

Milan held by PSV

RESULTS

Shakhter Karagandy (KAZ) 2 (Finonchenko 12, Khizhnicenko 77) Celtic (SCO) 0
Lyon 0 **Real Sociedad 2** (Griezmann 17, Seferovic 50)
Pacos de Ferreira (POR) 1 (Andre 58) **Zenit St. Petersburg (RUS) 4** (Shirokov 27, 60, 90, Degra 85-og)
PSV Eindhoven (NED) 1 (Matavz 60) AC Milan 1 (El Shaarawy 15)
Viktoria Plzen 3 (Cisovsky 8, Darida 58, Duris 89)

REUTERS, London

Real Sociedad scored two brilliant goals to win 2-0 against a stunned Olympique Lyonnais side who finished with 10 men while AC Milan held PSV Eindhoven to a 1-1 draw in Champions League playoff first legs on Tuesday.

Zenit St Petersburg midfielder Roman Shirokov netted a hat-trick as the Russian team made light of the absence of Brazil striker Hulk to thump Pacos de Ferreira 4-1 away in Porto.

In the early kickoff, Shakhter Karagandy upset former European champions Celtic 2-0 to stay on course to become the first Kazakh side to reach the group stage while Czech champions Viktoria Plzen beat Slovenia's Maribor 3-1 at home.

Mexican Carlos Vela laid on Sociedad's opener in the 17th minute with a fine cross from the left which Frenchman Antoine Griezmann, playing against his boyhood club Lyon, volleyed into the net with a bicycle kick from the edge of the box.

Swiss forward Haris Seferovic increased the Spanish side's lead five minutes after the break with another fine shot inside goal-



keeper Anthony Lopes's near post.

Lyon defender Milan Bisevac was sent off after fouling Vela just outside the box in the 75th to earn a

second booking.

Milan have a slight advantage after their draw at PSV in a clash between former European Cup winners.

Italy striker Stephan El Shaarawy headed the opener with Tim Matavz equalising for PSV from a rebound after Christian Abbiati failed to hold Jeffrey Bruma's scorching drive on the hour.

Zenit virtually sealed their berth in the lucrative group stage with their thumping victory at the Dragao, home of Hulk's former club Porto, with modest Pacos facing an uphill struggle to get back into the tie in next week's second leg in Russia.

Hulk missed a return to Porto after suffering an injury during a Russian league game at the weekend but he was hardly missed as defensive midfielder Shirokov provided the finishing.

Shirokov put Zenit ahead in the 27th minute, running on to Portuguese winger Danny's cross, but the hosts equalised just before the hour mark through Andre Leao at a corner.

Shirokov soon restored Zenit's lead from Danny's corner and they went 3-1 up five minutes from time thanks to an own goal by Pacos goalkeeper Matias Degra who deflected the ball into the net when a free kick by Aleksandr Kerzhakov came off the bar.

Shirokov completed his treble in the final minute.

Shakhter stunned Celtic with opportunistic goals from strikers Andrei Finonchenko and Sergei Khizhnicenko.



AC Milan striker Stephen El Shaarawy (L) exults after scoring the opening goal against PSV Eindhoven during their Champions League qualifying match in Eindhoven on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WC tickets in high demand

REUTERS, Undated

Over one million World Cup finals ticket requests were made within the first seven hours of public sale, soccer's world governing body FIFA said on Tuesday.

The first phase of sales for next year's tournament runs until October 10 and FIFA said more than 163,000 people had made requests on Tuesday for various games.

The opening match on June 12 at the Arena de Sao Paulo (over 168,000 requests) and the final at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro (more than 165,000) were the two most popular games.

The most requests for tickets came from Brazil, Argentina, the United States, Chile and England, added FIFA.

A lottery will be held to decide the distribution for games which are over-subscribed.

Alonso suffers broken foot

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid midfielder Xabi Alonso could be out for up to three months after breaking a bone in his foot during training, the club confirmed on Wednesday.

"Xabi Alonso has today suffered a fracture in the fifth metatarsal of his right foot, x-rays carried out by the club's medical staff have revealed," said a statement on Real's website.

Although the club didn't specify an expected recovery period, Spanish media reported that Alonso will be out for three months.

The former Liverpool man had only recently returned to training following an operation on a groin injury that prevented him from taking part in the Confederations Cup in June, and wasn't included in Carlo Ancelotti's squad for his first competitive match against Real Betis on Sunday due to a lack of match practice.

Lewandowski settles disagreements

REUTERS, Berlin



Borussia Dortmund forward Robert Lewandowski has resolved differences with the club over a failed transfer to Bayern Munich in the close season, the Poland international said on Wednesday after being given a pay rise.

Lewandowski was desperate to leave the Champions League runners-up to join treble winners Bayern Munich but the deal fell through after Dortmund blocked the transfer, saying he had a contract until 2014.

A bitter war of words ensued between the two sides, raising concerns over his commitment to Dortmund in his final year of his contract.

"The situation is now that I will stay in Dortmund for one more year," Lewandowski told sport bild magazine. "We have put aside all disagreements and have cleared the air. There were mistakes made but the case is closed."

"I had a different starting point. I thought I was allowed to transfer. I was then disappointed and angry. But now everything is calm. I have always said I would respect my contract."

Dortmund also said they gave the forward an unspecified pay hike last week based on last season's performances.

"It is true that we have adapted his remunerations to his sporting contribution," Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke said, without giving any details on the rise of the forward's annual salary. "We had intended for months to do that."



German media reported his salary was up from 1.5 million euros (\$2.01 million) to 5.0 million annually.

The Poland international enjoyed a sensational season, scoring 24 league goals and adding another 10 in the Champions League, including four in one game against Real Madrid.

