



Newly-appointed Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari reacts during his presentation in Rio de Janeiro yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Serie A teams qualify sans Chievo

AFP, Milan

Bologna, Atalanta and Fiorentina on Wednesday disposed of lower league opposition to book their spots in the last 16 of the Italian Cup, which will be shorn of another Serie A side in Chievo.

A 35th minute strike from Cristian Pasquato was enough for Bologna to overcome Serie B side Livorno and book a last-16 tie against Serie A title contenders Napoli.

Atalanta went down to a 31st minute goal by Denis Tonucci at home to second division Cesena, but levelled thanks to Manuel Parra 10 minutes later.

Giuseppe De Luca put the Bergamo side ahead just after the hour and Parra virtually sealed the win with his second in the 82nd minute to secure a last-16 encounter away to Roma.

Fiorentina continued their purple patch, which has seen them climb to third in Serie A, with a 2-0 win over second division Juve Stabia thanks to second-half goals from Haris Seferovic and Ahmed Hegazi.

La Viola rested many of their first team regulars for the win and will now play Udinese.

Chievo, meanwhile, were shocked 1-0 at home thanks to Fabio Lucioni's 60th minute winner for Reggina, who will now face more illustrious competition in AC Milan.

The remaining two fourth round ties, Catania v Cittadella and Cagliari v Pescara, will be played on December 4 and 5 respectively.

The competition's last-16, from which the winners qualify for the quarterfinals, will be played between December 11-19.



Channel 9

Bangladesh v West Indies

First ODI

Live from 9:00am

STAR Cricket

Australia v South Africa

Third Test, Day 1

Live from 6:30am

STAR Sports

Serie A

Catania v AC Milan



Bangladesh v West Indies

First ODI

Time: 9:00am

Venue: Sk Abu Naser Stadium,

'Big Phil' returns

Football

AFP, Sao Paulo

Brazil on Thursday officially announced Luiz Felipe Scolari as their coach to lead them through to the 2014 World Cup finals on home soil, replacing Mano Menezes, sacked last week.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) named 2002 World Cup winner Scolari for a second spell at the helm as he targets a sixth world title with the auriverde in 18 months time, using next year's Confederations Cup, also in Brazil, as a springboard.

Carlos Alberto Parreira, who managed Brazil's successful 1994 World Cup campaign in the United States, will serve as Scolari's technical assistant.

"Our sole commitment is to seek out and offer the best for our football and it is in this vein that we have chosen these two great champions, respected not just in our country but worldwide -- Felipe Scolari and Carlos Alberto Parreira," CBF president Jose Maria Marin told a news conference.

Marin had coyly avoided naming Scolari on Wednesday even as the media plastered the image of the 64-year-old all over newspaper front pages, while saying the CBF wanted "someone who can face up to the pressure of the post."

That pressure -- and inveterate impatience at the CBF to say nothing of demanding fans -- ensured Menezes was a dead man walking after Brazil lost the chance to end their Olympic gold medal duck in

losing the London Games final to Mexico.

Scolari is available after recently parting company with Palmeiras last September -- the team were later relegated.

The CBF sacked Mano Menezes last week after just two years in the job, with the Selecao having lost in the quarterfinals of last year's Copa America before the Olympic disappointment.

The five-times world champions are eager that the new man should use the Confederations Cup to blood new stars ahead of the 2014 World Cup.

In his first stint as Brazil manager, Scolari was forgiven for a pale Confederations Cup showing in 2001 after he led the Selecao to the World Cup win in Japan the following year.

Bayern extend lead

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich opened a 10-point gap at the top of the German league on Wednesday with a 2-0 victory at Freiburg ahead of their key Bundeslig clash at home to champions Borussia Dortmund this weekend.

Victory at 10-man Freiburg means Munich extended their lead by two points as the chasing pack lost ground.

Bayern took the lead after only 12 minutes when Germany star Mueller slotted home a penalty after Freiburg defender Oliver Sorg's handball.

The hosts were then reduced to 10 men moments later when Senegal defender Fallou Diagne was shown a straight red when he brought down Swiss midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri with only the goalkeeper to beat.

With Dortmund looming, Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes made four changes in the second-half, including taking off striker Mario Gomez, and Munich made sure of the three points when Anatoliy Tymoshchuk netted their second on 79 minutes.

Bayer Leverkusen took Dortmund's place in second spot after their 4-1 win at Werder Bremen to claim their fourth win in their last five league games.

Ex-Germany midfielder Gonzalo Castro scored the first two goals for Leverkusen before Nils Petersen pulled one back for Bremen with a 54th-minute header.

Leverkusen made sure of the three points when captain Simon Rolfes drilled home his shot on 74 minutes and five minutes later midfielder Jens Hegeler grabbed their fourth.

