

What to WATCH

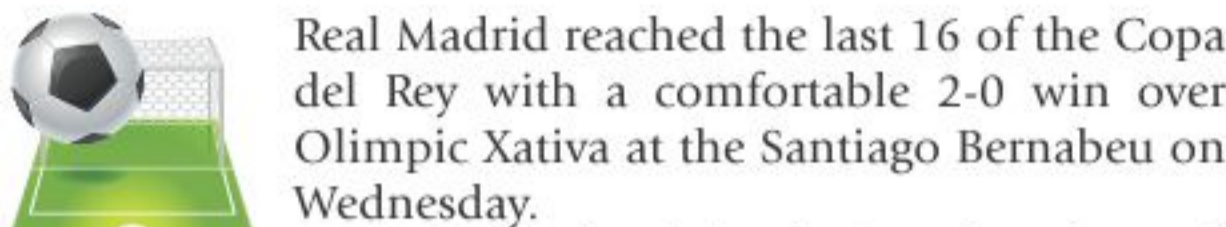
TEN Sports
South Africa v India
First Test, Day 3
Live from 2:30pm
Sony Six HD
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
Second ODI (D/N)
Live from 5:00pm

NEO Prime
Bundesliga
Eintracht Frankfurt v Augsburg
Live from 1:30am (Saturday)
New Zealand v West Indies
Third Test, Day 3
Live from 3:30am (Saturday)

STAR Sports 4
Primera Liga
Elche v Malaga
Live from 1:45am (Saturday)

Real, Atletico reach last 16

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid reached the last 16 of the Copa del Rey with a comfortable 2-0 win over Olympic Xativa at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday.

Without the injured Gareth Bale and suspended Cristiano Ronaldo, Real boss Carlo Ancelotti gave a number of his younger players another chance to impress despite being held to a 0-0 draw in the first-leg 10 days ago.

And the Italian was rewarded as Asier Illaramendi slotted home his first goal for the club before Angel di Maria's penalty made it 2-0 at the break.

The hosts failed to add to their tally in the second-half, but were never threatened by their third-tier opponents as they eased into the next round where they will face Osasuna.

Atletico Madrid, meanwhile, were forced to come from behind to beat minnows Sant Andreu 2-1 on the night at the Vicente Calderon to progress into the last 16, 6-1 on aggregate.

Alberto Carroza had fired the visitors into a shock lead as Atletico conceded for the first time at home since early October.

Atletico then passed up a host of chances to level before the break as Jose Gimenez had a goal harshly ruled out for offside, while Adrian Lopez blasted a penalty over the bar.

With such an advantage from the first-leg, Atletico boss Diego Simeone had handed a night off to the majority of his first-team regulars and had to turn to 18-year-old Hector Hernandez in his search for an equaliser.

The young forward duly delivered when he turned home Adrian's cross 12 minutes from time.

Sant Andreu looked like they may still hold out for a famous draw, but they were cruelly denied with the last action of the game as Toby Alderweireld headed home Gabi's free-kick deep into stoppage time.

Atletico will now face Valencia or Gimnastic in the next round.

Racing Santander produced the surprise of the evening as they overcame a 1-0 first-leg deficit with a 2-0 win away to 10-man Sevilla.

David Miguelez pulled the visitors level in the tie from the penalty spot after Stephane M'bia had been sent-off for hauling down Mariano Sainz inside the area.

Mahamadou Kone then sealed the comeback in

RESULTS

Real Betis 2 (Paulao 6, Amaya 10) Lleida 2 (Monforte 38, Mata 55)

Real Betis win 4-3 on aggregate

Almeria 0 Las Palmas 0

Almeria win 3-1 on aggregate

Atletico Madrid 2 (Hector 78, Alderweireld 90+3) Sant Andreu 1

(Carroza 14)

Atletico Madrid win 6-1 on aggregate

Real Sociedad 4 (Ros 40, Seferovic 65, Griezmann 70, Vela 75) Algeciras 0

Real Sociedad win 5-1 on aggregate

Real Madrid 2 (Illarramendi 16, Di Maria 28-pen) Olympic Xativa 0

Real Madrid win 2-0 on aggregate

Sevilla 0 Racing Santander 2 (Miguelez 63-pen, Kone 90)



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid winger Angel di Maria (R) imitates a baby after scoring against Olympic Xativa during their Spanish Copa del Rey match at the Bernabeu on Wednesday.