Dortmund, who lost out to Bayern in all three competitions last season, will not receive a transfer fee if Lewandowski leaves as a free agent after his deal expires next year.

Liverpool seal Cissokho deal

AFP, London

French left-back Aly Cissokho has joined Liverpool on a season-long loan from Valencia, the Premier League club announced on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old, who has been capped once by France, joined Valencia from Lyon last year and made 25 league appearances in his debut campaign for the Spanish club, scoring twice. He has also played for Porto.

Subject to the completion of paperwork, he will become the fifth player to sign for the five-time European champions since the end of last season, joining Belgian goalkeeper Simon Mignolet, Ivorian centre-back Kolo Toure and Spanish forwards Luis Alberto and Iago Aspas at Anfield.

"I feel extremely proud to be here and I'm proud of all the hard work I've put in so far throughout my career," Cissokho told the Liverpool website.

"I've always dreamt of one day signing for a really legendary club. I've been lucky enough to play for a few top sides and so to now get the chance to play for a club like Liverpool, it's just fantastic."

Ian faces rap

AFP, London



Crystal Palace manager Ian Holloway faces disciplinary charges over his conduct following his side's Premier League loss to Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday, the Football Association announced on Tuesday.

Holloway protested that his team had been the victims of unfair officiating after a second-half penalty from Roberto Soldado gave Spurs a 1-0 win at Palace on the opening weekend of the season.

He is accused of questioning the match officials' integrity and also faces a charge relating to his conduct in the vicinity of the referee's changing room after the game.

"Crystal Palace manager Ian Holloway has been charged by The FA in relation to two separate matters. Firstly, it is alleged that Holloway's language and/or behaviour in or around the match officials changing room at the end of the game amounted to improper conduct," the FA said in a statement.

"Secondly, it is alleged that Holloway's post-match media comments questioned the integrity of the referee and/or match officials and/or implied that the referee and/or match officials were motivated by bias; and/or brought the game into disrepute."

Holloway has until 16:00 local time (1500GMT) on Friday to respond to the charges.

Holloway, who led Palace to promotion from the Championship via the play-offs last season, was aggrieved that Spurs winger Nacer Chadli was not penalised for a challenge on Stephen Dobbie shortly before the visiting team were awarded the penalty that decided the game.

Speaking after the match, he told the BBC: "I've got to learn what a foul is because I thought Nacer Chadli deliberately body checked Stephen Dobbie, smashed him down and ran off with the ball."

"If the referee didn't see that, the assistant should have. You have to ask if he's good enough if he didn't see that. I don't see how he can miss it."

"It's going to be a long hard season for me with these people. I had this with (his former club) Blackpool. "Certain clubs get fouls and others don't."

Second Rising Stars kicks off

SPORTS REPORTER

Airtel Bangladesh Ltd, one of the country's leading mobile operators, is set to start its second season of the Airtel Rising Stars for budding and talented footballers across the country.

Like the previous season, Airtel will pick up 12 talented booters from across the country and provide them with the chance of a lifetime to attend a week-long training camp at the Manchester United Soccer School in Old Trafford, England.

The announcement came yesterday at a city hotel with the presence of Manchester United's former Irish full-back Denis Irwin and managing director Chris Tobit briefing the press.

"We have been highly enthusiastic after the success of the previous season in Bangladesh and we had the pleasure of working closely with a number of extremely talented players. With an ever growing fan base of Manchester United in Bangladesh, we are hopeful to see equally talented individuals this time too," said Denis.

The registration for the participating budding booters will get underway from September 1 before the talent hunt program starts from October, said the speakers.

Ox blow for Arsenal

REUTERS, London



Arsenal's Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain will be out for at least six weeks with a knee injury, manager Arsene Wenger said on Tuesday, easing fears the England winger could be set for an even longer spell on the sidelines.

He was injured in a collision with Aston Villa defender Antonio Luna in Arsenal's opening day Premier League home defeat on Saturday which ruled him out of their Champions League qualifier at Fenerbahce on Wednesday.

British media had reported that the 20-year-old could be out for up to six months but Wenger allayed those concerns.

"It will be at least six weeks out with a posterior cruciate problem... a ligament that is stretched. We don't think it will need surgery," the Arsenal manager told a news conference ahead of the playoff first leg in Turkey on Wednesday.

The Arsenal manager has found himself under early pressure following Saturday's disappointing 3-1 reverse against Villa which followed a difficult close season in the transfer market.

The north London club made a failed bid

to sign Uruguay striker Luis Suarez from Liverpool and were rebuked by Newcastle United manager Alan Pardew on Monday for lacking respect after making an offer for French midfielder Yohan Cabaye.

Arsenal's bid came before Newcastle's game at Manchester City which they lost 4-0 with Cabaye left out of the team.

"I do not know whether it is fair or unfair," Wenger told reporters. "I just do what is best for this football club."

Arsenal, who finished fourth last season to clinch a Champions League playoff spot, have so far signed only Yaya Sanogo on a free transfer from Auxerre and Wenger is under pressure from disgruntled fans to sign some quality players.

The Frenchman said he will try to reinforce his squad but emphasised that he has faith in the players he already has.

"As always, we do what we think is right," he was quoted as saying on the club's official website. "When we think we have the right players, we do it."

"We were for years restricted and we competed with exceptional quality. This year we did not lose any players - we just lost two players with injury - but we will try to strengthen the squad and make the right decisions until the end."



Airtel managing director Chris Tobit (L) and Manchester United's former Irish full-back Denis Irwin holds a famed United jersey during the launch of the second Airtel Rising Stars at a city hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY