

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE Kolkata complete semi lineup

GOAL.COM

Fikru Tefera's goal from the spot in the second half turned out to be the all important goal for Atletico De Kolkata who secured a vital 1-1 draw against FC Goa at the Salt Lake stadium. The draw means that Kolkata finish the league stage with 19 points from 14 games, ahead of fourth placed Kerala Blasters on goal difference.

The home side were behind thanks to a smashing goal by Edgar Marcelino, but Fikru's penalty midway into the second half brought the home supporters back on their feet. Goa end the group stages with 22 points one behind leaders, Chennaiyin FC.

DRAW

- December 13, 2014: Kerala Blasters FC vs Chennaiyin FC (in Kochi) First Leg
- December 14, 2014: Atletico De Kolkata vs FC Goa (in Kolkata) First Leg
- December 16, 2014: Chennaiyin FC vs Kerala Blasters FC (in Chennai) Second Leg
- December 17, 2014: FC Goa vs

Roma join duo Down Under

AFP, Melbourne

Italian giants Roma will join Manchester City and Real Madrid in next year's International Champions Cup (ICC) in Melbourne, organisers said on Wednesday.

The three-time Serie A champions round out the three teams taking part in the tournament at the 100,000-capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground from July 18-24.

"We had an excellent experience in last year's ICC in the United States and are confident this tournament will also be a great success with top-notch competition," said Roma chief executive Italo Zanzi.

"We very much look forward to playing in Melbourne and interacting with fans in the city, Australia and the region." Organisers are looking to build on the local appetite for top European teams after a crowd of 95,000 watched Liverpool's 2-0 win over Melbourne Victory at the MCG last year.

The tournament will kick-off with Real Madrid facing Roma on July 18, followed by Manchester City against the Italians three days later.

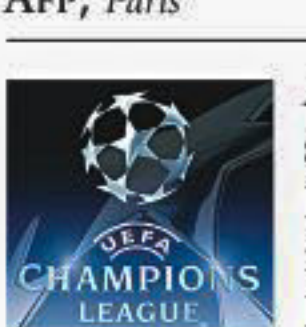
It wraps up with City playing Real Madrid on July 24.



Basel midfielder Fabian Frei (R) celebrates his opening goal against Liverpool during their Champions League encounter at Anfield on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

Basel KO Liverpool

AFP, Paris



A memorable Steven Gerrard strike could not prevent Liverpool from being eliminated from the Champions League as Basel went through on Tuesday, while Juventus and Monaco also advanced to the last 16.

Liverpool are enduring a deeply disappointing season but the Anfield club knew that a win at home to Basel would take them through from Group B into the knock-out stage for the first time since 2009.

However, Basel, convincing winners when the sides met in Switzerland two months ago, needed only a point and a pinpoint strike by Fabian Frei in the 25th minute set them on their way.

An already enormous task for Liverpool appeared impossible when Lazar Markovic was harshly sent off for a flailing arm in the direction of Behrang Safari, and although Gerrard drew them level nine minutes from time with a beautifully-flighted free-kick, the Premier League side could not find a winner.

Italian champions Juventus, knocked out at the group stage 12 months ago, are through from Group A after a 0-0 draw at home to last season's beaten finalists Atletico Madrid, who progress as group winners.

The draw for Juve means Olympiakos drop into the Europa League despite a 4-2 win in Greece against a Malmo side who finished with 10 men, with David Fuster, Alejandro Dominguez, Kostas Mitroglou and Ibrahim Afellay all scoring.

Meanwhile, it was a memorable night for Monaco, who needed only a point at home to Zenit St Petersburg to advance but a 2-0 win in the Principality, coupled with a 0-0 draw between Benfica and Bayer Leverkusen in Lisbon, saw them go through as Group C

RESULTS

- Olympiakos (GRE) 4 (Fuster 22, Dominguez 63, Mitroglou 87, Afellay 90) Malmo (SWE) 2 (Kroon 59, Rosenberg 81)
- Juventus (ITA) 0 Atletico Madrid (ESP) 0
- Liverpool (ENG) 1 (Gerrard 81) Basel (SUI) 1 (F. Frei 25)
- Real Madrid (ESP) 4 (Cristiano Ronaldo 20-pen, Bale 38, Arbeloa 80, Medran 88) Ludogorets Razgrad (BUL) 0
- Benfica (POR) 0 Bayer Leverkusen (GER) 0
- Monaco (FRA) 2 (Abdenour 63, Fabinho 89) Zenit St Petersburg (RUS) 0
- Galatasaray (TUR) 1 (Sneijder 88) Arsenal (ENG) 4 (Podolski 3, 90+2, Ramsey 11, 29)
- Borussia Dortmund (GER) 1 (Immobile 58) Anderlecht (BEL)

winners.

Second-half goals from defensive duo Aymen Abdennour and Fabinho secured the victory for Leonardo Jardim's Monaco, who have not qualified for the knock-out stage since they reached the final in 2004.

Elsewhere, Real Madrid rounded off their Group B campaign with a 4-0 defeat of Ludogorets Razgrad at the Santiago Bernabeu, their task being facilitated by the early sending-off of Marcelinho for a handball on the line.

Cristiano Ronaldo netted the resulting penalty for his 72nd Champions League goal, leaving him just two behind Lionel Messi's record tally, before Gareth Bale, Alvaro Arbeloa and youngster Alvaro Medran added further goals.

