

Brazil outgun Japan

Football

REUTERS, Wroclaw

Brazil gave one of their most impressive performances under coach Mano Menezes to sweep aside Japan 4-0 in Tuesday's friendly, with Neymar scoring twice and Kaka on target for the second game in a row.

Japan, unbeaten in their previous eight games, began confidently after beating France 1-0 in Paris on Friday but were ultimately outclassed on a cold, wet day in the Polish city of Wroclaw.

Midfielder Paulinho opened the scoring and Neymar converted a harshly-awarded penalty to put Brazil 2-0 ahead in less than half an hour.

Neymar struck again at the start of the second half and Kaka, on target on his international return after a two-year absence against Iraq last week, completed the scoring.

Brazil, 6-0 winners over Iraq on Thursday, also hit the woodwork twice and could have scored several more goals as they clocked up their sixth win in a row.

Menezes, who replaced Dunga after the 2010 World Cup, set himself an ambitious task of completely rebuilding the side and changing their style of play in time for 2014.

Although Brazil have won most games under his leadership, his experimental teams have often been unconvincing and

there has been speculation as to whether he will keep the job until the home World Cup.

There were no questions about Tuesday's performance, however, the combination of Oscar and Kaka in midfield and Neymar and Hulk in attack allowing Brazil to create chances seemingly at will.

Japan produced the first chance when Keisuke Honda's low drive was saved by Diego Alves' legs and briefly appeared to have Brazil on the back foot.

But the complexion of the game changed in the 11th minute when Kaka laid the ball off to Paulinho and the Corinthians midfielder found the net with a low shot from 25 metres.

Paulinho should have added another when he latched on to Oscar's incisive pass and rounded Eiji Kawashima, only to shoot wide of an open goal.

Kaka also hit the post before Yasuyuki Konno was judged to have handled in the area, even though it appeared accidental, and Neymar fired home the penalty.

The speed and variety of Brazil's attacks overwhelmed Japan and Neymar struck again only three minutes into the second half, collecting a corner at the far post and scoring with a mis-hit shot which went in off Makoto Hasebe, his 16th goal in 25 internationals.

Hulk hit the post from a free kick and another attack ended with Kaka slipping past his marker to fire the fourth with a low left-foot shot.



Brazil forward Neymar (R) scores the second goal from a penalty during their international friendly against Japan at the Municipal Stadium in Wroclaw yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ANC kicks Senegal out

AFP, Paris

Senegal have been disqualified from the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations after crowd trouble forced their qualifier with Ivory Coast to be abandoned, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) governing body said Tuesday.

The decision was taken at a CAF disciplinary meeting in Cairo after violence flared in Dakar on Saturday, with Ivory Coast players and fans pelted with stones, bottles and chairs, fires lit in the stands and firecrackers thrown.

"As a result, CAF decided to officially confirm the result of the match as 2-0 in favour of Ivory Coast... and to consider Senegal the loser of the match and eliminated from the competition".

Further sanctions may be taken against the east African side, the CAF said in a statement on its website.

The violence erupted after Ivory Coast took a 2-0 lead for a 6-2 aggregate advantage in a qualifier for the finals in South Africa. The match was suspended for 40 minutes while police tried to restore order but the referee abandoned the game.

Senegal football chiefs said on Sunday that they would accept any punishment and apologised to Ivory Coast and their fans.

Cassano can't fathom snub

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan striker Antonio Cassano said he is still mystified about why he has been left on the sidelines by Italy coach Cesare Prandelli.

Cassano has played at every level for Italy and made 35 appearances for the senior national side but played no part in their World Cup qualifying campaign so far.

The 30-year-old, who switched from AC Milan to Inter at the start of the season, said however he has not given up on what would be his first World Cup appearance if Italy qualify.

"I don't know why I haven't been selected but I remain hopeful that I'll be considered all the way up to the World Cup," Cassano told Italian television late Monday.

He added: "I feel a bit annoyed that journalists know five days before I did that I wasn't going to be picked. I hope to go to the World Cup but if it doesn't happen it's not a tragedy."

Cassano hit the headlines last year when he underwent heart surgery after suffering a scare on a return trip to Milan with the Rossoneri.

The Inter striker, who last played for Italy in the final of Euro 2012 -- won 4-0 by Spain -- has so far been snubbed by Prandelli for games against Bulgaria, Malta and Armenia.

