

# Zabaleta puts City thru'

AFP, London

**The FA CUP** Manchester City reached the fifth round of the FA Cup on Saturday after Pablo Zabaleta's late goal gave them a 1-0 win in an attritional cup tie at bogey team Stoke City.

The English champions had not won at Stoke in six previous visits but they made an assured start and saw David Silva hit the post in the eighth minute after being invited to shoot by the home defence.

Stoke defender Ryan Shawcross had a goal ruled out for offside, while City received a blow shortly before half-time when captain and centre-back Vincent Kompany had to go off after rolling his ankle.

Stoke goalkeeper Thomas Sorensen saved bravely at Gareth Barry's feet in the 64th minute, while Peter Crouch headed a left-wing cross over the bar at the other end 10 minutes from full-time.

The tie looked set for a replay until Zabaleta started and finished a sweeping move in the 85th minute to send Roberto Mancini's men into round five.

The Argentine exchanged passes with a team-mate inside the City half and then cantered upfield to meet substitute Sergio Aguero's low cross with a deft outside-of-the-foot finish that nestled in the bottom-right corner.

Second-tier Brighton and Hove Albion, third-round conquerors of Newcastle United, will go in search of another Premier League scalp later on Saturday when they welcome Arsenal to the Falmer Stadium.

Manchester United are in action in the evening kick-off, with top-flight rivals Fulham the visitors to Old Trafford.

Macclesfield Town and Luton Town of the fifth-tier Conference National will be bidding to emulate the exploits of fourth-division Bradford City, who overcame Aston Villa in mid-week to reach the League Cup final.

Both sides face Premier League opposition, with Macclesfield hosting Wigan Athletic and Luton visiting Norwich City.

The fourth round began with an upset on Friday, when Championship club Millwall deepened Villa's gloom with a 2-1 victory over Paul Lambert's side at The Den.

# FA charges Hazard

AFP, London

Eden Hazard was facing the prospect of an additional ban for kicking a ball boy after the Football Association charged him on Friday over his red card in Chelsea's League Cup exit at Swansea.

Belgian forward Hazard was already set to serve an automatic three-match ban for his red card in Wednesday's semifinal second leg at the Liberty Stadium, where a goalless draw condemned Chelsea to a 2-0 aggregate defeat.

However, the FA insisted Friday that constituted an "insufficient" punishment for the offence.

"The FA has charged Chelsea's Eden Hazard following his side's League Cup semi-final at Swansea on January 23, 2013," an FA statement said.

"It is alleged that Hazard's behaviour in relation to a Swansea ball boy, for which the player was dismissed in the 78th minute, constituted violent conduct whereby the standard punishment that would otherwise apply was clearly insufficient.

"The player has until 6pm (1800GMT) on Tuesday, January 29, to respond to the charge.

"The FA will remind all clubs of their responsibilities in ensuring ball boys and other personnel around the pitch act in an appropriate manner at all times and will liaise with competitions accordingly."

Hazard was sent off by referee Chris Foy for kicking Charlie Morgan, the 17-year-old son of Swansea's biggest shareholder, in the closing stages of Wednesday's match at the Liberty Stadium.

# Zaha set for MU move

AFP, London

Manchester United have struck a deal with Crystal Palace for the London club's highly-rated winger Wilfried Zaha to join them in July.

A statement on United's official website said that the 20-year-old, who won his first England cap in November, will stay at Palace till the end of the season and then make the move to Old Trafford.

"The player is having a medical in Manchester today (Friday, January 25). There will be no further comment by any party until Wilfried joins United in July 2013."

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson said: "We are signing a player of potential. We hope the boy enjoys coming here, when he comes in the summer."

# Zidane back in court

AFP, Paris

Zinedine Zidane was back in court Thursday, aiming to land a legal headbutt on a French humorist who described him as an advertising whore.

The legendary former footballer failed in a first defamation case against Christophe Alevy but is seeking to have that ruling overturned on appeal.

In a January 2011 edition of the magazine SportMag, Alevy was quoted as saying of Zidane: "This guy is an advertising board with three brain cells who cashes in on his image to an excessive degree."

"It is a form of prostitution. This guy is a whore."

For good measure Alevy added that the hero of France's 1998 World Cup win and the anti-hero of the 2006 final defeat by Italy was "as thick as a dick."

Zidane, 40, told the appeal hearing the comments were "gratuitous and hurtful" to himself, his wife, children and parents.

"It is just not possible," he told the court in a barely audible voice.

Zidane is seeking a symbolic euro in damages, having dropped his initial demand for 75,000 euros (\$100,000) damages to be paid to a charity of his choice.

A judgement on the appeal will be delivered on March 7.



Barcelona defender Gerard Pique imitates a baby after scoring against Malaga during their Copa del Rey quarterfinal second leg at the Rosaleda Stadium on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

# 50 on Scolari's Dortmund go second

AFP, Berlin



Defending Bundesliga champions Borussia Dortmund romped to a 3-0 win at home to Nuremberg on Friday to provisionally go second in the German league behind leaders Bayern Munich.

With Bayern at south German rivals VfB Stuttgart on Sunday, Dortmund took their opportunity to move up to second ahead of Bayer Leverkusen, who are at Freiburg on Saturday night.

There was a strong Poland theme to Dortmund's scoresheet with national team-mates, midfielder Jakub Blaszczykowski, who netted a controversial first-half penalty, and striker Robert Lewandowski, sharing the goals.

Nuremberg last scored a goal in Dortmund back in 2006 and this was their 14th visit to Borussia without a win.

"The first-half penalty they were awarded was definitely questionable and at the end, the result was probably a goal too many," said Nuremberg coach Michael Wiesinger.

