

Bastia's home ground shut

AFP, Paris

Bastia had their home ground shut down on Thursday by French football chiefs who believe that regular outbreaks of violence are putting fans and players in danger.

The Armand-Cesari stadium has been plagued by trouble this season and on Wednesday the Ligue 1 game with Marseille was played behind closed doors.

The French league's disciplinary commission said that the suspension will come into effect from December 22 when Bastia are due to face Nancy.

"It has become obvious that there is a great uncertainty that at any time can cause danger to spectators and players," said a statement by the league who added that the decision was a protective measure.

But the decision left Bastia president Pierre-Marie Geronimi fuming.

He accused the French league of trying to destroy the club.

Barry given 1-game ban

AFP, London

Manchester City midfielder Gareth Barry was given a one-match ban on Thursday after a foul-mouthed rant at an official following last weekend's explosive Manchester derby.

Barry, 31, accepted the FA's charge that he used abusive and/or insulting language in the aftermath of City's 3-2 defeat against bitter rivals Manchester United at Eastlands and the England star will miss his club's trip to Newcastle on Saturday.

"Manchester City's Gareth Barry will serve a one-match suspension with immediate effect after admitting a breach of FA Rule E3 in that he used abusive and/or insulting words towards a match official following his side's match against Manchester United on Sunday 9 December 2012," an FA's statement read.

"Also as part of the standard penalty for this offence, Barry has been fined £8,000 (9,855 euros.)

It has been reported that the target for Barry's tirade was fourth official Mark Clattenburg, who was recently cleared of allegations that he racially abused Chelsea's Nigerian midfielder John Obi Mikel during a match against Manchester United.

Barry's absence is another blow to City manager Roberto Mancini.

What to WATCH

ESPN

Australia v Sri Lanka

First Test, Day 2

Live from 5:30am

English Premiership

Newcastle v Man City

Live 4:45pm

Man United v Sunderland

Live from 9:00pm

Series A

Lazio v Inter Milan

Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

STAR Cricket

India v England

Fourth Test, Day 3

Live from 10:00am

STAR Sports

English Premiership

Liverpool v Aston Villa

Live from 9:00pm

Primera Liga

Mallorca v Bilbao

Live from 11:00pm

Granada v Real Sociedad

Live from 1:00am (Sunday)



Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard (front) dribbles the ball during a training session in Yokohama yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Goal-line tech a 'no-brainer'

Football

AFP, Yokohama

Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard, whose "goal" against Germany at the 2010 World Cup was missed by officials, believes the introduction of goal-line technology into football is a "no-brainer".

Lampard came on as a substitute in Chelsea's semi-final win over Monterrey at the Club World Cup Thursday -- the first time the English Premier League side had ever played a match where a goal-line system was available to the referee.

"I have been in favour for a while now, particularly when it was clear it would be a quick and simple measure, and wouldn't take much time from the game," the 34-year-old said ahead of the match in Yokohama, Japan.

"Anything we can do to help referees, who have a very tough time trying to have their eye across everything... we have to try," he added.

"If it doesn't break the game up, and it could add the excitement factor as it has in cricket, then why not?"

It was the England international's long-range effort, which cannoned off the crossbar and dropped over the line before bouncing back out, in South Africa two years ago that sparked FIFA into investigating the use of goal-line technology.

The world body are trialling two systems at the Club World Cup in Japan -- camera-based Hawk-Eye and GoalRef, a system that uses magnetic fields and a ball with a special chip to determine its trajectory and position.

Both inform the referee within a second if a goal has been scored.

Top-of-the-table clash

AFP, Madrid



With Real Madrid trailing by 11 points, Barcelona's closest threat is from Atletico Madrid who they face on Sunday and midfielder Xavi Hernandez feels it is an opportunity to dent their title aspirations.

Barca have made a record start to the season with a remarkable 14 wins from 15 games and while the reigning champions and traditional rivals Real Madrid have not been able to live with the pace it has been their neighbours Atletico who have made an impressive start to the campaign and trail the Catalans by seven points.

