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Juventus edge Aus All Stars

AFP, Sydney

Late strikes from French midfielder Paul Pogba and substitute Simone Pepe handed Italian champions Juventus a come-from-behind 3-2 win against an Australian All Stars side in Sydney on Sunday.

The All Stars, led by former Italy and Juventus great Alessandro Del Piero, took the lead twice with the Italians, who brought a full-strength squad to Australia, having to dig deep for the win at ANZ Stadium.

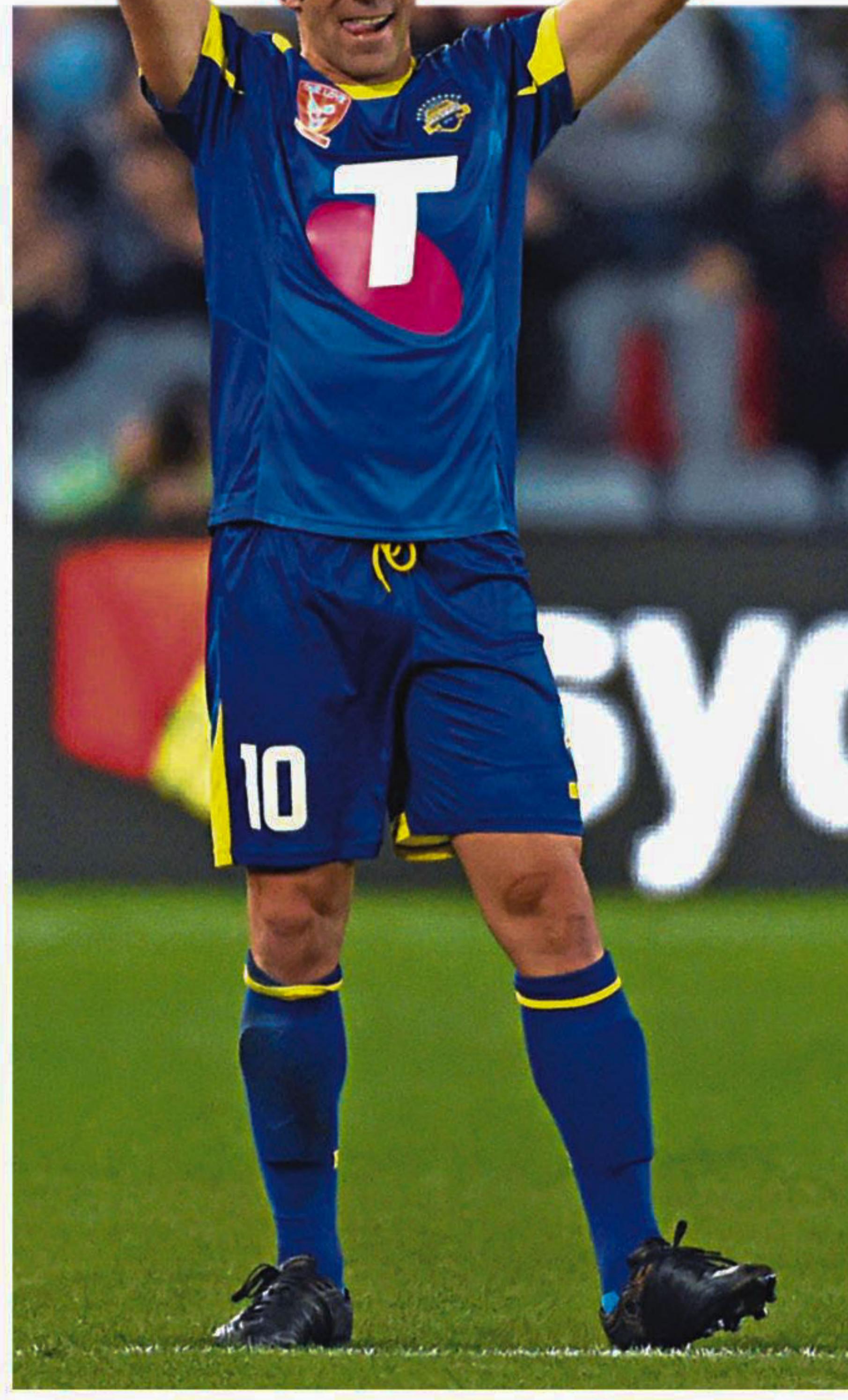
The local side took a 1-0 lead in the 9th minute after Argentinian midfielder Marcelo Carrusca clinically drilled home a pass from Thomas Broich, the A-League player of last season.

His strike was cancelled out just before the hour when towering Spanish international Fernando Llorente powerfully headed home a cross from new Juventus recruit, ex-Manchester United star Patrice Evra.

When Socceroos striker Tomi Juric smacked in a left-foot shot from 15 metres in the 77th minute it looked like the All Stars were heading for a famous victory.

But Pogba, named best young player at the recent World Cup in Brazil, chested the ball down and blasted a superb equaliser with two minutes of regular time left.

Pepe then snatched a stoppage-time winner with a fierce first time drive after the All Stars failed to clear a corner.