Borussia Moenchengladbach are up to ninth after their 2-0 win at home to VfL Wolfsburg.

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Goalline technology put to the test

Football

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Did the ball cross the line? It's a question which football fans have been asking at least since the 1966 World Cup final, when England striker Geoff Hurst's extra time goal against Germany was given by a Swiss referee on the advice of his Soviet linesman.

World governing body FIFA has been trying out two technologies and will put them to the tournament test at the upcoming Club World Cup starting December 6 in Japan with a view to using the most accurate version at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

A last-16 match at the last finals two years ago in South Africa went a long way to convincing FIFA that the technology had to come to the rescue after England's Frank Lampard had what appeared to be a perfectly good goal ruled out against

Germany.

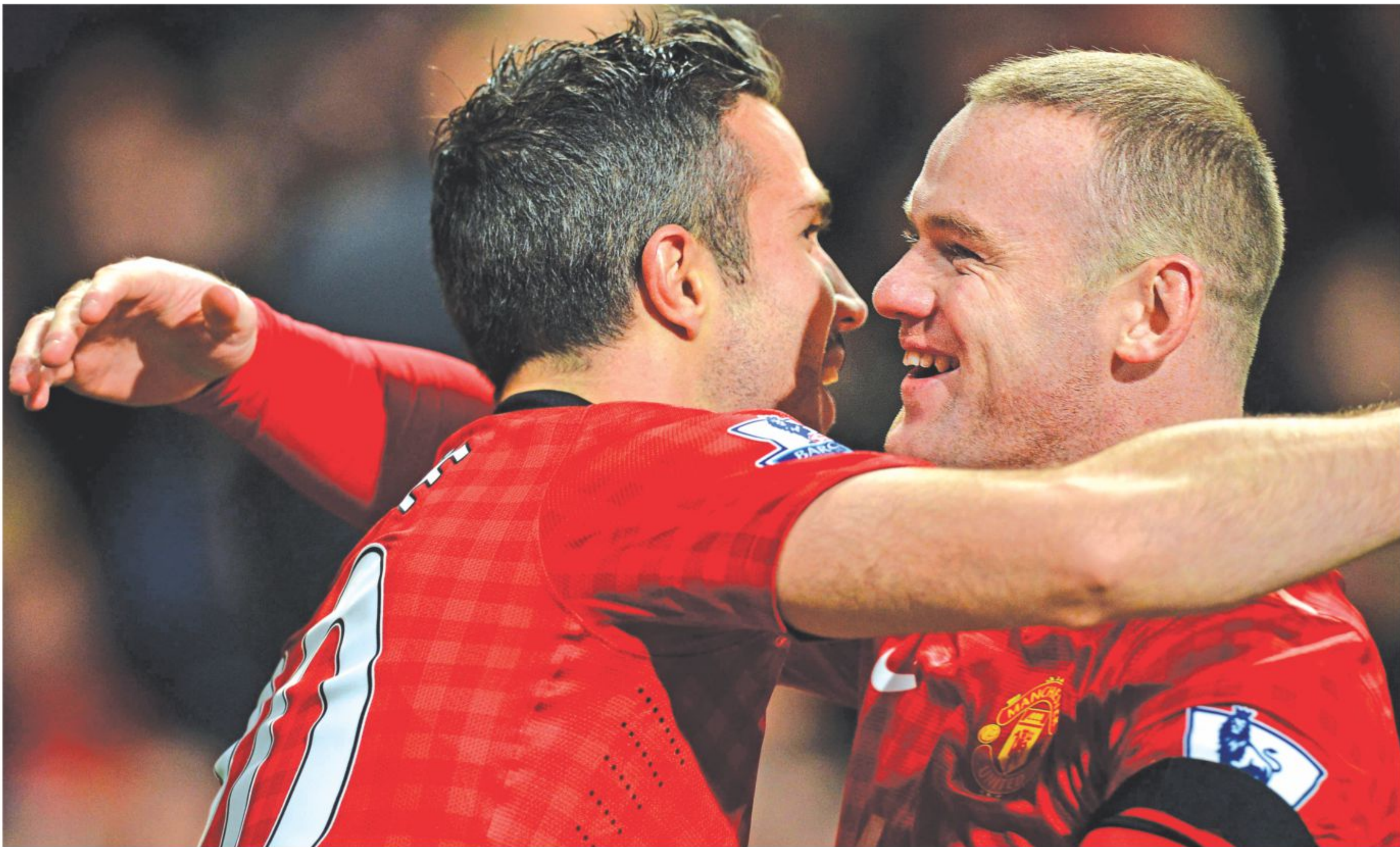
The non-award of his effort ultimately went some way to presaging a 4-1 loss for Lampard's side, prompting the game's authorities to accept that there had to be a technological leap of faith to prevent such miscarriages of sporting justice.