"It is too early to really say who are going to be the biggest rival and at the moment it looks as though both will be strong rivals," said Xavi.

"Atletico are very strong. People said that they were going to slip-up but they haven't very much and now this weekend we have our chance to make them slip-up."

"They are on a good run, they play very well on the counter-attack and they have a striker (Radamel) Falcao

"Also as part of the standard penalty for this offence, Barry has been fined £8,000 (9,855 euros.)

It has been reported that the target for Barry's tirade was fourth official Mark Clattenburg, who was recently cleared of allegations that he racially abused Chelsea's Nigerian midfielder John Obi Mikel during a match against Manchester United.

Barry's absence is another blow to City manager Roberto Mancini.

Manchester United star Ryan Giggs has warned Manchester City that his side's derby triumph will provide the perfect springboard to wrestle the title away from Eastlands.

United moved six points clear of second placed City after an explosive 3-2 win over their bitter rivals in the Manchester derby last Sunday and Alex Ferguson's team have a golden opportunity to extend their lead this weekend.

While spluttering champions City have a tricky assignment at Newcastle, United host lowly Sunderland on the back of four successive league victories and with confidence sky-high following Robin van Persie's stoppage-time winner at Eastlands.

Giggs has seen 12 previous title-winning teams

take shape during his career at United and the veteran Welsh midfielder is beginning to sense another dominant team forming at Old Trafford.

Asked if the win over City would provide a major boost, Giggs said: "It should do, purely because of the way we performed."

"We have got everything in place for the busy Christmas period and the confidence of such a great result."

"We accept that we are letting too many goals in and we've had to come from behind too often, but the signs are there that this could be a very good season for

FIXTURES

Saturday

Getafe v Osasuna (1500), Mallorca v Athletic Bilbao (1700), Granada v Real Sociedad (1900), Sevilla v Malaga (2100)

Sunday

Zaragoza v Levante (1100), Valencia v Rayo Vallecano (1600), Real Madrid v Espanyol (1800), Barcelona v Atletico Madrid (2000)

Monday

Deportivo La Coruna v Valladolid (1900),

as Atletico demolished Deportivo La Coruna 6-0 and he now has 16 league goals.

"We are now tougher mentally as a group which should help at the Camp Nou. We have had some difficult moments but we have come through them," said Falcao.

Real Madrid meanwhile continue to stutter with Mesut Ozil coming to

the rescue with a brace as they beat Valladolid 3-2 and then in midweek they lost 2-1 away in the first leg of a King's Cup game with Celta Vigo.

It means they have lost six times so far which is one more than the whole of last season and the same number as in Jose Mourinho's first campaign at the club.

They now take on Espanyol who are joint bottom with Deportivo La Coruna on eleven points and while new coach Javier Aguirre has been working on making them more solid at the back it should be a relatively easy game.

Fourth-placed Malaga face a tricky Andalusian derby away to Sevilla who are languishing in midtable due to a lack of consistency but they are generally tough side to face at home.

Level with Malaga on points are Real Betis who are one of the revelations so far and caused plenty of problems in the second half for Barcelona last weekend although losing 2-1. They take on Celta Vigo.

Levante are in the final European place and they have a difficult away game against Zaragoza who are solid at the back and have an exciting young forward line with Victor Rodriguez standing out.

Marquez quits Red Bulls

AFP, New Jersey

Rafa Marquez, a 33-year-old defender who was Mexico's captain at the 2010 World Cup, was released by Major League Soccer's New York Red Bulls on Thursday and signed with Leon of Mexico.

Marquez joined the US club from Barcelona in 2010 and started 42 of his 44 matches for the Red Bulls, but played in only 15 games this past season.

"This decision has been made in the best interests of both parties," said Red Bulls' sporting director Andy Roxburgh. "Rafa has accomplished a great deal during his career and is a top quality player."

His \$4.6 million annual salary was the second-highest in the US league, trailing only French teammate Thierry Henry's \$5.6 million paycheck.

