TEN SPORTS

Europa League

Juventus v Benfica

Eager for final

AFP, Munich



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo says the chance to win the Champions League title with Real Madrid in Lisbon means more to him than setting the new European goal-scoring

The 29-year-old Real star netted twice in Tuesday's historic 4-0 rout of Bayern Munich as the holders suffered their heaviest home defeat in European competition to crash out of the semifinals 5-0 on aggregate.

Ronaldo picked up his 15th and 16th goals of the current European campaign to help put the Spanish side into the final in Lisbon on May 24 as Carlo Ancelotti's side humiliated the defending champions.

The Portuguese forward's two goals helped him eclipse the previous best of 14 in a season registered by Barcelona's Lionel Messi in 2011-12 and Jose Altafini of AC Milan in 1962-63.

"The team really helped me, I am overjoyed, but not primarily because of the cup record, but mainly because we now have the chance to win the title, especially in my home country, in Lisbon," said Ronaldo, who was born on the island of Madeira, but started his professional career at Sporting Lisbon.

Real will face either Mourinho's Chelsea or neighbours Atletico Madrid in the Lisbon final as they look to claim 'La Decima' -- their tenth European title having last reached the Champions League final in 2002.

"We'll go there (to Lisbon) with our heads held high, but with our feet on the ground. It will be a difficult game," said Ronaldo, with the final to be held at the Estadio da Luz, the home of Benfica, the local rivals of Sporting, who Ronaldo left in 2003 to join Manchester United as an 18-year-old.

Ronaldo put Real's emphatic win down to their Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti as reigning European champions Bayern were humiliated in their own Allianz Arena stadium.



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (L) scores his second goal from a freekick during their Champions League semifinal against Bayern Munich in Munich on Tuesday.

РНОТО:

Ancelotti relishing bid for Decima



Carlo Ancelotti said he is relishing bidding for Real Madrid's tenth European title after their historic 4-0 win over Bayern Munich in the Champions League semifi-

nal, second-leg.

Real blasted their way into the final 5-0 on aggregate and will face either neighbours Atletico Madrid or Jose Mourinho's Chelsea on May 24 in Lisbon as Bayern suffered their heaviest European home defeat on Tuesday.

Real centre-back Sergio Ramos produced two early bullet headers to put the visitors 2-0 up after 20 minutes before Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice to complete the rout.

His brace left Ronaldo with a record 16 Champions League goals this season to season set by Barcelona's Lionel Messi in 2011-12 and Jose Altafini of AC Milan in of the campaign for a first-half foul. 1962-63.

in 2002, are now one game away from 'La Decima' - their 10th European title - and Ancelotti. Ancelotti is through to his fourth Champions League final as a coach, equalling the record.

"To reach the final after 12 years, that is a fantastic objective to have reached," said the 54-year-old Ancelotti, who replaced Mourinho as Real coach at the start of the season.

"When I came to Madrid, there was a

special atmosphere and you can feel the desire to win 'La Decima'.

"The players were fantastic and we have to keep the same attitude for the final. "This is one victory here and nothing else.

"We're happy to beat the defending champions, we managed to prevent them from scoring in either leg and controlled both matches very well, so we deserved the

Having won the Champions League title in 2003 and 2007 with AC Milan, Ancelotti could face his former club Chelsea in the final after they host Atletico in Wednesday's other semifinal.

"Chelsea are really strong and have a lot of confidence, but it doesn't really matter who we'll face, just that we are there," he said having coached Chelsea from 2009-11.

The only downside to Real's stunning win eclipse the previous best tally of 14 in a in Germany was the loss of Xabi Alonso for the final after he picked up his third booking

"We're sad to lose Xabi Alonso, not just Real, who last reached the European final for tactical reasons, but he's also a big loss as a personality. We're sad for him," added

> Goal-scorer Ramos said it was a dream to reach the final.

"Today, Madrid went to a level that will be recognised across the world and to score two goals is a dream," he said.

"The final is Lisbon is a dream. It has been a long time coming and we need to thank all our fans.

Townsend's WC dream over

AFP, London

Tottenham Hotspur announced on Wednesday that Andros Townsend will be sidelined for around 10 weeks with an ankle ligament problem, effectively ruling him out of the

World Cup for England. "Following further examination and consultation, Andros Townsend is to undergo surgery on his left ankle on Thursday after damaging ligaments during our fixture against Stoke City last Saturday," Tottenham said in a state-

ment on their website. "The injury is likely to sideline the young winger for up to 10 weeks."

A period of unavailability of 10 weeks would leave Townsend unable to play until the second week in July, by which time England's World Cup campaign in Brazil may already be over.

England manager Roy Hodgson is due to announce his 23-man squad for the tournament on May 12.

Pep picks up pieces

AFP, Munich



Pep Guardiola has been left picking up the pieces amidst the fall-out from Bayern Munich's historic 4-0 hammering at home to Real Madrid which dethroned the

Champions League holders.

Bayern suffered their heaviest home defeat in European competition on Tuesday, losing the semifinal 5-0 on aggregate, with Guardiola admitting he made mistakes with both his tactics and selection in Munich. "Debacle" was how chairman Karl-Heinz

Rummenigge described the defeat and most of the shell-shocked players expressed their "deep disappointment" in the mixed zone.