Iniesta agrees new deal

AFP, Madrid

Spanish international Andres Iniesta has agreed to extend his Barcelona contract until at least 2018, the club said Thursday.

"Iniesta's extension is confirmed, we have shaken on it and that is enough for us," Barcelona president Sandro Rosell told a news conference.

The deal will probably be formalised on Monday, he said, putting an end to weeks of rumours about the emblematic player's future.

The 29-year-old midfielder's contract keeps him with Barcelona until 2018, after which it can be extended annually depending on his sporting performance, Rosell said.

The Barcelona boss gave no financial details but said in September Iniesta should be the second best paid player in the team.

MU in semis, Spurs out

AFP, London



Manchester United beat Stoke City 2-0 to reach the League Cup semi-finals on Wednesday, while the post Andre Villas-Boas era at Tottenham Hotspur began with defeat by West Ham United.

After a first-half hailstorm briefly forced the teams off the pitch at the Britannia Stadium, United prevailed through fine strikes from Ashley Young and Patrice Evra to join Sunderland and Manchester City in the last four.

With Wayne Rooney absent due to an unspecified injury, United manager David Moyes deployed Danny Welbeck as a lone striker, while Chris Smalling, Anderson and Young were all brought into the team.

Young was given an early sight of goal when a square pass from Welbeck found him in space on the edge of the box, but he could only find the side-netting with his rising shot.

The hail arrived in the 28th minute, sending players and match officials

RESULTS

Stoke City 0 Manchester United 2 (Young 62,

Evra 78)

Tottenham Hotspur 1 (Adebayor 67) West Ham

scurrying for the cover of the changing rooms, before play resumed following a 10-minute delay.

Jonny Evans might have put United ahead shortly before half-time but he could not get a shot away after latching onto Smalling's near-post flick-on.

Moyes introduced Javier Hernandez with just over half an hour remaining and moments later Young made the breakthrough in stunning fashion.

The former Aston Villa winger played a pass forward to Hernandez and when the ball came back to him on the edge of the box, he met it with a first-time drive of searing power that Thomas Sorensen got his gloves to but could not stop.

Stoke rallied, briefly, but United put the game to bed in the 78th minute when Evra exchanged passes with

Young before curling a fine shot inside the right-hand post with his seldom-used right foot.

Playing for the first time since Villas-Boas was sacked on Monday, Spurs let a 1-0 lead slip in a 2-1 loss at home to London rivals West Ham.

Interim coach Tim Sherwood picked an adventurous team, giving Emmanuel Adebayor his first start of the season alongside Jermain Defoe up front, and the pair combined to give Spurs the lead in the 67th minute.

Defoe crossed from the left and Adebayor slid in to slam home an emphatic volley via the underside of the crossbar.

However, there was a blow for Spurs when Andros Townsend was forced off with an apparent hamstring injury and in the 80th minute West Ham levelled when Matt Taylor teed up Matt Jarvis to beat Hugo Lloris at his near post.

Modibo Maiga completed West Ham's comeback five minutes later, heading in from a Mohamed Diame cross to give Sam Allardyce's side a second consecutive win at White Hart Lane following a 3-0 league success in

Messi on the mend

AFP, Madrid

Argentina's four-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi's recovery from a torn hamstring is on schedule, his club Barcelona confirmed on Wednesday.

Messi was ruled out for the rest of the year when he suffered the latest in a number of recent muscle injuries in Barca's 4-1 win over Real Betis at the beginning of November.

The 26-year-old is currently in Argentina as he undergoes treatment, but has been joined in Buenos Aires by Barca sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta and club doctor Ricard Pruna.

"The fitness test and scan carried out this morning by doctor Ricard Pruna at the training facilities of the Argentine Football Federation in Buenos Aires showed good progress in Lionel Messi's injury," the club said in a statement.

"More tests will be carried out on Friday to set the timescale for the third part of the player's recovery process and training schedule."

Barca boss Gerardo Martino said on Tuesday that he expects Messi to be back in Barcelona on January 2.