Juventus legend Alessandro Del Piero acknowledges the applause during his appearance for Australian A-League All Stars team against his former club in their exhibition match in Sydney on Sunday.

Nasri calls time on France

AFP, London

Manchester City midfielder Samir Nasri has confirmed his retirement from international football with France.

The 27-year-old dropped a strong hint last week that he had decided to cut short his chequered international career, having been omitted from the France squad that went to the World Cup by coach Didier Deschamps.

"I will only be 29 in 2016 for the European Championship, but the French national team doesn't make me happy," Nasri said in an interview with British newspaper The Guardian published on Sunday.

"Every time I go there, there is just more trouble. I face accusations about me and my family suffers from it and I don't want to make them suffer, so it's better to stop it and focus on my club career."

Nasri made his France debut at the age of 19 in 2007 and has won 41 caps, scoring five goals, but his international career has been dogged by controversy.

He clashed with senior players during the 2008 European Championship and unleashed an expletive-strewn tirade at a journalist following France's elimination at Euro 2012, for which he received a three-game ban.

He was also left out of the France squad for the 2010 World Cup.

Nasri's girlfriend Anara Atanes sparked controversy in May when she responded to his exclusion from the World Cup squad with a foul-mouthed Twitter attack on Deschamps and the France squad.

"Let's face it, as long as he is going to be the manager, I don't think I have a shot after everything that has happened," Nasri said of Deschamps.

"It's not just him. He did what he thought was best for his team. I understand his choice. It is not something about him. I don't have any problem with him. It's just everything."

"It is not him who talks in the press, it is the press who say things about me and the players as well. Before this World Cup they were saying that some players complain (about Nasri).

"Why do you want me to be in the group with some players who can't even be true in front of me and tell me that they have a problem? I don't want to be there. I am not happy. I don't want to go there any more."

Meanwhile, Nasri has claimed that the abuse he receives from fans of his former club Arsenal -- who City are due to face in the Community Shield later on Sunday -- did not bother him.

"The abuse doesn't affect me on the pitch. I just think it's stupid," Nasri told several British newspapers.

"I'm not an Arsenal fan, I am not from London. If we want to be honest, we are players who look at what is in the best interests for us and our career."

"When Manchester City came, it was the best choice for me to come here. And today I have won trophies, I am really happy, I have everything and I have a better life."

Nasri left Arsenal for City in 2011, angering fans of the north London club, and has since won two Premier League titles and the League Cup.

Arsenal lift Community Shield

AFP, London

Arsenal delivered a rousing demonstration of their Premier League title credentials by overwhelming league champions Manchester City 3-0 in the Community Shield at Wembley on Sunday.

Buoyed by last season's FA Cup success over Hull City, Arsene Wenger's side took charge with first-half goals from Santi Cazorla and Aaron Ramsey before substitute Olivier Giroud added a glorious long-range third.

Victory in the traditional season curtain-raiser -- which witnessed the first use of vanishing spray in English football -- suggests Arsenal are in fine fettle ahead of their opening league fixture at home to Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Arsenal made an assured start on their return to Wembley, with new signing Mathieu Debuchy obliging Gael Clichy to head a cross clear.

Debuchy then blocked a shot by Samir Nasri -- lustily booted by the fans of his former club -- at the other end, before Cazorla gave Arsenal the lead in the 21st minute.

Jack Wilshere was felled on the edge of the box by Dedryck Boyata, but play continued and the ball ran to Cazorla, who threw Clichy off-balance with a clever chip before drilling home left-footed.

From Sanchez's sweeping through ball, Yaya Sanogo played a pass inside that was slightly behind Ramsey, but the Welshman checked his run and smartly chipped the ball on before drilling a shot into the bottom-left corner.

Jovetic twice threatened to halve Arsenal's lead, heading against the post and blazing the rebound over before seeing a rasping 15-yard shot blocked by Wojciech Szczesny.

But Giroud put the game to bed on the hour, gathering the ball in the inside-right channel and launching a superb, dipping strike from 25 yards that plunged beneath the crossbar.

Lanka beat rain too

AFP, Galle

Retiring M. a. h. e. l. a. Jayawardene took on the unusual role of opening batsman to hand Sri Lanka a thrilling seven-wicket victory on the final day of the first Test against Pakistan in Galle on Sunday.

The hosts, needing 99 to win in a minimum of 21 overs, beat fading light and approaching rain to cruise home in the 17th over in front of some 5,000 jubilant home fans.

Jayawardene scored 26 before Kumar Sangakkara (21) and skipper Angelo Mathews (25 not out) chipped in lower down the order.

Mathews and Kithuruwan Vithanage smashed 17 runs in the 16th over bowled by Junaid Khan and then scored the winning run in the next over just before rain hit Galle.

