

Balotelli punished

AFP, Turin

AC Milan striker Mario Balotelli has been suspended for three matches by the Italian league's disciplinary committee on Tuesday after insulting an assistant referee.

The Italy international was given a one-match ban after picking up a fourth yellow card in last Sunday's 2-2 draw against Fiorentina.

He was banned for a further two games after insulting a linesman at the end of the match, the league said in a statement.

Balotelli turned on the official who was watching the forward having an animated discussion with Fiorentina goalkeeper Emiliano Viviano.

The suspension means he will miss Milan's next two big matches against Naples and league-leaders Juventus plus the encounter with Catania.

"Super Mario" has scored seven goals in eight games since his arrival from English Premier League club Manchester City in January.

His absence robs third-placed Milan of their first-choice striker as they seek to wrest second spot from Napoli.

10-match ban for racism proposed

AFP, London

Players found guilty of racial abuse will face minimum suspensions of 10 matches, under plans laid out by UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino on Wednesday.

Infantino also said racist offences would trigger partial stadium closures in the first instance and full stadium closures for a second incident.

The proposed punishments would affect all matches in European competition.

"We have to have sanctions and they must have a deterrent effect and what we are proposing is if a player or official is convicted of racism, they should receive a 10-match suspension at least," Infantino told the Soccerex forum in Manchester.

"If supporters at a club are found guilty of racist abuse, the first sanction will be a partial closure of the part of the stadium from which the racist abuse took place.

**What to WATCH**

SET Max
Indian Premier League
Bangalore v KKR
Live from 4:30pm
Pune v Rajasthan
Live from 8:30pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

TEN Sports
UEFA Europa League
Newcastle v Benfica
Live from 1:05am (Friday)

TEN Action
UEFA Europa League
Rubin Kazan v Chelsea
Live from 10:00pm
Basel v Tottenham

**DAY'S EVENT**

Bangladesh U-19s v Sri Lanka U-19s
(Four-Day Match, Day-2)
Time: 9:30am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National

Borussia Dortmund defender Felipe Santana (R) is lifted by his teammate Ilkay Guendogan after his winning goal against Malaga during their Champions League quarterfinal second leg in Dortmund on Tuesday.

PHOTO:
AFP



Dramatic Dortmund

AFP, Dortmund



Borussia Dortmund scored twice in added time to seal a dramatic 3-2 quarterfinal, second-leg win at home to Malaga on Tuesday to reach the last four of the Champions League.

With Malaga leading 2-1 in the dying stages, Dortmund's Marco Reus gave his side a glimmer of hope with a 91st-minute equaliser, but the Spaniards would still have gone through on away goals.

In the frantic closing seconds, Reus managed to stab the ball across the Malaga goal for Brazilian centre-back Felipe Santana to toe the ball over the line for the crucial third Dortmund goal to put the Germans in the last four.

Dortmund go through 3-2 on aggregate after last Wednesday's first leg finished goalless and are into the semifinals for the first time since 1998.

Malaga winger Joaquin had given the Spaniards an early away goal before Poland striker Robert Lewandowski's equaliser made it 1-1 at the break.

Second-half substitute Eliseu then looked to have put Malaga in the semis in their debut season in Europe's top club competition with a goal eight minutes from time, before Dortmund produced two goals in two magical minutes.

It was heart-break for Manuel Pellegrini's side after the Malaga coach had to make a round-trip to his native Chile following the death of his father in the days before the game.

Dortmund continue their run as the only unbeaten team in the competition, but the winning goal came as late as the 93rd minute at the Signal Iduna Park.

Despite the hosts' bright start, a mistimed clearing header from Dortmund centre-back Santana gave Malaga their first chance on 25 minutes, which the Spaniards pounced on to score the early away goal the Germans had dreaded.

When the ball fell to Joaquin, the former Spain winger pulled the ball back onto his left foot, out of reach of his marker Marcel Schmelzer, and rolled his shot through the legs of Neven Subotic and past goalkeeper Roman Weidenfeller.

It meant Dortmund had to score twice, but they needed only 15 minutes to draw level as Germany star Marco Reus sublimely flicked on a pass between his legs and into the path of striker Lewandowski.

Despite the attention of three defenders, the Poland star needed no further invitation to slot in his sixth goal of the competition.

Dortmund had a nervous final few seconds of the half as an unmarked Joaquin came close to netting a second for Malaga.

Lewandowski forced Willy Caballero into a diving save early in the second half, while Weidenfeller produced an outstanding parry to keep out Joaquin's header which looked destined for the bottom corner.

Eliseu looked to have wrapped it up, 12 minutes after coming off the bench, when he knocked Julio Baptista's rolling, goal-bound shot past Weidenfeller from close range to leave Dortmund reeling.

But with the hosts pushing forward frantically, left-back Jesus Gamez was tackled by Santana, and the loose ball fell to Marco Reus, who stroked it in to give Dortmund hope.

And Santana was Dortmund's 11th-hour hero when he stabbed the ball over the line in a desperate scramble after Marco Reus's shot across goal.

Chelsea chasing history

AFP, Paris



Chelsea can take a step closer to becoming only the fourth side to win all three of UEFA's major club competitions by cementing a place in the Europa League semifinals when they travel to Rubin Kazan on Thursday.

Only Juventus, Ajax and Bayern Munich can count Champions League, Cup Winners' Cup and UEFA Cup triumphs among their list of honours, but Chelsea are well positioned to add their name to that elite group as they head to Russia with a 3-1 advantage from the first leg at Stamford Bridge.