Mourinho happy to take flak

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho said Monday he was happy to take flak if it means he has managed to motivate his players rather than sit back and enjoy cordial relations with them.

"As a coach I prefer to draw criticism for my aggressive style in a press conference because I try to play on the hurt pride of my players rather than to be politically correct and continue to lose," said Mourinho, who is determined to knock leaders Barcelona off their perch in La Liga but also deliver European glory.

Real have made a slow start to the league campaign and find themselves eight points adrift of Barca after two early defeats.

But he feels that their last-gasp Champions League pool win over Manchester City and a draw at the Nou Camp has indicated that things are looking up.

"We are still eight points off the pace but the team came out (of those matches) stronger."

Mourinho did not, meanwhile, refer to injury-hit pair Coentrao of Portugal, who is out for a month after suffering a groin injury in the weekend loss to Russia, and Brazilian Marcelo, sidelined for three months, which will leave Real Madrid without a natural left back in the coming weeks.

Mourinho has several times in recent months spoken of how one day he will return to England - he hopes after becoming the first man to win the Champions League with three clubs if he can end Real's decade-long drought.

But he says for now he is happy in Madrid - even if he took aim at "pseudo-supporters" - code for constant critics - of the club.

"I think I am appreciated. Clearly not by everybody, which is normal. I continue to think there are pseudo-supporters, but the dyed-in-the-wool Madrileno, the one with the scarf round his neck, the ones you meet in the street - I feel I have their confidence," said the man nicknamed "The Special One".

Liverpool not moving

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool on Monday announced they were staying at Anfield instead of moving to a new ground, after city authorities announced plans to regenerate the area around their historic home.

The club's managing director Ian Ayre described the move as a "major step forward" for both Liverpool and local residents, after years of wrangling about whether they should move from the stadium that has been their home since 1892.

And he insisted a multi-million redevelopment of Anfield will enhance the club's transfer market spending power and not diminish it.

Redevelopment of the Main Stand and Anfield Road end is likely to cost an estimated £150million and while nothing has been forthcoming as yet on how this money will be procured Ayre said it would not impact on football matters.

"As we've said, the right solution is the right economic solution," Ayre told liverpoolfc.com.

"More so from it detracting from our spending in the transfer market, the whole point of doing this is to actually increase our revenues.

"If we look at our biggest competitors with a bigger capacity, like Manchester United, Arsenal, their match day revenues are significantly ahead of ours.

"This whole initiative is designed to generate additional revenues so the ultimate solution has to be one that increases the overall output through the process rather than decreasing it.

"We'll find the right financing solution, the right return on investment to deliver the right amount of additional revenue to support the long-term future of the football club."

Match-day revenues will be significantly increased by bigger crowds and the financial reality was that it could be achieved more cheaply on the current site - Liverpool's home since 1892.

"We need a much-increased capacity and it has to be one that is right for the club going forward," Ayre told the Liverpool Echo.

"We could have achieved that in a new stadium but the cost of doing so would have been at least double what we expect to spend by staying put.

"We would have been making very big payments - servicing the loans involved in building a brand new stadium - for very many years into the future.

"That would have hampered our ability to spend money where we, and the supporters, want to see it spent: in buying and developing top players to allow us to continue to compete successfully at the very highest levels in Britain and Europe.

"This option gives us much more chance of generating the revenues we need in a sensible and practical way - and of course of accommodating many more fans who want to come and watch us play."

Remaining at Anfield and not building a new ground, costing upwards of £300million, was always the owners' preferred option.

FSG have a history of updating historic old stadiums as they did a similar thing at Fenway Park, home to baseball's Boston Red Sox, and they will now

look to do the same on Merseyside.

Redevelopment, made possible by the regeneration plans to clear some streets close to the ground, is subject to planning permission and the support of homeowners and the community - which means plans for a new-build stadium cannot be conclusively confirmed to the waste bin until those have been secured.

But planning applications to raise capacity to 60,000 are likely to be submitted next year with building potentially beginning in 2014.

"LFC celebrated its 120th year in 2012 at Anfield and there is no doubt Anfield is the spiritual home of the club - our preference was always to remain at Anfield," added Ayre.

"But today is just the start really and there are so many other issues still to discuss and resolve, so many consultations and processes to go through, that we are not absolutely guaranteeing things. We can't."

