

# It's Real vs Man Utd

THE GUARDIAN



Manchester United have been drawn against Real Madrid in the stand-out tie of the Champions League last 16. Cristiano Ronaldo will return to Old Trafford for the first time since his £80m move to Madrid in 2009 in a meeting that also pits Sir Alex Ferguson against Jose Mourinho.

Britain's two other representatives, Arsenal and Celtic, have also been handed tough draws. Arsenal will face last season's beaten finalists Bayern Munich while Celtic take on the Italian champions Juventus as they look for a place in the quarterfinals for the first time.

In an incredible twist, the draw was an exact repeat of Wednesday's rehearsal, meaning the most eye-catching tie not involving British sides is that of the holders Barcelona against Milan. The German champions Borussia Dortmund face Shakhtar

Donetsk, Valencia play Paris Saint-Germain, Porto meet Malaga and Galatasaray come up against Schalke.

Ronaldo scored 118 goals in 292 appearances during his six years at United, but it was the other Ronaldo – the Brazilian striker – who took the headlines when the clubs last faced each other in 2003, scoring a hatrick at Old Trafford as Madrid went through to the semifinals 6-5 on aggregate.

The United defender Rio Ferdinand, who played in the tie nine years ago, reacted to the draw on Twitter, saying: "Oh yes, Madrid!! What a great couple a game that'll be!! @Cristiano see u soon bro!!"

Meanwhile, United's club secretary, John Alexander, hoped there was a lucky omen for them. "It's the tie that everyone wanted to see – but that nobody wanted to see, they wanted to save it for later in the competition," he said. "If history has anything in our favour our one [aggregate] victory over Real Madrid in this competition was in the year we won the final at Wembley [in 1968]." The 2013 final takes place at the new Wembley on Saturday 25 May.

United have a slight advantage over Madrid in that as group winners they will get to play the second leg at home. Arsenal and Celtic, who were runners-up in their respective groups, will both play their second legs away.

Neil Lennon described Celtic's draw against Juventus as "a beauty" but also acknowledged the challenge of facing the Serie A leaders. The manager said: "Juventus are one of the great traditional European teams. So in terms of glamour it's great, in terms of qualification it is going to be very tough."

RESULTS OF THE DRAW			
	<b>GALATASARAY A.S. (TUR)</b>	vs	<b>FC SCHALKE 04 (GER)</b>
	<b>CELTIC FC (SCO)</b>	vs	<b>JUVENTUS (ITA)</b>
	<b>ARSENAL FC (ENG)</b>	vs	<b>FC BAYERN MÜNCHEN (GER)</b>
	<b>FC SHAKHTAR DONETSK (UKR)</b>	vs	<b>BORUSSIA DORTMUND (GER)</b>
	<b>AC MILAN (ITA)</b>	vs	<b>FC BARCELONA (ESP)</b>
	<b>REAL MADRID CF (ESP)</b>	vs	<b>MANCHESTER UNITED FC (ENG)</b>
	<b>VALENCIA CF (ESP)</b>	vs	<b>PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN (FRA)</b>
	<b>FC PORTO (POR)</b>	vs	<b>MÁLAGA CF (ESP)</b>

## Goetze fires Dortmund

AFP, Berlin

Holders Borussia Dortmund thanked a hatrick from Mario Goetze as they thrashed Hanover 5-1 on Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of the German Cup.

"I'm taking the ball home," beamed Goetze after the first hatrick of his professional career, cementing his showing with a fine volley for his third goal.

Polish star Jakub Blaszczykowski and compatriot Robert Lewandowski were also on target with Mame Diouf adding a consolation for outclassed Hanover.

## Bologna stun Napoli

AFP, Rome

Lazio and Fiorentina reached the Italian Cup quarterfinals on Wednesday - but Napoli fell by the wayside after a 2-1 home loss to Bologna in the round of 16, Greek star Panagiotis Kone netting an injury-time winner.

Lazio needed penalties to beat Siena after a 1-1 stalemate over 120 minutes - the hosts rescued the extra half hour after a last-gasp Michael Ciani leveller - while Fiorentina won 1-0 at Udinese with Spaniard Borja Valero scoring.



<b>BTV</b> Bangladesh Premier League Sk Russel v Abahani Live from 4:30pm
<b>ESPN</b> Sportscentre India Sports News Live at 8:30pm
<b>TEN Cricket</b> South Africa v New Zealand First T20



<b>Bangladesh Premier League</b> Sk Russel v Abahani Time: 4:30pm Venue: Bangabandhu National
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## Door opens for Riquelme

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

New Boca Juniors coach Carlos Bianchi has opened the door for the return of former Argentina playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme who walked out on the club in July.

"We'll see what the chances are for Roman to come back," Bianchi said at his official unveiling on Wednesday.

Riquelme, 34, left Boca after they lost the South American Libertadores Cup final to Corinthians, citing exhaustion.

According to media reports, he did not get on with former coach Julio Cesar Falcioni and had grown tired of his unadventurous tactics.

Bianchi, Boca's most successful coach in his two previous spells, was officially unveiled on Wednesday as Falcioni's replacement at the club's Casa Amarilla training complex where he signed a three-year contract.

"The decision is Roman's, everyone is the owner of their own decisions. I'll speak with him and see if he is prepared (to return)," said Bianchi, who quit as Boca coach for the second time in 2004.