Germany's media did not pull their punches. Bild ran the headline "Real humiliate

echoed Rummenigge with "debacle German football. Dahoam", using the Bavarian word for 'home'. Bayern had never previously lost in face arch-rivals Borussia Dortmund at Europe by more than two goals in Munich

and the defeat made a mockery of their dream to become the first team to successfully defend the Champions League title. Even with their European crown now

gone, Guardiola has still won three titles this season and the German Cup can yet be added to their league, Club World Cup and UEFA Super Cup triumphs.

But with their coveted Champions League hopes in tatters, Guardiola has already faced criticism of his fast-passing 'Tiki-Taka' football and over reliance on possession after Real hit them on the counter-attack.

Having cryptically questioned whether

his players were up to playing his style of football, Guardiola then insisted he was "proud" of what they had achieved this season prior to the Real drubbing. "We need to think if this is the best system

for the players," said Guardiola, who is under contract until June 2016. "I made a mistake with the tactics, the

trainer wasn't good today. "We played badly, that's my responsibil-

"I made a mistake with our tactics.

"We are at the highest level in Europe

where such errors are punished." Such talk can only come from a head coach who feels secure in his position, but

that will change quickly should there be any Guardiola" and Munich-based tabloid TZ challenge to Bayern's position at the top of Guardiola has the chance to redeem himself on May 17 when holders Bayern

> Berlin's Olympic Stadium in the German Cup final. A further defeat, or a similar repeat of the 5-2 drubbing Dortmund handed Bayern in

> the 2012 final, would only confirm Guardiola's poor first season by Bayern's lofty standards. The Spaniard has admitted he has struggled to get the most out of his team since

they wrapped up the Bundesliga title with a

record seven matches to spare last month.

racist condemnation.

Villarreal said they had identified the fan who threw the banana, withdrawn his club membership and permanently banned him from their ground.

Police arrest

Spanish police said

Wednesday they had

arrested a spectator sus-

pected of hurling a banana

at Barcelona's Brazilian

defender Dani Alves, a slur

that sparked a worldwide

detained," a police spokes-

man told AFP without

onto the pitch near the 30-

year-old Brazilian interna-

tional as he was about to take

a corner during Barcelona's

away match against Villareal

Alves won praise for his

reaction, picking up the

banana to take a bite before

getting on with the game

and setting up a goal in

Barcelona's dramatic come-

worldwide indignation, with

Brazilian President Dilma

Rousseff and FIFA president

Sepp Blatter joining the anti-

The incident sparked

from-behind 3-2 victory.

A fan threw a banana

"The person has been

anti-racist uproar.

giving further details.

on Sunday night.

banana

thrower

AFP, Madrid

Spurs deny de Boer link

AFP, London

Tottenham Hotspur declared on Wednesday that they have not made any moves to appoint a new manager, after British media reports linked them with Ajax coach Frank de Boer.

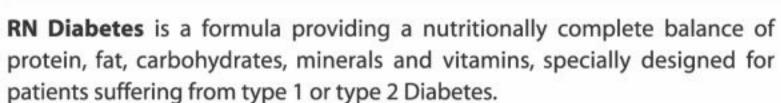
"Reports that we have made approaches to other clubs regarding coaching staff are wholly inaccurate. We have NOT contacted any club regarding coaching appointments," the club said in a statement on their website.

"We regret that a statement such as this is necessary, however we feel it is important to clarify matters."

Several British media outlets on Tuesday cited an interview given by De Boer to Dutch broadcaster NOS in which he reportedly said that he had agreed to hold talks with Tottenham.

The BBC subsequently reported that an Ajax spokesman had confirmed contact between Spurs and the Dutch club's director of football Marc Overmars on the subject of De Boer's availabil-

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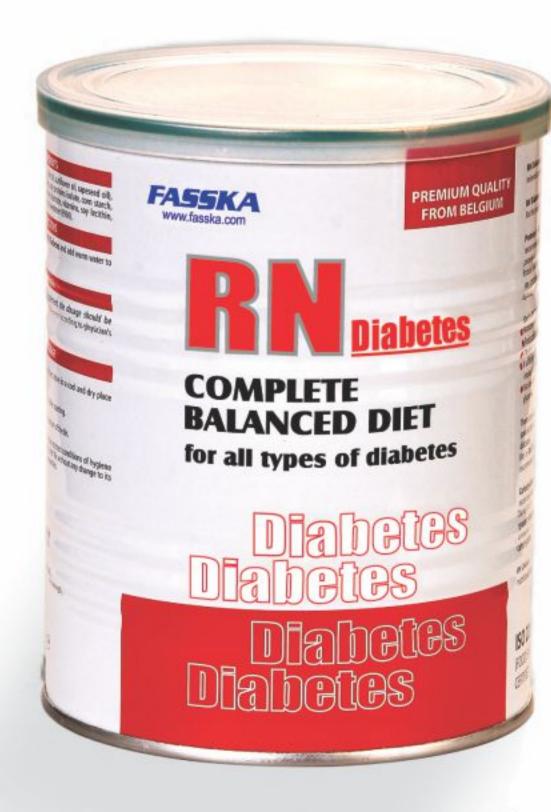


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