



Schalke midfielder Ibrahim Afellay (R) celebrates scoring the second goal during their Champions League encounter against Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium on Wednesday.

# 'We are on course'

AFP, Dortmund



Coach Jose Mourinho has said his Real Madrid are on course for the Champions League knock-out stages despite their 2-1 defeat at Dortmund, but warned Manchester City are still a danger in Group D.

Borussia Dortmund took the lead when Robert Lewandowski's first-half strike on Wednesday was cancelled out by Real's Cristiano Ronaldo before Germany defender Marcel Schmelzer hit the 64th-minute winner for the German champions.

Dortmund snatched top spot in the group from Real to lead with seven points leaving Madrid on six and Ajax on three following their 3-1 win over Manchester City, who are last with just a point.

But with three group games left, Mourinho insists the English champions can still roar back to win their next three games -- home to Ajax, then Real, followed by a trip to Dortmund -- and remain a threat.

"A big team will go to the Europa League and after this result there is a gap between us and the other teams."

"Us and Borussia are in the better position to make the next stage, but City can still get 10 points, so we have to make sure we get 11."

Despite having been European champions nine times, Real continued their appalling record on German soil and in their 24 matches in Germany they have now suffered 17 losses and their single victory was 12 years ago.

"We were just missing a goal, both sides had their chances to win, we could have also got a few goals and won," said Mourinho.

"It was a strange match, neither team was better, but it was an incredibly difficult game."

"They were very organised and defended very well."

## Dutch doom for English

AFP, Paris



English heavyweights Manchester City and Arsenal slumped to surprise Champions League d e f e a t s o n Wednesday leaving the former starting at a second successive exit at the group stage.

City were outplayed by a vibrant young Ajax side with the Dutch outfit prevailing 3-1 having gone a goal down, while goals by Dutch duo Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Ibrahim Afellay gave German team Schalke 04 a 2-0 victory in London over an insipid Arsenal.

For both the winners it was a rare success.

Ajax's last home win against English opposition in the 1980 European Cup semifinal home leg was against eventual winners

**RESULTS**

Porto (POR) 3	(S. Varela 15, J. Martinez 36, 78)
Dynamo Kiev (UKR) 2	(Gusev 21, Ideye 72)
Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 0	Paris Saint Germain (FRA) 2
(Ibrahimovic 32, Menez 43)	(Huntelaar 76, Afellay 86)
Montpellier (FRA) 1	(Charbonnier 49) Olympiakos (GRE) 2
(Torosidis 73, Mitroglou 90+1)	(Torosidis 73, Mitroglou 90+1)
Ajax (NED) 3	(de Jong 45, Mousander 57, Eriksen 68)
(S. Varela 15, J. Martinez 36, 78)	Manchester City (ENG) 1 (Nasri 22)
Borussia Dortmund (GER) 2	(Lewandowski 36, Schmelzer 64) Real Madrid (ESP) 1 (Ronaldo 38)
(Torosidis 73, Mitroglou 90+1)	Malaga (ESP) 1 (Joaquin 64) AC Milan (ITA) 0
Zenit St Petersburg (RUS) 1	(Kerzhakov 72+pen)

Nottingham Forest while Schalke were experiencing their first win in the English capital on their sixth visit.

Expensively-assembled City's task of avoiding their group stage exit from last season was made even trickier as Schalke's Bundesliga rivals Borussia Dortmund pulled off a superb 2-1 home win over Real Madrid, whose miserable record in Germany continued with just one win in 24 games.

While Arsenal and Real failed to maintain their perfect record in this season's competition two sides made it three wins from three.

The 2004 champions Porto edging a 3-2 win over Dynamo Kiev while Spanish surprise packages Malaga continued their stunning maiden appearance in the competition with a 1-0 home win over AC Milan.

## Terry heading for Valencia?

AFP, London

Former England captain John Terry could be on his way out of Chelsea and heading for Spanish club Valencia in the January transfer window, the Daily Mirror reported Thursday.

Terry is serving a four-match Football Association ban for racially abusing QPR defender Anton Ferdinand and Chelsea have slapped a fine on the player into the bargain.

The Mirror reported that FIFA agent Francois Gallardo has claimed Terry has been offered the chance to relaunch his career in the Spanish top-flight.

Valencia are reportedly ready to offer the 31-year-old defender an 18-month contract, with an option for another year.

Gallardo told Radio Intereconomia: "Valencia are negotiating, and I am involved in person, with the signing in the winter transfer market.

"The offer is on his table. The player is out of contract in June and will not renew there for several reasons at Chelsea and he wants to come to Spain."