Two systems -- one German, one English -- have been certified by FIFA and are now fighting one another for the right to be used in Brazil in two years' time.

First there is GoalRef, which uses magnetic fields and a special ball which will be tested at the stadium at Yokohama during the Club World Cup. The other, Hawk-Eye, is based on deploying cameras in similar fashion to that already prevalent in tennis and cricket.

The latter will be used at the Toyota stadium.

GoalRef is the brainchild of researchers Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuit in Germany and the second has been created by Hawk-Eye Innovations in Britain.



Manchester United striker Robin Van Persie (L) celebrates his all-important goal with teammate Wayne Rooney during their Premier League encounter against West Ham United at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Van Persie fires Man Utd

AFP, London



Robin van Persie scored the fastest goal of the English Premier League season as Manchester United stayed a point clear at the top with a 1-0 win over West Ham at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

The Dutch forward needed just 33 seconds to give United the lead when, after receiving the ball from Michael Carrick, his first touch eluded Winston Reid before his finish deflected off James Collins and looped over Hammers goalkeeper Jussi Jaaskelainen.

Van Persie's goal was all the more extraordinary as, prior to Wednesday's match, United had conceded the first

goal 13 times already this season.

However, they remained just a point in front after reigning champions and local rivals Manchester City, who won 2-0 away to Wigan.

City, the only unbeaten side in the top flight, looked like they might be held to a frustrating draw before striker Mario Balotelli scored his first league goal of the season in the 69th minute.

And three minutes later England midfielder James Milner made it 2-0 with a powerful shot.

European champions Chelsea suffered their second straight home goalless draw, under interim manager Rafael Benitez, a derby stalemate with Fulham doing little for his approval rating with the sceptical Stamford Bridge faithful.

Chelsea moved up one place to third but, more significantly, they are now seven points behind United.

Van Persie's effort trumped that in an earlier kick-off match of his former Arsenal team-mate Theo Walcott, who took a comparatively sedate 52 seconds to give the Gunners the lead at Everton.

RESULTS

Chelsea 0 Fulham 0

Everton 1 (Fellaini 28) Arsenal 1 (Walcott 1)

Manchester United 1 (Van Persie 1) West Ham 0

Southampton 1 (Lambert 32) Norwich 1 (Snodgrass 45)

Stoke 2 (Walters 81, Jerome 85) Newcastle 1 (Cisse 47)

Swansea 3 (Michu 9, Routledge 11, 39) West Brom 1 (Lukaku 45)

Tottenham 2 (Lennon 7, Bale 16) Liverpool 1 (Bale 72-go)

But Everton equalised through Marouane Fellaini 20-yard strike in the 28th minute at Goodison Park.

The draw left Arsenal, searching for their first major trophy since 2005, 12 points off the lead.

Tottenham moved into fifth with a 2-1 win at home to Liverpool.

Aaron Lennon put Spurs ahead in the seventh minute at White Hart Lane after good work by Gareth Bale before the Welshman doubled their advantage in the 22nd minute with a deflected free-kick.

Bale, however, gave Liverpool hope with a 72nd minute own-goal although there was little he could do when Lennon, trying to clear Steven Gerrard's goalbound header, smashed the ball into the winger's face.

Messi, C'Ron, Iniesta up for Ballon d'Or

AFP, Sao Paulo

Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Andres Iniesta were on Thursday shortlisted for this year's Ballon d'Or, football's world governing body FIFA and sponsors France Football magazine said.

Barcelona forward Messi, 25, has already won the title three times and the Argentine is again favourite to win the prize, which will be presented in Zurich on January 7 after votes from journalists, national team captains and coaches.

If he wins, he would become the first player to win the award four times, having already joined French legend and current UEFA president Michel Platini as the only players to win three straight titles.

Dutch stars Johan Cruyff and Marco Van Basten have also won three accolades.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter unveiled the shortlist at a news conference in Sao Paulo.

He also revealed that Spain's Vicente Del Bosque, Real Madrid's Jose Mourinho and former Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola were on the shortlist for the title of best coach.

Platt handed 2-game ban

AFP, Paris

Manchester City assistant coach David Platt was banned for two European matches on Wednesday after being sent off in the English team's Champions League clash with Real Madrid.

Platt, number two to City coach Roberto Mancini, was red-carded in the 1-1 draw with the Spanish giants, a result which eliminated the English champions from the competition at the group stage for the second successive season.

"The UEFA control and disciplinary body has suspended Manchester City FC assistant coach David Platt for the next two UEFA competition matches," said a UEFA statement.

"He will not be able to carry out his function at Tuesday's UEFA Champions League Group D match against Borussia Dortmund in Germany, as well as at the next UEFA competition match for which he will be eligible."

City were also fined 12,000 euros for the improper conduct (five cards or more) of their players in the same match.