

Roy recall
Lennon

REUTERS, London

England coach Roy Hodgson gave Celtic's tall goalkeeper Fraser Forster a first international call-up when he named the 24-year-old in his squad for this month's World Cup qualifiers against San Marino and Poland.

Tottenham Hotspur winger Aaron Lennon was named in the squad for the first time since the 2010 World Cup.

Hodgson recalled strikers Wayne Rooney and Andy Carroll for the October 12 match at Wembley against San Marino and trip to Poland four days later.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers:

Fraser Forster (Celtic), Joe Hart (Manchester City), John Ruddy (Norwich City)

Defenders:

Leighton Baines (Everton), Gary Cahill (Chelsea), Ashley Cole (Chelsea), Kieran Gibbs (Arsenal), Phil Jagielka (Everton), Glen Johnson (Liverpool), Joleon Lescott (Manchester City), Ryan Shawcross (Stoke City), Kyle Walker (Tottenham Hotspur)

Midfielders:

Michael Carrick (Manchester United), Tom Cleverley (Manchester United), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Adam Johnson (Sunderland), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), Aaron Lennon (Tottenham Hotspur), James Milner (Manchester City), Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (Arsenal), Theo Walcott (Arsenal)

Forwards:

Andy Carroll (West Ham United), Jermain Defoe (Tottenham Hotspur),

Real rout Ajax

REUTERS, Amsterdam



A rampant Cristiano Ronaldo scored his second hattrick in four days and Karim Benzema netted a spectacular overhead kick to fire Real Madrid to a crushing 4-1 win at Ajax Amsterdam in Champions League Group D on Wednesday.

Chasing a 10th European title that has eluded them since 2002, Jose Mourinho's side opened a 2-0 lead against a disappointing Ajax with a goal either side of the break but gave the Dutch champions hope with some sloppy defending before Ronaldo struck twice in two minutes late on to kill the game.

It was the Portuguese forward's first Champions League treble and lifted him to 42 goals in 82 matches in Europe's elite club competition.

With Sunday's La Liga 'Clasico' at Barcelona looming, it also gave him the edge in his personal scoring duel with Barca's equally prolific forward Lionel Messi.

Ronaldo, the last player to be named World Player of the Year before Messi won the last three awards, has 12 in all competitions compared with 10 for the Argentine.

"It was a very complete game on our part and it's very important for the next match to boost confidence," Ronaldo said in an interview with Spanish television.

"Scoring three goals is important for me and I am very happy," he added, clutching another match ball to add to his growing collection. Ronaldo also netted a hattrick in La Liga against Deportivo Coruna on Sunday.

"These collections are always very important for me but the most important thing is the team," he said.

The victory consolidated Real's lead at the top of Group D with six points from two matches.

Borussia Dortmund, whom Real visit on October 24, have four points after Wednesday's

1-1 draw at Manchester City, with City on one point in third and Ajax on zero in fourth.

Mourinho sprung several surprises in his starting lineup at the Amsterdam arena, deploying little-used Brazil playmaker Kaka instead of Mesut Ozil and Luka Modric.

In only his second appearance this season, Kaka showed some of the form that won him the World Player award in 2007, tormenting the home defence and linking up well with Ronaldo and Benzema.

Real dominated the first period but wasted a host of chances before Ronaldo pounced on a loose ball to score from close range in the 42nd minute.

A toothless and sloppy Ajax, coached by former Netherlands international Frank De Boer, looked a shadow of the side that has won four European titles and hardly threatened Casillas's goal before the break.

Real doubled their lead thanks to Benzema's stunner three minutes into the second period.

Kaka floated an inviting cross from the right and the France striker leaped acrobatically to send a crashing volley past Ajax goalkeeper Kenneth Vermeer.

Real's vulnerability at set pieces gave Ajax a lifeline in the 56th minute when Niklas Moisander stole in at the far post at a corner and nodded under Iker Casillas.

However, Ronaldo then curled in his second and Real's third from distance in the 79th minute and clipped a delightful shot over Vermeer to make it 4-1 in the 81st.

