venezuela four days later.

Brazil coach Mano Menezes has different concerns, since Brazil hosts the 2014 World Cup and automatically qualifies.

Brazil's front-line combined 31-year-old Ronaldinho with 19-year-old Neymar.

Argentina had almost all the scoring chances in the first half, led by Mauro Boselli of Estudiantes who had three chances in the first 16 minutes.

Brazil did little in the first half but matched Argentina in the second.

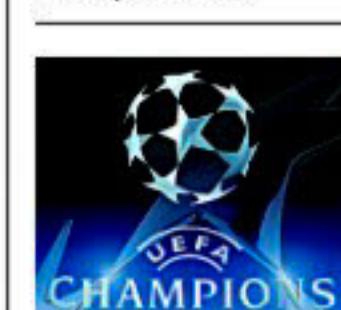
"We did OK when you consider we have hardly ever played together," Ronaldinho said.

Ronaldinho came close on a hooking free-kick in the 81st that just missed going in by inches.

The two teams--again with local players--will meet again on Sept. 28 in Brazil.

MU indebted to Giggs

AFP, Lisbon



Manchester United were indebted to a superb Ryan Giggs goal as they drew 1-1 with Benfica on Wednesday despite a below-par performance in their Champions League Group C opener.

Giggs, 37, sent a rocket into the top corner three minutes before half-time to cancel out Oscar Cardozo's 24th-minute opener for a Benfica side who seemed intent on puncturing their opponents' early-season momentum.

At Lisbon's iconic Estadio da Luz,

United looked a shadow of the side that has soared to the top of the Premier League with 18 goals in their first four games.

It was only thanks to Giggs and some fine goalkeeping from competition debutant Anders Lindegaard that Sir Alex Ferguson's decision to rest a string of players did not backfire.

Mindful, perhaps, of United's pedigree, Benfica were initially content to concede the initiative but uncertainty in the visitors' play allowed Jorge Jesus' men to assert themselves.

Collecting a high pass from the enterprising Nicolas Gaitan on his chest, he turned Evans adroitly before clipping an accomplished finish inside

Lindegaard's right-hand post.

It was the first away goal United had conceded in the competition since their quarterfinal loss to Bayern Munich in the 2009-10 tournament.

United's only effort of note had been a shot from a tight angle that Antonio Valencia blazed over the bar, but from nowhere Giggs rolled back the years to produce a stunning equaliser that silenced the home fans.

Giggs' goal, from United's first shot on target, broke his own record for the tournament's oldest goalscorer and means he has now scored in more Champions League campaigns 16--than any player in history.

Bayern's explosive start

REUTERS, Berlin



Bayern Munich made an explosive start to the Champions League with a 2-0 win at Spain's Villarreal in Group A on Wednesday but for coach Jupp Heynckes it was equally important to see that his players were having fun.

After almost two seasons under strict disciplinarian Louis van Gaal, where hard work and obedience was the order of the day, Bayern players this season are looking far more relaxed and enjoying their football.

The timing could not have been better given that the Champions League final is in Munich next year and Bayern are eager to get a shot at the big prize in front of a home crowd.

"For players at such a level it is important that they have fun, that they enjoy themselves," 66-year old veteran coach Heynckes told reporters.

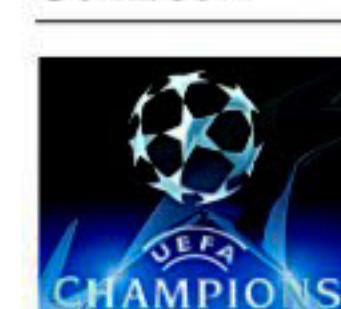
"They need to be able to express themselves and you have to make them feel important," Heynckes, in his third spell at Bayern, added.

Bayern scored once in each half through Toni Kroos and Rafinha but could have added at least another three as they controlled possession against the Spaniards and kept a clean sheet for the seventh straight game in all competitions.

Even despite injuries to top striker Mario Gomez and defender Daniel van Buyten, the Bavarians kept pressing and seemed to have lost none of their offensive spark.

Narcissistic Ronaldo

GOAL.COM



Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo says Dinamo Zagreb fans are 'jealous' of him after receiving jeers from the local supporters in his side's 1-0 win in the Champions League on Wednesday night.

The Portuguese was given a rough time throughout by the home crowd as Madrid triumphed thanks to Angel Di Maria's second-half strike, and showed his frustration at the final whistle.

"It's surely because I'm good-looking, rich and a great soccer player. They're jealous of me. I don't have any other explanation," he said after the game, in quotes published by Marca.

Ronaldo was also unhappy with Norwegian referee Oddvar Moen, having

finished the game with a bloody ankle which needed stitches in the dressing room later on.

"He was an embarrassment," Ronaldo said. "It's sad because referees say they will protect the most skilful players, but while others can't be touched, I am fouled all the time."

"I hope this referee never takes charge of another of our games because he is an embarrassment," he added.

After the game, assistant coach Aitor Karanka - deputizing for the suspended Jose Mourinho - revealed Ronaldo had needed medical attention.

"He's having stitches in the dressing room," the Basque said. "Let's hope it's nothing worse than that."

Ronaldo may now be a doubt for the game against Levante this weekend.

"I don't know; we'll see how my ankle improves," he said.



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo gives a sarcastic thumbs up during their Champions League encounter against Dinamo Zagreb at the Maksimir Stadium on Wednesday.

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