It is just the sixth time that a team has won all six group games in the competition, the last being Madrid in 2011-12, while Carlo Ancelotti's side's Spanish record run of consecutive victories now stretches to 19.

In Group D, two stunning Aaron Ramsey strikes helped Arsenal to a morale-boosting 4-1 win against eliminated Galatasaray in Istanbul.

Player struck by lightning survives

INTERNET

Unbelievably, a Peruvian player has miraculously survived being struck by lightning during the weekend's Copa Peru game between Sport Aguila and Minera Force in the city of Huancayo.

Sport Aguila left-back Joao Contreras collapsed to the floor after the bolt hit the pitch as the second-half was about to kick-off amid a torrential rain storm, with many people presuming he'd died instantly.

Indeed, several Peruvian news outlets reported his death - with Sport Aguila's opponents even Tweeting their condolences...

However, it would appear that reports of Contreras' death were greatly exaggerated, as updated news reports are now claiming that the defender somehow survived the blast of Zeus' righteous anger and, while still hospitalised, is currently in a stable condition.

Sport Aguila's Julio Rios and linesman Abraham Loayza were also injured by the strike, with Sport Aguila executive Walter Delgado confirming that all three men are mercifully on the way to recovery.

Sevilla eye knockouts

AFP, Paris



Trophy holders Sevilla are among the clubs looking to claim one of the 10 berths still up for grabs in the Europa League knockout stage in Thursday's final round of group games.

The Spanish side, who beat Benfica on penalties in last season's final in Turin, host Rijeka of Croatia needing just a point to progress, while their visitors have to win to advance from Group G alongside Dutch giants Feyenoord.

However, coach Unai Emery has urged his side, who are currently in fourth place in La Liga, to make sure they win the game.

"Our objective is to win the game and be in the hat for the last 32," Emery wrote on his personal website.

"We feel that we are strong in our own stadium and we hope to maintain that by carefully preparing a game in which (Rijeka) can't afford to settle for a draw." Elsewhere, Borussia Moenchengladbach and Villarreal will advance from Group A by avoiding defeat in their games, while Qarabag can become the first club from Azerbaijan to survive in a major European competition into the spring if they can win at home to Italian giants Inter, who are already certain to win Group F.

"We will be playing in front of our fans and this sometimes can add to the pressure," Qarabag captain Rashad F Sadygov told UEFA.com, mindful of the fact that a slip-up could see either Saint-Etienne or Dnipro of Ukraine take advantage.

"We have a huge responsibility and just can't let them down. So we have to be patient and hope God will help us."

Among the other decisive encounters, Lille welcome Bundesliga high-flyers

Wolfsburg to northern France in a direct shoot-out to decide who progresses from Group H along with Everton.

While Wolfsburg can afford to settle for a draw, Lille have to win, something they have yet to do in the group.

Everton are already certain to progress as group winners, which means they will be seeded in next Monday's draw for the last 32 along with the four third-placed teams with the best records in the Champions League group stage.

Given their current travails in the Premier League, that means Toffees manager Roberto Martinez will shuffle his pack when already-eliminated Krasnodar visit Goodison Park, and Ghanaian winger Christian Atsu is one of those looking to get a chance.

"It's been quite difficult since I came here," Atsu, who has started just three games since joining on loan from Chelsea, told evertontv.

"I'm working hard for the team and I believe the fans haven't seen the best of me yet."

Of the game, the 22-year-old added: "We have a very good team spirit and we want to win every game. We are not treating it like we have qualified - we are not going out to relax."

Scottish champions Celtic are also already through, although Ronny Deila's side know they will finish second in Group D to Salzburg, rendering their trip to play Dinamo Zagreb in Croatia meaningless.

"The pressure will be off and the gaffer might change the team but we don't want to let the fans down over there," said Celtic's Irish forward Anthony Stokes, scorer of his team's winning goal in the weekend Premiership win at Motherwell.

Tottenham Hotspur are also through, although in their case first place in Group C is still up for grabs as they go to Istanbul to face Besiktas.

Gang of criminals threaten Asprilla

REUTERS, Bogota



Former Colombia striker Faustino Asprilla has revealed he will leave his home city of Tulua after being threatened by a gang of criminals seeking extortion money.

Asprilla, who played for Parma and Newcastle United in the 1990s, said on Tuesday that masked, armed men entered his homestead on the outskirts of Tulua in southwest Colombia where he has been living with his family.

"They were four (men) in two cars... they threatened me, they told me to contact their chief because if I didn't they would kill my family and me," Asprilla was quoted by the daily El Tiempo as saying.

"I had to leave my own land, Tulua, as a victim of extortion by a group of anti-socials. My family was threatened in my

presence, my father, my sisters," the 45-year-old said in a statement.

"Helpless and hurting, I took the decision for the security of my loved ones to leave Tulua," said Asprilla, who retired 10 years ago after a career that included winning the European Cup Winners Cup and UEFA Cup with Parma and playing for Colombia at two World Cups.

"I dedicated my life to representing my country abroad, to giving happiness to my Colombian people (and) when I settled down to rest, to recover the time lost with my (family), I'm forced to leave by the back door of my own town."

Asprilla's case, one of many similar incidents in southwest Colombia, has been taken up by national police chief Rodolfo Palomino, who guaranteed him and his family protection while they sought to identify and capture the culprits, police sources said.

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