"Certainly we are not setting unrealistic deadlines or talking about overambitious or fanciful timescales.

"Neither is the club taking anything or anyone for granted - especially the residents of Anfield - and we certainly don't want our fans to be misled or misinformed."

The club's decision to stay put followed an announcement by Liverpool City Council that they had secured a 25-million-pound (\$40 million, 31-million-euro) grant to transform the Anfield area in the city in northwest England, with further investment likely from a public housing association.

AFC's apology to Emirates

AFP, Dubai

The Asian Football Confederation apologised on Monday for racist remarks it made about the United Arab Emirates national team, referring to them as "sand monkeys", a statement on the AFC website said.

The "AFC apologises for an editorial mistake in which the UAE National Team was inadvertently referred to by an inaccurate nickname on the AFC's official website".

It said the comment was due to an "error, which was mainly because of referral to a popular web-based encyclopaedia" and that it "was corrected immediately after it was noticed".

The AFC said it was sorry for "any hurt this might have caused to the UAE Football Association and UAE football fans".

The apology came just a day after the UAE football federation publicly accused the AFC of racism and demanded an apology.

"We express our strong resentment over the use of this bad description by the AFC website," the UAE federation secretary general Yusuf Abdullah said in a statement.

"What happened is unacceptable and shows disrespect to others. It is proof of racist attitudes that are starting to surface," he said, demanding "a quick official apology".

The UAE football team is usually referred to as "Al-Abyad", or the whites, after the colour of their strip.

But an AFC report on a friendly between the UAE and Uzbekistan on Friday described the team of the desert Gulf state as "sand monkeys."

What to WATCH

STAR Cricket

Champions League T20

Titans v Auckland Aces

Live from 5:30pm

KKR v Perth Scorchers

Live from 9:30pm

ESPN

Sportscentre India

Sports News

DAY'S EVENT

GP Federation Cup

QUARTERFINALS

Sk Jamal v Abahani

Time: 3:30pm

Muktijoddha v Brothers Union

Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National

Klose halts somersaults

REUTERS, Berlin

The somersault has been Germany striker Miroslav Klose's trademark goal celebration for over a decade but the 34-year-old is cutting out the mid-air flip in a bid to stay fit for the 2014 World Cup.

Klose, enjoying a fine season at Italy's Lazio, hopes to add to his 65 international goals against Sweden in Germany's World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

However, an expected 80,000 crowd at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin will be treated to a more modest celebration.

"The somersault...I think I can still do it but I honestly do not want to risk it because I want to be around in 2014," he told reporters with a chuckle.

The Polish-born forward needs only three more goals to equal the all-time German record of 68 set by Gerd Mueller, but Klose refused to class himself alongside the former "bomber of the nation" who took just 62 matches to reach his tally.

"I would never compare myself to Gerd Mueller," said Klose, who has so far won 125 caps.

"You should not compare him with any other striker around. What he has achieved is incomparable. I have told him that myself a few times. It is a joke to be compared to him."

Klose, who is level with Mueller on 14 World Cup goals, is eager to get a chance to at least equal World Cup top scorer Ronaldo's record of 15 in Brazil in two years' time.

"In football it is difficult to plan anything but if I am fit and injury-free I would like to play in Brazil and that is my ultimate aim," he said on Monday.

Germany are top of their qualifying Group C with maximum points from three games.



Germany striker Miroslav Klose addresses a press conference in Berlin on Monday.

Lippi rules out Drogba swoop

Football

REUTERS, Beijing

Former Chelsea striker Didier Drogba is not a transfer target for Chinese Super League champions Guangzhou Evergrande, coach Marcello Lippi has said.

The Italian told local media there was no substance behind rumours he was planning a raid for Ivory Coast talisman Drogba, who plays for Guangzhou's rivals Shanghai Shenhua.

"I know nothing about Didier Drogba's move," Lippi told Xinhua news agency. "I have never contacted him myself or via anybody since I took charge of Guangzhou."

According to Chinese media speculation, Lippi has been monitoring Drogba, whose future at Shanghai was thrown into doubt recently due to an equity stake row among shareholders.

The China Daily claimed Shenhua chairman Zhu Jun had blogged: "Somebody finally came to make a bid (for Drogba)."

Drogba has scored eight goals in