"We lost control of the game a bit when Ajax scored and the match became a little dangerous but after the third goal we started to dominate again," Mourinho told Spanish TV.

"The team won and is fulfilling its objectives in a group which is no joke and if you drop points you'll be in trouble," added the Portuguese.



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo shoots to score one of his three goals against Ajax during their Champions League Group D encounter at the Amsterdam Arena on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

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"Scoring three goals is important for me and I am very happy."

- Cristiano Ronaldo

"Real are back, this is the first time this season we've won three or four matches in a row, that's important for our objectives and our confidence."

- Jose Mourinho

"I was surprised to be starting, I found out in the afternoon but at Real Madrid we all have to always be prepared to play."

- Kaka

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Big spenders flop

REUTERS, Berne



Cristiano Ronaldo hit a hattrick in Real Madrid's 4-1 Champions League win at Ajax Amsterdam on Wednesday but big spending trio Zenit St Petersburg,

Paris St Germain and Manchester City failed to win.

Ambitious Zenit lost 3-2 at home to AC Milan who spent most of the summer selling their players, Tomas Hubocan putting through his own goal in the 75th minute after the Russians had recovered from two goals behind to pull level.

Paris St Germain lost 1-0 at Porto, who have become a stepping stone for South Americans hoping to move to big European clubs, after Colombian James Rodriguez struck a late winner.

Manchester City needed a late penalty converted by Mario Balotelli to draw 1-1 at home to Borussia Dortmund in a meeting of the Premier League and Bundesliga champions and claim their first point in Real's group.

There was also late drama at Schalke 04 where Souleymane Camara scored a 90th minute equaliser for debutants Montpellier in a 2-2 draw, their first point in the competition.

Champions League debutants Malaga,

who appeared set for a rough ride after selling top players in the close season amid restructuring by their Qatari owners, instead notched their second straight 3-0 win in Group C, this time at Anderlecht.

Two goals from Eliseu and a Joaquin penalty completed a perfect week for Spain's four representatives following wins for Valencia and Barcelona on Tuesday.

Dynamo Kiev beat Dinamo Zagreb 2-0 on coach Oleg Blokhin's European debut and Arsenal beat Olympiakos 3-1 in the evening's other matches.

Milan's win was the first by an Italian team this season after three draws and left Zenit pointless from two games and facing a quick exit.

Struggling in Serie A after offloading several top players in attempt to cut costs, Milan raced into a two-goal lead after only 16 minutes through Urby Emanuelson and Stephan El Shaaraway.

Brazilian forward Hulk, signed for a Russian league record 60 million euros (\$77.41 million), pulled one back in first-half stoppage time and Roman Shirokov headed an equaliser four minutes after the re-start.

But Milan took the points when Riccardo Montolivo's shot hit Zenit defender Hubocan and slid into the near corner.

Lights go out on ARG-BRA friendly

AFP, Buenos Aires

The prestige international between Argentina and Brazil was called off on Wednesday night in the northern city of Chaco, when the floodlights failed just before kick-off.

After much hype and anticipation for the second leg of the "Superclasico de las Americas", the teams were already on the pitch and the national anthems had been played before a massive floodlight failure threw the stadium into partial darkness.

After a one-hour delay and no signs of improvement, the referee called the match off much to the disappointment of fans inside the Resistencia stadium.

With World Cup 2014 qualifiers and South American Cup fixtures dominating the upcoming football calendar, there has been no announcement of a rescheduled date.

The match was set to be the second leg of a Argentina v Brazil series.

Kaka back on song

REUTERS, Madrid



For a 30-year-old former World Player of the Year who cost Real Madrid 67 million euros (\$86.44 million) three years ago, Kaka has been spending a surprising amount of time warming the bench.

The Brazilian appeared to have been discarded from coach Jose Mourinho's plans and the arrival of fellow playmaker Luka Modric from Tottenham was interpreted by many as the final nail in the coffin of his undistinguished stint in the Spain capital.

Linked in the media with moves to former club AC Milan or Paris St Germain, he only made his first appearance of the campaign on Sunday, coming off the bench in Real's 5-1 La Liga win at home to Deportivo Coruna, their ninth game of the season.

