



Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney (C) takes a shot during their Premier League encounter against Chelsea at Old Trafford on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gundogan out for another month

AFP, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund will be without Germany midfielder Ilkay Gundogan for at least another four weeks, ruling him out of next month's World Cup qualifiers against Austria and Faroe Islands.

The 22-year-old has been sidelined since aggravating a back injury in Germany's 3-3 friendly draw against Paraguay on August 14 and an MRI scan on Monday revealed he has a strain in the lumbar region and will be out for another month.

It means Gundogan will miss Germany's World Cup Qualifier against Austria in Munich on September 6 and away to Faroe Islands in Torshavn four days later, as well as at least Dortmund's next three league matches.

Having joined from Nuremberg in 2011, Gundogan has risen to become first choice defensive midfielder for Dortmund.

MU-Chelsea ends in stalemate

AFP, Manchester



Wayne Rooney may have played his way out of a transfer to Chelsea after a committed display in Manchester United's 0-0 draw against their Premier League rivals on Monday.

Rooney has been the subject of two failed bids from Chelsea in recent weeks, but he was one of few impressive players on a night when the season's first major head-to-head clash failed to live up to its billing.

The point was enough to send Chelsea top of the nascent standings, but they have played a game more than the rest and United can draw level with them if they win at Liverpool on Sunday.

Rooney's inclusion in United's starting XI, for the first time since April, caused the evening's first ripple of excitement, but Mourinho's team selection was every bit as eye-catching.

The Portuguese named a team without a recognised striker, deploying Andre Schuerrle up front ahead of Oscar, Eden Hazard and Kevin De Bruyne, and leaving Fernando Torres and Romelu Lukaku on the bench.

Moyes could not have picked a more high-profile opponent for his first turn in the Old Trafford dug-out, or a more glorious evening, but the fare on the newly laid pitch was disappointing.

Twice, Oscar shot straight at United goal-

keeper David de Gea, while United's best chance of the first half saw Robin van Persie deceive half the stadium into thinking a goal had been scored with a snapshot that ruffled the side-netting.

Rooney, for his part, looked determined to influence the game, despite Chelsea's fans mischievously taking up their United counterparts' chants of "Rooney!" and pledging: "We'll see you next week!"

Playing in support of Van Persie, he constantly dropped deep to demand the ball, but when he managed to find space on the edge of the box with a smart turn, his shot lacked the power to trouble Cech.

Chelsea were content for their hosts to attack them, but the tactic almost back-fired in the 56th minute when Rooney found Danny Welbeck inside the box, only for the England forward to poke the ball wide.

In response, Gary Cahill tested De Gea's handling with a meaty drive from distance, but Mourinho decided his team needed a greater cutting edge and sent on Torres for De Bruyne.

For all the enmity between the sides, the game lacked bite, but United appeared to have came to feel aggrieved when referee Martin Atkinson failed to award a penalty after Tom Cleverley's shot struck Lampard on the hand.

Rooney raised the biggest cheer of the night with a full-bodied sliding tackle to dispossess Ramires, before giving Cech his last and most searching examination of the night with a powerful drive from 30 yards.

Deco calls it quits

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Deco, the former Barcelona, Porto and Chelsea midfielder, has blamed injury on his decision to retire from football at the age of 35.

The Brazilian-born former Portuguese international hung up his boots on Monday with a clutch of titles to his name, including the Champions League with Porto in 2004 and again two years later with Barcelona.

"With a lot of sadness and hurt I am announcing the end of my professional career," said Deco, who has had a frustrating final season with a series of health problems for his Brazilian club Fluminense.

Deco, who had a two-year spell with Chelsea from 2008, returned to his homeland in 2010 where he picked up two national league titles with Fluminense.

"I've been really happy during this time, I wanted to help Fluminense more but my body won't allow that, my muscles can no longer put up (with the demands of professional football)."

Pursuit over

AGENCIES, Manchester



Wayne Rooney has decided against lodging a formal transfer request with Manchester United, bringing to an end to the summer-long saga regarding his future.

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho earlier suggested his club's pursuit of Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney may be at an end following the 0-0 draw between the teams on Monday.

Mourinho has had two bids for the 27-year-old rejected by United and after Rooney produced a committed display in the game at Old Trafford, the Chelsea coach admitted he may miss out on signing the England star.

"This is a special club with special fans and I think probably now he thinks he wants to stay," Mourinho told Sky Sports.

"If that is his decision, we will respect that and say it is over. If now, he does not want to leave, we are out of the thing but we need to know what is happening."

Speaking to reporters later, Mourinho said he would wait only 48 hours for Rooney to make up his mind about his future and called on the striker to made a clear declaration about his desires.

"The person that starts the story has to finish the story," he said.

"A club like us, a manager like me, and the people that work in the club with me, we are not silly to try to get a player from a big club, a club that doesn't sell what they don't want to sell."

"I think it's time, for the good of everyone, to finish the story, to one side or the other side."

Asked why he had been led to believe that Rooney wanted to leave United, Mourinho replied: "He told somebody that it is very important in his career."

When asked how long he was prepared to wait, Mourinho said "24 hours, 48 hours", and warned that Chelsea would move for another player, believed to be Anzhi Makhachkala's Samuel Eto'o, if they cannot sign Rooney.

Lebanese refs refuse to testify

AFP, Singapore

Two Lebanese match officials jailed in Singapore for accepting free sex from an alleged match-fixer have refused to return to the city-state to testify at his trial, a court heard Tuesday.

Assistant referees Ali Eid, 33, and Abdallah Taleb, 37, were deported in June after serving three-month prison sentences for accepting the services of a prostitute as a bribe from Singaporean nightclub owner Eric Ding Si Yang.

Another Lebanese national, referee Ali Sabbagh, testified for the prosecution last month while he was still in Singapore serving a six-month jail term.

Tan Kian Tat Jeffrey, an investigator from the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB), told the court that Ali Eid and Abdallah Taleb had communicated to him their unwillingness to return to testify.

Benzema saves Real blushes

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid made it two wins from two games under Carlo Ancelotti with a 1-0 victory at Granada, but Los Blancos were again made to work for the three points.

Rumours of Gareth Bale's impending arrival in Madrid had somewhat overshadowed the build-up to the game, but the visitors didn't appear distracted as Karim Benzema opened the scoring after just 10 minutes.

Mesut Ozil then had a goal ruled out and Isco struck the post after the break as Madrid continued to have the lion's share of the chances.

However, Granada were denied a great chance to snatch a point five minutes from time when referee Javier Estrada Fernandez failed to spot a trip on Diego Buonanotte by Casemiro inside the area.

Real also won by just the odd goal against Real Betis last weekend, but Ancelotti stressed it is vital to keep winning whilst they make the adjustments to the style of football he wants to play.

Ancelotti's decision to keep faith with Diego Lopez in goal ahead of Spanish captain Iker Casillas was the big news before kick-off, but the Italian picked a very attack-minded line-up with Angel Di Maria coming in for the injured Sami Khedira and the former Milan boss was rewarded with a very bright start by his side.

Benzema should have put Real in front after just five minutes when he skewed wide after a lovely reverse ball from Di Maria had played him in.

The Frenchman made amends five minutes later though as Di Maria's cross from the right was inadvertently knocked into Benzema's path by Cristiano Ronaldo and he swept home from close range for his second goal of the season.

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