



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates his opening goal against Liverpool during their Champions League encounter at Anfield on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Real lesson for L'pool

AFP, Paris

Real Madrid handed Liverpool a 3-0 Champions League reality check Wednesday as Arsenal struck twice at the death in a 2-1 win at Anderlecht to mark manager Arsene Wenger's 65th birthday style.

At Anfield, Cristiano Ronaldo hit his 70th Champions League goal -- one short of the all-time record 71 held by Raul -- and his 20th of the season with Karim Benzema grabbing a brace. Lionel Messi is in third place with 69 goals.

Real maintained their 100 percent record in Group B as did Borussia Dortmund in Group D after trouncing Galatasary 4-0.

In a further demonstration of the power of Spanish and German football, Atletico Madrid routed Malmo 5-0 while Bayer Leverkusen saw off Zenit Saint Petersburg 2-0.

"It was special, my first goal at Anfield and I am very happy," said Ronaldo.

"We knew that Anfield is a difficult place but we were fantastic in the first 45 minutes and we deserved to win."

He added: "I'm not worried about the Champions League goalscoring record. I know I will beat it. The best thing is that the team has nine points."

Ronaldo had never scored at Anfield in his five appearances for Manchester United, but he needed only 23 minutes to break that barren run.

Seizing possession in a central area 25 yards from goal, Ronaldo moved the ball onto James Rodriguez before sprinting into the penalty area to meet the Colombian's chip pass, which dropped perfectly over three Liverpool

defenders, with a sublime finish as he held off Martin Skrtel to flick his shot past Simon Mignolet.

Ludogorets became the first Bulgarian team to get CL group phase points.

RESULTS

Atletico Madrid (ESP) 5 (Koke 48, Mandzukic 61, Griezmann 63, Godin 87, Cerci 90+2) Malmo (SWE) 0

Olympiakos (GRE) 1 (Kasami 35) Juventus (ITA) 0

Liverpool (ENG) 0 Real Madrid (ESP) 3 (Cristiano Ronaldo 23, Benzema 30, 41)

Ludogorets Razgrad (BUL) 1 (Minev 90+1) Basel (SUI) 0

Bayer Leverkusen (GER) 2 (Donati 58, K.

Papadopoulos 63) Zenit St. Petersburg (RUS) 0

Monaco (FRA) 0 Benfica (POR) 0

Anderlecht (BEL) 1 (Najar 71) Arsenal (ENG) 2 (Gibbs 89, Podolski 90+1)

Galatasaray (TUR) 0 Borussia Dortmund (GER) 4

Arsenal sit three points behind Dortmund, but are five clear of the sides below them and well on course for a place in the last 16 with the reverse fixture with Anderlecht to come next.

Last year's runners-up Atletico Madrid moved a step closer to qualifying for the last 16 with a comfortable 5-0 win over Malmo at the Vicente Calderon to go top of Group A.

It took the Spanish champions until after half-time to make the breakthrough, but once Koke had finished off a fine team move to open the scoring there was little doubt Diego Simeone's men were headed for victory.

Two goals in two minutes from Mario Mandzukic -- his 19th in 23 Champions League appearances -- and Antoine Griezmann just after the hour mark made the game safe before late goals from Diego Godin and Alessio Cerci rounded off the scoring.

Previous leaders Juventus slumped to a 1-0 loss at Olympiakos with Swiss midfielder Pajtim Kasami scoring a first half winner.

In Group C, 10-man Bayer Leverkusen went top with a 2-0 win over Andre Villas-Boas' Zenit St Petersburg to claim a second straight victory.

Monaco's goalless draw at home to Benfica means Leverkusen took over at the top, despite having lost their opening match at Monaco before beating Benfica at the BayArena.

Defenders Giulio Donati and Kyriakos Papadopoulos scored the Germans' goals.

Leverkusen were forced to play the final ten minutes a man down after Brazilian left-back Wendell was sent off for a second yellow-card.

Costa in hospital

THE TELEGRAPH

The mystery over Diego Costa's condition has deepened after it emerged that the Chelsea striker was forced to spend time in hospital after returning from international duty with Spain.

Costa is struggling with a groin injury, but has also been battling an illness that forced him to go to hospital. Chelsea have not specified the illness and whether Costa is fully over it, but it is understood that the 26-year-old had symptoms similar to a severe stomach bug. That he has two problems goes some way to explaining the level of anger felt by Jose Mourinho, the Chelsea manager, over the condition in which his leading goal-scorer returned to the club last week.

Rodgers rages after Balotelli shirt swap

AFP, Liverpool



Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers revealed he will take action against Mario Balotelli after he swapped shirts with Real Madrid's Pepe at half-time of Wednesday's 3-0 Champions League defeat against the holders at Anfield.