"I know what Roman can give the team, but until I meet with him I can't say anything else," he added.

Club president Daniel Angelici told Infobae: "If there's anyone who can make Riquelme change his mind, that person (is Bianchi), that's a chance Carlos can go for, speaking to him face to face."

Riquelme did not retire from football and has been courted by Brazilian clubs including Cruzeiro and relegated Palmeiras, after saying he would not turn out for another Argentine side.

Former Argentina coach Sergio Batista tried to persuade Riquelme to join his Chinese team Shanghai Shenhua.

Bianchi, nicknamed Viceroy when he coached Velez Sarsfield where he began his playing career, won four Argentine leagues, three Libertadores Cups and two Intercontinental Cups during his two previous spells at Boca between 1998 and 2004.

Riquelme shared in all but three of those trophy wins.

## Eric returns to training

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona defender Eric Abidal returned to training with his teammates Wednesday for the first time since undergoing a liver transplant in April, the club said.

The French international underwent the liver transplant operation on April 10 just over a year after having a tumour removed from his liver in March 2011.

"This Wednesday, the defender returned to training with the rest of his teammates," Barcelona said in a statement.

Abidal, who had been training separately, including at a mountain camp in the Catalan Pyrenees, has not played for the Spanish league leaders since February 26.

## Chiellini out for 2 months

REUTERS, Rome

Serie A leaders Juventus will go into Friday's clash with Cagliari (1945 GMT) without defender Giorgio Chiellini, after he was ruled out with a calf injury on Wednesday.

The Italy centre-back could be out for two months, reports suggested, although Juve said the severity of the injury would not be clear until after a scan on Thursday.

## Vilanova sidelined

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona will have to continue their march at the top of La Liga with coach Tito Vilanova sidelined after the club revealed Wednesday he has suffered a relapse of a tumour on which he was operated just over a year ago.

The 44-year-old who took over from Pep Guardiola at the beginning of the season was thought to have fully recovered from surgery last November to remove the growth on his parotid gland, and he was back at work within 15 days.

However, after an operation on Thursday it is thought he will have treatment for at least six weeks and may not be available to return to work during that time.

Until then, Sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta confirmed on Thursday, the side will be led by Vilanova's team, with his assistant Jordi Roura at the helm.

"Without going into too much detail about the sporting side today and whether we win or not at Valladolid on Saturday, just to say we'll continue with our coaching staff and our way of working, we'll be in extraordinary hands and Tito I'm sure will be watching us on TV," he said.

Barca president Sandro Rossell added "the most important thing for the club at this moment is the full recovery of Tito".

Vilanova has led Barcelona to the most successful start to a season in La Liga's history, with 15 wins and one draw in 16 matches so far.

With the final round of La Liga games of 2012 brought forward to allow the players an extra day of Christmas holidays, Barca will make it a great finish to the year, on the pitch at least, if they take three points

at Valladolid on Saturday.

Last weekend's win over closest rivals Atletico Madrid increased the Catalan side's lead to nine points at the top of La Liga and with Real Madrid's surprise draw with Espanyol leaving 'los blancos' 13 points back in third, for some the title is already destined for the Nou Camp in May.

That win was followed with the news on Monday that Carles Puyol and Xavi Hernandez will stay at Barca until at least 2016 and Lionel Messi until 2018, and it was all looking positive until Wednesday's shock news.

Last Sunday's clear dominance over their closest rivals Atletico Madrid, especially in the second-half, in the 4-1 win, left most observers concluding that it is the Catalans' title to lose.

The win also secured Barca's status as La Liga's 'Winter Champions', a title given to the side top of the league with half the calendar completed. With only 16 games played Barca still have three games to play until the halfway stage.

Atletico's challenge seems to have ground to a halt with defeats at neighbours Real and now Barcelona since December began.

They play Celta Vigo on Friday in the hope of continuing an excellent run of eight home wins since the league began, to keep up some sort of pressure on the Catalans.

Meanwhile Real Madrid face a tricky trip to fourth placed Malaga less than a week after manager Jose Mourinho said the title was "almost impossible now."

One player the 'Merengues' missed last Sunday was French forward Karim Benzema.

Benzema is closer to a return than colleague Higuain, but could still miss the trip to Malaga with a foot injury. However he has pledged his future to the club this week, despite his name being linked with PSG.

## Wolves set to appoint Schuster

AFP, Berlin

VfL Wolfsburg look to have ended their search for a new coach with German media reporting ex-Real Madrid boss Bernd Schuster will take charge in a three-year deal set to be announced on Friday.

Schuster, who turns 52 on Saturday, is set to sign until 2015 on what would be his first appointment in the Bundesliga.

As a coach, Schuster's biggest success to date is to have won the Spanish league title in 2008 with Real.

As a midfielder, he played for both Barcelona and Real Madrid in the 1980s and made more than 20 appearances for West Germany during his career having been dubbed the "Blond Angel" for his goal-scoring prowess.

His last coaching role was in March 2011 when he resigned as trainer from Turkish team Besiktas after less than a year in charge.

After Felix Magath was sacked in October, Wolfsburg's caretaker coach Lorenz-Guenther Koestner has been in charge with the team 15th in the Bundesliga, just above the relegation places.



PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea defender Branislav Ivanovic celebrates scoring the second goal during their League Cup quarterfinal against Leeds United at Elland Road on Wednesday.