However, Mourinho surprised many by including Kaka in the starting lineup for Wednesday's 4-1 Champions League win at Ajax and he responded with a performance full of verve and creativity that suggests he may be working his way back into contention.

"I was surprised to be starting," Kaka told reporters after the match at the Amsterdam Arena, during which he provided a delightful assist for Karim

Benzema's breathtaking 48th-minute overhead kick and came close to scoring several times himself.

"I found out in the afternoon but at Real Madrid we all have to always be prepared to play," he added. "I had a very bad time. Starting games is a personal goal and if I work hard things will come good."

After consolidating their position at the top of Champions League Group D on six points from two matches, Real play at Barcelona on Sunday.

A victory for Barca in the La Liga 'Clasico' at the Nou Camp will stretch their lead over the bitter rivals to 11 points and Kaka said he was ready to play if selected in a match which could go a long way to deciding the championship.

Mourinho said his decision to initially leave Mesut Ozil on the bench on Wednesday before deploying the German playmaker in place of Kaka for the final 15 minutes was "nothing definitive".

"I decided that with his (Kaka's) characteristics, the nature of the opponent and the work he did during the week, it would be good for us if he played against Ajax," the Portuguese told a news conference.

"The media thinks every time a player of status is on the bench it's a big problem," he added.

"My job is to think about who will play and to tease out the best performances. I have to choose 11 players and there will always be someone left out."

Pato boost for Milan

AFP, Milan

Embattled Serie A side AC Milan were given a boost a day after their Champions League heroics with the news that Brazilian forward Alexandre Pato could soon return to the squad.

Pato, along with fellow Brazil teammate Robinho, has been sidelined since the start of the season after he suffered an adductor muscle tear.

Robinho returned to the fray almost two weeks ago and Milan announced on their website Thursday that 23-year-old Pato took part in a full training session with the senior team for the first time since his injury.

It was hoped Pato would be fit in time for the Milan derby on Sunday, but with the international break on the horizon he is now expected to be fit for Milan's visit Lazio on October 20.

Milan, the league runners-up in 2012, have had a disastrous start to the campaign and currently sit 11th with only seven points from six games.

However Massimiliano Allegri's side have got back to winning ways and gave fans a boost Wednesday with a hard-fought win away to Zenith St Petersburg in the Champions League.



BTV

ICC World T20
Australia v West Indies
Second Semifinal
Live from 7:30pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News



GP Federation Cup

Mohammedan v Rampur Boys Club
Time: 4:00pm
Sk Russel v Bangladesh Police
Time: 6:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Team BJMC v Khulna Abahani
Time: 3:30pm



PHOTO: AFP

Porto midfielder James Rodriguez celebrates his all-important goal against Paris Saint Germain during their Champions League Group A match at the Dragao Stadium on Wednesday.

'Success no miracle'

REUTERS, Madrid



Malaga coach Manuel Pellegrini says there is nothing miraculous about the La Liga club's blistering start to their Champions League debut and has warned against getting carried away.

The Qatar-owned team knocked three goals past Anderlecht without reply in their Group C clash in Brussels on Wednesday, including a pair of stunners from midfielder Eliseu.

Malaga also thumped Zenit St Petersburg by the same score at their Rosaleda stadium two weeks ago and top the group on six points, two ahead of seven-times European champions AC Milan, who visit Malaga on October 24.

"Six points from six is significant but it's not definitive because as quickly as you accumulate points in a group you can drop them too," Pellegrini said on UEFA.com.

"We maintained a good approach tonight. We were at quite a high level as a team, playing collectively as opposed to individually," added the Chilean, a former Real Madrid and Villarreal coach.

"This is not a miracle. It's based on hard work, compromise and is helped by the unity of our supporters."

Malaga had an uncertain summer, marked by delays in wage payments, the departure of some of their best players and rumours owner Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nassar Al Thani was preparing to sell up after only two years.

They now appear to have put the crisis behind them after Al Thani reaffirmed his commitment to the club, helping to kick off a process of restructuring designed to help them become economically viable.