Gallardo added: "Terry has problems. They are insulting him and he is not taking it anymore."

## Table-toppers clash

REUTERS, London

Manchester United head to Premier League leaders Chelsea on Sunday with Alex Ferguson admitting that not only is he worried

about his porous defence but he now has a problem in attack -- albeit a "good" one.

United, who are second domestically, beat Braga 3-2 in the Champions League on Tuesday after trailing 2-0 inside the first 20 minutes to top Group H with maximum points from their three games.

Javier Hernandez, who has often been overlooked this season despite scoring three goals from four starts, netted twice to rescue the win and the Mexican has given manager Ferguson a selection dilemma for the clash at Stamford Bridge.

"The boy is improving all the time," Ferguson told reporters. "He is fantastic in training and he's always practising."

"His goal ratio for us is fantastic. For his second goal he bends around the back of the defender. It is a great ball in from Tom Cleverley but his movement is terrific. He's given me a problem -- but that's a good thing."

With Robin van Persie, Wayne Rooney and Danny Welbeck also vying for spots upfront, United look spoilt for choice against a Chelsea side who have their own problems.

Among them is the continuing absence of skipper John Terry, serving the second of his four-match English ban for racially abusing Queens Park Rangers defender Anton Ferdinand last year.

They could also be without midfielder Frank Lampard, who was having a scan on the injured calf that caused him to limp out of Chelsea's 2-1 Champions League defeat at Shakhtar Donetsk after only 18

minutes on Tuesday.

The weekend's other high profile match is fourth-placed Everton facing Liverpool in the first Merseyside derby of the season at Goodison Park on Sunday.

Champions and third-placed Manchester City are at home to Swansea City on Saturday and fifth-placed Tottenham Hotspur visit lowly Southampton on Sunday.

Despite it still being relatively early in the campaign, Chelsea's meeting with United could have a significant bearing on the outcome of this season's title race.

Chelsea's superb 4-2 come-from-behind win at Spurs on Sunday was their seventh victory out of eight matches this term and they host United as one of the only two unbeaten sides in the league, with City being the others.

Chelsea lead the table with 22 points, followed by United and City on 18, Everton on 15 and Spurs leading a trio of clubs on 14.

United, though, have not lost any of their last five games against Chelsea and their meeting in the league there last season was a classic as they came back from 3-0 down to draw 3-3.

That scoreline encapsulates their current problem - potent in attack but weak at the back.

United fell behind for the eighth time in 12 games this season against Portugal's Braga and Ferguson is perplexed.

"I can't understand our defending," he said. "I can't get to the bottom of it. We certainly make it difficult for ourselves. If you analyse the goals we are conceding they are all different types."

"It is difficult to put my finger on it and it certainly doesn't give us a good start to games that's for sure. It is always at home as well."

## Allegri not quitting

AFP, Milan



AC Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri has insisted his side's latest setback has not signalled the bell for his departure amid reports the club are lining up former player Frank Rijkaard to take over.

Allegri employed a new 4-3-3 formation for their Champions League clash away to Malaga on Wednesday and despite a late fightback the Italian giants succumbed to Joaquin Sanchez's second-half winner.

Milan's sixth defeat from 11 games in all competitions has underlined the ongo-

ing task facing Allegri, who lost the spine of an experienced side in a busy summer transfer period.

And a report by the 7gold television network on Thursday claimed the club was set to lure former Rossonero Rijkaard from his post as coach of the Saudi Arabian national team.

Allegri -- who led Milan to the league title in 2011 and a runner-up place behind Juventus last year -- said he is not throwing in the towel.

"I'm not quitting, absolutely not," said Allegri.

"It's not my style to quit, and I have a lot of the faith in this squad. I think we can get back into the Serie A and the Champions League for us isn't over yet."

## Khedira out for weeks

AFP, Berlin

Real Madrid star Sami Khedira is set to miss the next two weeks and both his club's Champions League clash with Dortmund, then Germany's friendly with Holland, after picking up a new leg injury.

The 25-year-old defensive midfielder limped out of Real's 2-1 defeat at Dortmund on Wednesday in the Champions League clutching his left hamstring.

It was his first game back after injuring himself in the World Cup qualifier win in Ireland on October 11.

Having also missed Germany's 4-all draw with Sweden in last week, Khedira is now set to sit out the next fortnight and will miss Real's return Champions League clash against Dortmund in Madrid on November 6.



Malaga winger Joaquin Sanchez runs off to celebrate his all-important goal against Milan during their Champions League tie at the Rosaleda Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP



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