And the Catalans hope that their star man could even be fit to face Atletico Madrid in a clash between the top two sides in La Liga on January 11.

Golam Rasul no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Eminent sports organiser Golam Rasul Mollah died of kidney failure at a city hospital yesterday morning. He was 67.

Mollah, who had been suffering from the disease for a long time, left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

Mollah had been involved with the country's sports over a long time. He was the general secretary of Tangail District Sports Association for 18 years in row. He was also the general secretary of Bangladesh Athletics Federation and Dhaka Divisional Sports Association. The veteran organiser also served as a vice-president of Bangladesh Football Federation and Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Mollah was buried at the Shahjahanpur graveyard after two namaz-e-janazas at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and Shantinagar Aminbagh Jame Mosque.

Derby final on the cards

AFP, London

This season's English League Cup final could be an all-Manchester affair after cross-town rivals Manchester United and Manchester City avoided each other in Wednesday's semi-final draw.

Four-time winners United, who beat Stoke City 2-0 in the quarter-finals, will play Sunderland.

City, meanwhile, were drawn against West Ham United, having booked their place in the last four on Tuesday when they defeated second-tier Leicester City 3-1.

DRAW

Sunderland v Manchester United

Manchester City v West Ham United

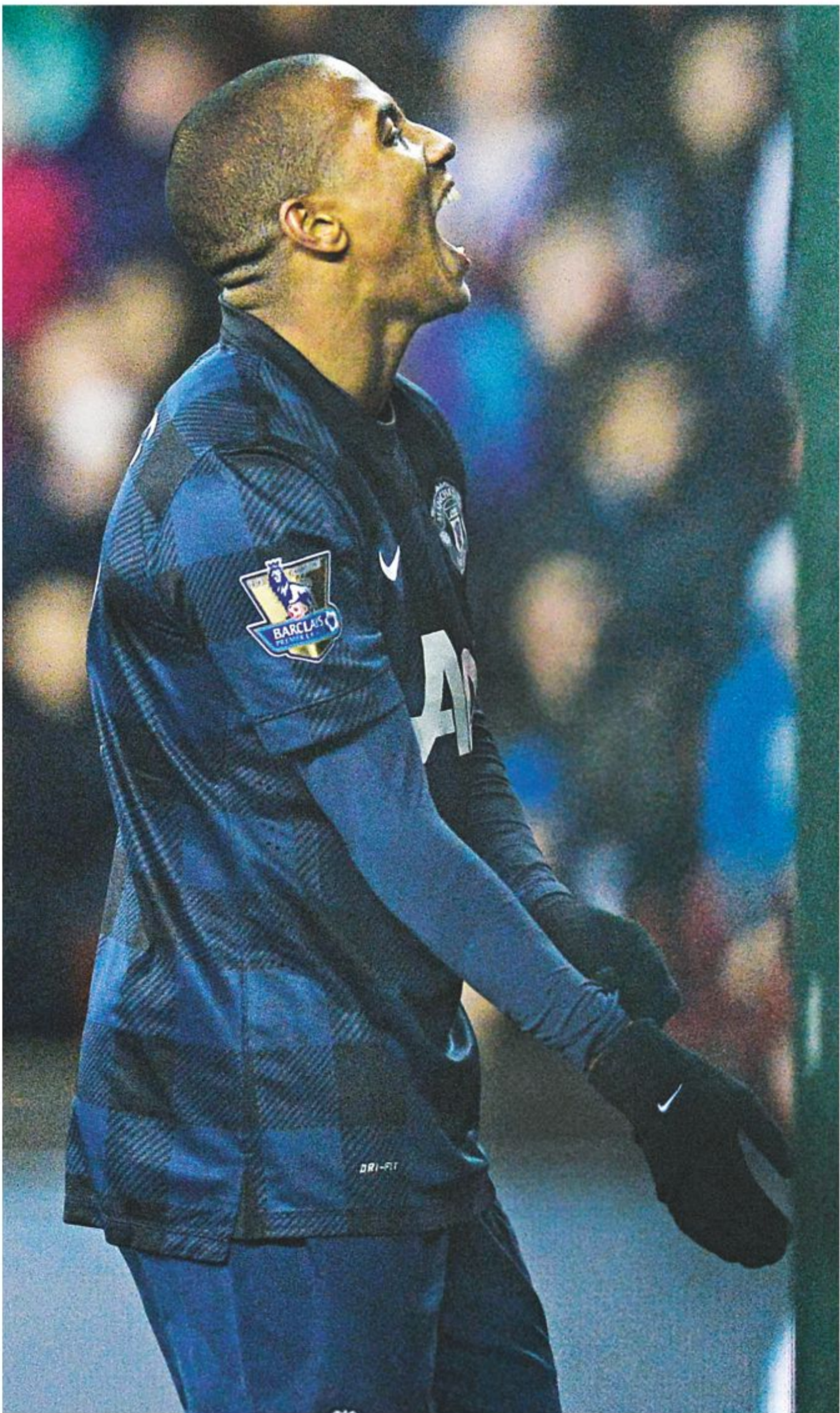
First legs to be played during the week commencing January 6; second legs during week commencing January 20