# Barca set up Real tie

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona defeated Malaga 4-2 on Thursday to set-up a mouthwatering Spanish Cup semifinal clash against bitter rivals Real Madrid.

Barcelona, who suffered their first La Liga defeat of the campaign last weekend, saw off a battling Malaga in their quarterfinal second leg tie after the two sides had been locked 2-2 from the first meeting.

Defending champions Barcelona went ahead on the night after just nine minutes when Pedro Rodriguez headed in a cross from Dani Alves after good work by Xavi.

But Joaquin Sanchez, with a right-foot drive, levelled for Malaga three minutes later.

Four minutes after the interval, Gerard Pique, who became a father for the first time this week when pop star girlfriend Shakira gave birth to a son, marked the occasion by volleying in Barcelona's second.

Roque Santa Cruz controversially equalised in the 68th minute after a Malaga counter-attack.

But Barcelona were furious that Cesc Fabregas had not been awarded a penalty when he was stamped on by Wellington.

Eight minutes later Andres Iniesta made it 3-2 after a smart one-two with Fabregas before Lionel Messi grabbed Barcelona's fourth of the night, heading in an 80th-minute cross from Iniesta for a 6-4 aggregate.

In the night's other tie, Atletico Madrid drew 1-1 at Real Betis for a 3-1 aggregate and a semifinal clash against Sevilla.

Real Madrid advanced to the semi-finals on Wednesday after a 1-1 draw at Valencia saw Jose Mourinho's side progress 3-1 on aggregate.

Sevilla clinched their berth in the last four with a 4-0 rout of Real Zaragoza following a goalless first leg.

**Barcelona meets Real Madrid in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey for the seventh time**

**The head-to-head record stands at three victories apiece, with Madrid winning**

## RESULTS

**Betis 1** (Molina 90-pen) Atletico Madrid 1 (Costa 45)  
Atletico win 3-1 on aggregate  
**Malaga 2** (Joaquin 12, Santa Cruz 68)  
**Barcelona 4** (Pedro 8, Pique 49, Iniesta 75, Messi 80)  
Barcelona win 6-4 on aggregate  
Wednesday  
Sevilla 4 Zaragoza 0  
Sevilla won 4-0 on aggregate  
Valencia 1-1 Real Madrid

# 50 on Scolari's mind

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari revealed on Thursday that he has a long list of 50 potential candidates in mind for his squad that will go into the 2014 World Cup on home soil.

"Our staff are keeping an eye on 50 players all over the world as we try to build the best possible team for the World Cup," said 'Big Phil', who was speaking at a teleconference.

Scolari, who led Brazil to glory at the 2002 World Cup, and recently returned to the job for a second spell following the sacking of Mano Menezes, announced his first squad earlier this week for the friendly against England at Wembley on February 6.

It included Ronaldinho, now 32 and playing his club football at home with Atletico Mineiro, but there was no place for Kaka, whose career has nosedived since his move to Real Madrid in 2009.

"We are not just trying players out for the sake of it, we need to be sure that their experience counts," Scolari added.

"If a player is in the right shape, he will be given opportunities."

The former Portugal and Chelsea coach admitted that Brazil are "the favourites" to win a sixth World Cup, and a first on home soil.



French legend Zinedine Zidane leaves the Paris court house following a hearing on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Iker returns home

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid captain Iker Casillas has returned home after a "successful" operation on his fractured left thumb, his club revealed Saturday, and will now begin a recovery period of between eight and 12 weeks before he can return to action.

"After a successful operation yesterday (Friday), the captain is back home resting," his club revealed on their website.

"Everything went superbly well. Now it is all a question of waiting while he recuperates," added the club's medical chief Carlos Diez.

The Spanish international - who had controversially been dropped by coach Jose Mourinho just before Christmas leading to murmurs of discontent in the dressing room - fractured the first metacarpal bone, at the base of his thumb, during Madrid's Spanish Cup clash with Valencia in midweek.

The recovery period means he will miss both legs of the Champions League last-16 tie with Manchester United and is also likely to miss Spain's trip to France in a crucial 2014 World Cup qualifier on March 26.

Madrid moved to cover for the loss of their captain on Friday when they brought Diego Lopez back to the club for a second spell from Sevilla.

The 31-year-old, who was on the books of the capital club between 2000 and 2007 but rarely featured for the first time before departing for Villarreal, has arrived on a four-and-a-half-year deal.

Spanish media reported that the transfer was worth between 3.5 and four million euros (\$4.7m-5.4m).

# Destro faces knee op

AFP, Milan

Roma striker Mattia Destro is set for a spell on the sidelines after twisting his knee in the first leg of an Italian Cup semifinal against Inter Milan, his club announced Friday.

Tests showed Destro suffered "a tear to the lateral meniscus in his knee" according to the Serie A club. Destro is set to undergo arthroscopic surgery "in the coming days", the statement added.

Roma beat Inter 2-1 in the first leg of their semi on Wednesday. The second leg will be played on April 17.

Zdenek Zeman's side sit seventh in Italy's Serie A, 15 points behind leaders Juventus.



**ESPN**  
Australian Open  
Men's Singles Final  
Live from 2:00pm  
**FA Cup**  
Brentford v Chelsea  
Live from 6:00pm  
Atalanta v AC Milan  
Live from 8:00pm  
Oldham v Liverpool  
Live from 10:00pm  
**STAR Sports**  
Primera Liga  
Rayo Vallecano v Real Betis  
Live from 10:00pm  
Barcelona v Osasuna  
Live from 12:00am (Monday)  
Bilbao v Atletico Madrid  
Live from 2:00am (Monday)  
**STAR Cricket**  
India v England