The win was set up by left-arm spinner Rangana Herath,

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First Innings 451 (Younis 177, Shahid 75, Sarfraz 55, Rehman 50, Perera 5-137, Herath 3-116)
SRI LANKA: First Innings 533 for 9 declared (Silva 64, Sangakkara 221, Jayawardene 59, Mathews 91; Ajmal 5-166, Junaid 2-104)
PAKISTAN: Second Innings (overnight 4-1)
Manzoor c Dickwella b Herath 3
Shehzad lbw b Perera 16
Ali c Dickwella b Prasad 4
Ajmal c Dickwella b Herath 41
Younis b Herath 13
Misbah lbw b Perera 28
Shafiq lbw b Herath 8
Sarfraz not out 52
Rehman c Dickwella b Sangakkara 1
Talha c Dickwella b Herath 4
Junaid lbw b Herath 0
Extras (b-7, lb-3) 10
Total (All out in 80.2 overs) 180
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-11, 3-39, 4-55, 5-111, 6-111, 7-133, 8-153, 9-178
Bowler O M R W
Herath 30.2 11 48 6
Eranja 14 5 44 1
Perera 28 6 68 2
Prasad 8 3 10 1
SRI LANKA: Second Innings
Tharanga b Junaid 12
Jayawardene b Junaid 26
Sangakkara c Manzoor b Talha 21
Mathews not out 25
Vithanage not out 11
Extras (lb-3, w-1) 4
Total: (For 3 wkt in 16.2 overs) 99
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-59, 3-73
Bowler O M R W
Ajmal 6 0 29 0
Junaid 8 0 55 2

who claimed six for 48 that bundled Pakistan out for 180

in their second innings in the post-tea session.

Pakistan, who started the day at 4-1, lost three wickets in the morning session to go to lunch on 66-4.

The tourists added eight runs in the morning when seamer Dhammika Prasad had nightwatchman Saeed Ajmal edging a catch to wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella.

Opener Ahmed Shehzad made 16 when he was given out leg-before to off-spinner Dilruwan Perera to make it 39-3.

Asad Ali and skipper Misbahul Haq put on 56 for the fifth wicket on either side of lunch when both fell at the same total to make it 111-6 -- just 29 runs ahead with 45 overs left in the game.

Seamer Shamsinda Eranga had Abdur Rehman caught behind at the stroke of tea before Herath dismissed Mohammad Talha and last man Junaid to leave gutsy Sarfraz Ahmed stranded on 52 not out.

Vermaelen seals Barca move

AFP, London

Barcelona finally won the race to sign Arsenal defender Thomas Vermaelen on Saturday. The Spanish club had been battling with Manchester United for the Belgium international's signature over the last few weeks and Luis Enrique's team got their man for a reported fee of £15 million (\$25 million).

United had initially been the front-runners to sign Vermaelen, who was said to be keen to stay in the Premier League and was uncertain if he would start regularly at the Camp Nou.

But United manager Louis van Gaal ended his interest when Gunners boss Arsene Wenger, who preferred to sell the former Ajax star to a foreign club rather than a direct rival, asked for England defender Chris Smalling to be included as part of the transfer.

Vermaelen, who was signed by Mathews and Vithanage, had Abdur Rehman caught behind at the stroke of tea before Herath dismissed Mohammad Talha and last man Junaid to leave gutsy Sarfraz Ahmed stranded on 52 not out.

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AFP, Toronto

Roger Federer put on a commanding performance on Saturday to reach his fifth career Canadian final as he defeated Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4 at the Toronto Masters.

The Swiss second seed and two-time champion in Canada will take on Jo-Wilfried Tsonga after the Frenchman rolled over rising star Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 6-3.

Tsonga, seeded 13th and loser to Federer in two previous finals, will be playing his first final in Canada, while Federer moved into his 120th career final.

Federer stayed in total control from the opening point against Lopez, who was treated in the second set for an apparent neck problem.

The winner fired 13 aces and never faced a break point while forcing Lopez to save nine of 11 break points.

The 29-year-old Tsonga will face off for

his second Masters 1000 shield on Sunday.

He claimed a Masters win at Paris Bercy in 2008, but lost in Paris and London in two other finals to Federer.

Tsonga spent fewer than 90 minutes in dispatching 23-year-old Bulgarian Dimitrov, the youngest member of the ATP Tour's top 10 who stands eighth in the world and is tipped as one of the stars of the future.

The Frenchman took victory on his second match point after a tie in which he struck seven aces, saved all four break points he faced and fired 22 winners as he broke his opponent three times.

Tsonga needed to work for three-quarters of an hour to win the opening set against a player he beat three times in 2011.

Tsonga earned a break for 5-4 in the opener and claimed the set after a marathon final game in which he saved four break points.

In the second set, the Frenchman got on top 2-1 and then broke again in the final game to post his 29th win of the season against 13 losses.

Venus wins this time

AFP, Montreal

Venus Williams booked her spot in the Montreal WTA final by rallying to take a three-set win over sister Serena on Saturday in their 25th career meeting.

Seven-time Grand Slam winner Venus benefited from nine Serena double faults en route to a 6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 6-3 victory at the 2.5 million dollar hardcourt tournament.

Venus posted her first win over top seed and defending champion Serena since another three-set victory five years ago in Dubai.

The contest lasted just over two hours as Venus hammered six aces and had just two double faults.

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