Marquez joined five-time Mexican league champion Leon later on Thursday. The team spent a decade in the second division until moving up to the top level this year.

"We all know the importance of the (Newcastle) game but I don't do very well thinking about bad scenarios."

"For me there are so many positives that can happen if we win that game. I can't think of the other side of that coin."

Giggs warns rivals

AFP, London



The wins against Chelsea, Newcastle and City away have been our three best performances and you probably can't get three bigger challenges."

While Giggs and his United teammates can contemplate a successful second half of the season, City are facing a fight to salvage their campaign.

Roberto Mancini's side have already crashed out of the Champions League and another setback at Newcastle this weekend would deal a hammer blow to their hopes of retaining the title.

While spluttering champions City have a tricky assignment at Newcastle, United host lowly Sunderland on the back of four successive league victories and with confidence sky-high following Robin van Persie's stoppage-time winner at Eastlands.

Giggs has seen 12 previous title-winning teams

take shape during his career at United and the veteran Welsh midfielder is beginning to sense another dominant team forming at Old Trafford.

Asked if the win over City would provide a major boost, Giggs said: "It should do, purely because of the way we performed."

"We have got everything in place for the busy Christmas period and the confidence of such a great result."

"We accept that we are letting too many goals in and we've had to come from behind too often, but the signs are there that this could be a very good season for

FIXTURES

(1500GMT unless stated)

Saturday

Liverpool v Aston Villa, Man Utd v Sunderland, Newcastle v Man City (1245GMT), Norwich v Wigan, QPR v Fulham, Stoke v Everton

Sunday

Tottenham v Swansea (1330GMT), West Brom v West Ham (1600GMT)

Monday

I don't know anything about psychological blows," he said. "Losing on Sunday changes nothing. We lost and we move on to the next game."

"The beauty of football is that you are always challenged, whether you have lost or won, and the next game is always the most important."

"We all know the importance of the (Newcastle) game but I don't do very well thinking about bad scenarios."

"For me there are so many positives that can happen if we win that game. I can't think of the other side of that coin."

FIFA can't verify it

Football

AFP, Paris

World football's governing body on Friday said that they were unable to check whether claims that an African footballer and not Argentina star Lionel Messi was the record holder for the most goals scored in a calendar year.

"Thanks for the questions about Godfrey Chitalu. Our official stats are limited to FIFA competitions, so we cannot verify this 'record,'" FIFA's communications department said on its Twitter account @fifamedia.

"We keep records for all FIFA competitions," it added.

Barcelona forward Messi was hailed by many as the greatest player ever in the game after he scored twice on Sunday to beat the 40-year-old record of Germany's Gerd Mueller and take his tally to 86 for 2012.

But claims emerged on Thursday that he may still in fact be well short of Zambia legend Chitalu, who netted 107 times -- 49 in league matches for Kabwe Warriors and

58 in cup and internationals -- between January 23 and December 10, 1972.

A black and white photograph of a smiling Chitalu, dressed in a suit and holding a ball inscribed with "1972 Godfrey Chitalu 107 goals" has been widely circulated on the Internet.

Yet there have also been claims that his name was raised by jealous supporters of Barca rivals Real Madrid to prevent the record going to a Barcelona player.

Zambian commentator Musonda Chibulu and fellow researcher Jerry Muchimba, who compiled their data from daily newspapers and the southern African country's national archives, had said they would try to get Chitalu's tally ratified by FIFA.

"Kabwe Warriors, for whom Godfrey Chitalu played, is a legendary team in our country," FAZ president Kalusha Bwalya was quoted as saying on the BBC Sport website.

Chitalu died with the whole national football team when their airplane crashed off the coast of Gabon in 1993 on the way to a World Cup qualifier in Senegal.



বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল এন্ড ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল

২০৩, শহীদ সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম সরণি

(৮৬, বিজয় নগর), ঢাকা-১০০০

ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৫৫০৩০, ১১৬১৮৫০০, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৯