Ramos wins red card appeal

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos will be free to play against Valencia on Sunday after the club's appeal against his 18th career red card in the game with Osasuna last Saturday was successful.

The first of Ramos' two yellow cards in the first-half of the 2-2 draw in Pamplona was rescinded by the competition committee of the Spanish Football Federation on Wednesday.



Manchester United winger Ashley Young is ecstatic after scoring the opening goal against Stoke City during their League Cup quarterfinal at the Britannia Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

CLUB WORLD CUP

Raja stun Mineiro

AFP, Marrakech



Home-grown midfielder Mouhssine Moutouali converted an 84th minute penalty to help ensure Raja Casablanca became only the second African team in history to reach the Club World Cup final as they defeated Brazilians Atletico Mineiro 3-1 on Wednesday.

The Moroccan champions, who qualified as the host team, equal Congolese club TP Mazembe who lost the 2010 final against Inter Milan, and will now face European champions Bayern Munich in Saturday's final in Marrakech.

However, unlike Mazembe, Raja did not even qualify for the tournament, taking part only because they are the champions of the host country -- making their achievement all the more impressive.

Striker Mouhcine Iajour, who was on the

scoresheet during the 2-1 extra-time quarter-final win over Mexicans Monterrey, hit the target to send the partisan 35,000 crowd into hysterics with the opening goal six minutes into the second-half.

However the lead was short-lived as former world player of the year Ronaldinho levelled 12 minutes later when he beat Khalid Askri in the home goal.

The game appeared to be heading towards extra-time before Rever brought down Iajour in the box, allowing Moutouali to become the hero, smashing home the ball with just minutes remaining.

Then deep into injury time, Central African international Vianney Madibe capped a glorious night in Raja's history with their third goal, to the delight of their Tunisian-born 63-year-old coach Faouzi Benzarti, who has enjoyed three spells at the helm of his national team and also won the African Champions League in 1994 with Esperance.

Spanish judge demands Neymar contracts

AFP, Madrid



A Spanish judge has ruled that Barcelona must submit the contracts that brought Brazilian star Neymar to the club in May to ascertain if president Sandro Rosell has a case to answer for misappropriation of funds.

Barcelona have publicly stated that the money from Neymar's signing was distributed among four companies at a total cost of 57.1 million euros (\$78.6 million, £48.2 million). However, the club have claimed a confidentiality clause in the contract prevents them from saying how much each of the parties received of the overall fee.

That led to a Barca member Jordi Cases launching a case against Rosell for misappropriating funds.

According to Cases' complaint, only 17.1

million euros was paid for Neymar's registration rights whilst the other 40 million euros went to a company called N&N, which is owned by the player's father.

Earlier in the week prosecutors had asked the judge in the case, Pablo Ruz, to demand Barcelona hand over the contracts involved in the player's signing.

Ruz has now acceded to that request and Barca have five days to submit the contracts in question to the court.

Once Ruz has studied the content in the contracts, he will then decide whether the case will proceed.

Barcelona spokesman Toni Freixa described the complaint when it was first presented as a "reckless and unfounded complaint that damaged the club's image."

However, he insisted at a press conference on Monday that the club would fully co-operate with the authorities.