"We have established a good lead. We know that the second leg will be difficult away from home, so it was important to get the victory and score three goals," said Brazilian midfielder Ramires.

"Obviously we want to qualify for the Champions League but we don't want to forgo the trophies that we are chasing either," added the 26-year-old, sounding a slightly different tone to teammate John Mikel Obi after the Nigerian revealed his indifference towards Europe's second-tier competition.

"No disrespect to the Europa League... but when you get that buzz, and you hear the Champions League song, it's different.

"It has been kind of frustrating to

watch (Champions League matches) - and we have to then play on Thursday night," Mikel admitted.

History overwhelmingly favours Rafa Benitez's side with the Blues having won all five previous encounters against Russian opposition and Rubin, despite an 18-game European unbeaten run in Kazan, far less dominant in Moscow, the venue for Thursday's return leg, having lost three of their past four matches at the Luzhniki Stadium.

Chelsea's London rivals Tottenham face a significantly sterner challenge as they make the trip to Basel to face the Swiss league

FIXTURES
(kick-off times 1905 GMT unless stated otherwise):
Rubin Kazan (RUS) v Chelsea (ENG) (1600), Basel (SUI) v Tottenham (ENG), Lazio (ITA) v Fenerbahce

leaders with their last-eight tie evenly poised at 2-2 after Spurs recovered from a two-goal deficit at White Hart Lane last week.

Adding to Andre Villas-Boas' problems is the absence of Gareth Bale, Aaron Lennon and William Gallas after the trio all sustained injuries in the first leg.

However, January arrival Lewis Holtby remained confident Tottenham could still secure their place in the last four.

"We are good away from home, we have got some good results this season so we're still positive and our confidence is high," said the German

Police probe Kompany claims

AFP, London

Police in Britain have revealed that they are studying claims that Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany was racially abused as he gave a television interview after his side's win at Manchester United on Monday.

The Belgium international was being interviewed alongside teammate James Milner in the Old Trafford tunnel area when a voice could be heard off-camera apparently shouting abuse, although it was not clear to television viewers what was said.

Kompany scored an own goal in the match, cancelling out Milner's opening goal for City, but the away side prevailed 2-1 through a late strike from Sergio Aguero.

Al-Thani blames racism for defeat

AFP, Dortmund



Malaga president Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Thani has called for UEFA to investigate his team's dramatic 3-2 Champions League defeat at Borussia Dortmund which he blamed on racism.

Dortmund scored two goals in 70 seconds in added time at home on Tuesday to reach the last four of the Champions League after their dramatic quarter-final finished 3-2 on aggregate after last Wednesday's goalless first-leg in Malaga.

Replays showed both Germany midfielder Marco Reus' 91st-minute equaliser and Felipe Santana's 93rd-minute match-winner looked to have been scored from offside positions, leaving Malaga's Qatari billionaire president fuming.

"This is not football, but racism, clearly," he wrote on his Twitter account after his side were denied a Champions League semifinal place on their first season in the competition.

"I hope to open a thorough investigation UEFA regarding the Spanish club out this way [sic].

"Thank you very much for the team, you have been Champions on the pitch, I'm sorry to go out this way (to) injustice and racism."

After the match, the Spaniards' coach Manuel Pellegrini was highly critical of Scottish referee Craig Thomson, but Malaga's second goal by Eliseu, eight minutes from time which had made it 2-1, was also shown to have been offside.

"It was like there wasn't a referee on the pitch at the end, it was chaos in the closing stages, there were six or seven things which went unpunished in our area," fumed Pellegrini.

"There was a chain of mistakes. Whatever needs to be changed, must be changed."

Malaga's sense of injustice was reflected in the Spanish media.

Real made to sweat

AFP, Istanbul

Real Madrid withstood a second-half onslaught from Galatasaray to qualify for their third successive Champions League semifinal 5-3 on aggregate, despite losing 3-2 on the night.

Already leading 3-0 from the first-leg last week, it took Los Blancos just eight minutes to build on their advantage as Sami Khedira crossed for Cristiano Ronaldo to prod home from close range.

However, after Ronaldo had missed a guilt edged opportunity to double his tally on the night, Galatasaray produced a remarkable comeback as Emmanuel Eboue thumped in an equaliser from the edge of the box.

Wesley Sneijder and Didier Drogba then added two goals in a minute to ensure a nervy final 18 minutes for Madrid.

Alvaro Arbeloa saw two quick-fire yellow cards a minute from time to ensure he will miss the first-leg of the semifinal, before Ronaldo sealed Madrid's path into the last four with another sweet strike in stoppage time.

Madrid had been warned about the wall of noise they would face in Istanbul but just like in the first leg,

they started in perfect fashion.

Angel di Maria ought to have done better when his shot towards an open goal was deflected wide after Fernando Muslera had scampered from his line to deny Gonzalo Higuain just three minutes in.

However, the visitors continued to take the game to Galatasaray in the early stages and reaped their reward just five minutes later.

Mesut Ozil was once more the creator for the Spanish champions as he slipped Khedira through on the right side of the area and his driven cross was turned in by Ronaldo for his 10th goal in just 10 Champions League appearances this season.

Ronaldo then played in Di Maria for what would have been the visitors' second on 25 minutes had it not been for an incredible save from Muslera to turn the Argentine's driven effort over the bar.

The hosts created hardly anything of note going forward in the first-half, but Sneijder did test Diego Lopez's handling with a powerful drive from the edge of the area after Madrid had switched off from a short corner seven minutes before half-time.

Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo exults after his second goal against Galatasaray during their Champions League quarterfinal in Istanbul on Tuesday.

PHOTO:
AFP