Rodgers already planned to haul off Balotelli during the interval after growing frustrated with the latest in a growing list of lacklustre displays from the eccentric Italy striker since his August move from AC Milan.

The former Manchester City star, who was replaced by Adam Lallana, hardly improved his chances of getting back in Rodgers' good books when he decided to exchange shirts with Madrid defender Pepe in the tunnel before entering the Liverpool dressing room.

Rodgers, who didn't find out about Balotelli's antics until after the match, was appalled by such unfocused behaviour and prefers his players to wait until the end of the match if they want to swap shirts.

He took action against Reds defender Mamadou Sakho when he exchanged shirts with Chelsea's Samuel Eto'o during the interval of a 2-1 defeat at Stamford Bridge last season and vowed to do the same with Balotelli, although he declined to say what the punishment would be.

"We had an incident last year with a player and it was dealt with. It's exactly the same," Rodgers said.

"I heard about it when I came off the pitch. I don't like that.

"It's something that doesn't happen here, it shouldn't happen here.

"For me, if you want to do that it's something you do at the end of the game. I will deal with that tomorrow (Thursday)."

Kolkata turn it around

GOAL.COM



World champions Germany comfortably top the pile of the FIFA national team rankings revealed Thursday despite a recent 2-0 loss to Poland and 1-1 draw with Ireland in the Euro 2016

qualifiers.

Spain's domination of

several years however is

most certainly on the wane

as the reigning European

champions drop to tenth

The top three remain

unchanged from

September with Lionel

Messi's beaten World Cup

finalists Argentina second

and Colombia in third.

The 2014 World Cup

hosts Brazil are sixth and

Uruguay eighth, leaving

four Latin Americans in the

top-10.

Belgium's up-and-

coming Red Devils

continue

their ascent and climb a

place to fourth with their

northern neighbours the

Netherlands, who lost 2-0

to Iceland last week, drop-

ping a place to fifth.

Euro 2016 hosts France

under the able guidance of

coach Didier Deschamps

can thank a series of

friendly wins for their

seventh spot.

Cristiano Ronaldo's late

goal at Denmark in the Euro

qualifiers last week gave

new coach Paulo Bento his

first competitive win and

keeps Portugal at ninth.

TOP 10

1. Germany, 2. Argentina,

3. Colombia, 4. Belgium

(+1), 5. Netherlands (-1),

6. Brazil, 7. France (+2),

8. Uruguay (-1), 9.

Portugal (+2), 10. Spain

(-2)

After 122 days Luis Suarez

will be free to take part in a

competitive match again and

not just any game, but the

biggest one in world football

when Barcelona face Real

Madrid at the Santiago

Bernabeu on Saturday.

Much has changed since Suarez sunk his

teeth into the shoulder of Italy's Giorgio

Chiellini at the World Cup back in June.

He was lambasted and ridiculed in equal

measure by commentators the world over,

handed a four-month ban from FIFA as

the bite was his third offence and changed

clubs.

Suarez admitted recently he feared his

latest indiscretion would result in dream

move from Liverpool to Barca falling

through, but the Catalans instead invested

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AFP, Dubai

Australia got off to a solid start after wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed's brilliant hundred guided Pakistan to a big first innings total of 454 in the first Test in Dubai on Thursday.

Opener David Warner smashed a quickfire 75 and Chris Rogers was on 31 to take Australia to 113 without loss at close of play on the second day, trailing by 341 runs with all ten wickets standing.

Warner hit seven fours and a six in his eighth Test half-century, his third in succession, as Australia matched Pakistan's batting.

Pakistan could have removed Rogers on 13 in left-arm spinner Zulfiqar Babar's first over but Younis Khan failed to hold a straightforward catch in the slips.

Warner reverse swept debutant leg-spinner Yasir Shah for his fifth boundary to reach his run-a-ball 50.

Earlier, Pakistan's total had been lifted by Ahmed.

Ahmed, who scored his first hundred in Sri Lanka two months ago, fell in the last over before tea, stumped off spinner Nathan Lyon for 109. He batted for 148 minutes and hit 14 boundaries in all.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: First innings 454 all out in 145 overs (Ahmed 53, Younis 106, Misbah 69, Shafiq 89, Sarfraz 109; Johnson 3-39, O'Keefe 2-107, Lyon 2-148)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 113 for no loss (Rogers 31 not out, Warner 75 not out)

NEW



A small change in habit can help a child reach the age of 5

Every year in Bangladesh thousands of children under the age of 5 die from diarrhea and other diseases. A small change in the habit of washing hands regularly with soap can reduce this mortality rate. You can bring in a change by adapting this habit and inspiring others.

Not as difficult as hitting sixes and fours with every ball, a simple habit can reduce unwanted death.

- Shakib Al Hasan

