

Reus fined for driving offence

AFP, Berlin

Serena, Novak top ITF awards

AFP, Paris

German international Marco Reus has been slapped with a record EUR540000 (\$665,000) fine for driving without a licence, the daily Bild reported Thursday.

"Today I know it: I was much too naive in this situation, it was a stupidity I have learned from," said the 25-year-old.

"I've learned my lesson. It will never happen again."

According to Bild, the fine is a record in Germany for such an offence.

The Borussia Dortmund player who is currently out with a right ankle injury was stopped by police on March 18 behind the wheel of a luxury car as he returned from training.

He failed to present his licence to police who later discovered that he did not possess one and he had been stopped five time previously between September 2011 and March 2014.



Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane (R) scores the third goal against Newcastle during their League Cup quarterfinal at White Hart Lane on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Germany at the zenith

AFP, Paris

Spurs, Liverpool thru'

REUTERS, London

Dortmund stay put

AFP, Berlin

World champions Germany comfortably top the pile of the FIFA national team rankings revealed Thursday despite a slump in form since their rampant campaign in Brazil.

The top three remain unchanged since September with Lionel Messi's beaten World Cup finalists Argentina second and Colombia in third.

Up-and-coming Belgium are fourth ahead of their northern Neighbours the Netherlands while the humiliated World Cup hosts Brazil round off the year in a respectable sixth.

Euro 2016 hosts France are seventh as Didier Deschamps' solid team continue to impress while World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal are level with them.



Tottenham Hotspur strolled into the League Cup semifinals with a 4-0 rout of Premier League rivals Newcastle United on Wednesday and Liverpool's Raheem Sterling netted a sharply-taken double in a 3-1 win over Bournemouth.

Nabil Bentaleb, Nacer Chadli, Harry Kane and Roberto Soldado were on target for Spurs against Newcastle who conceded four times for the second match in succession after they were beaten 4-1 by Arsenal in north London on Saturday.

Sterling, who wasted chances as Liverpool slumped to defeat against Manchester United on Sunday, looked a sharp-eyed goal-getter as he produced a clinical display that will lift the pressure on his manager Brendan Rodgers.

Tottenham had lost their last two home clashes with Newcastle, but the threat of a third was eased when a

RESULTS
Bournemouth 1 (Gosling 57) Liverpool 3 (Sterling 20, 51, Markovic 27)
Tottenham 4 (Bentaleb 18, Chadli 46, Kane 65, Soldado 70) Newcastle 0
SEMIFINAL LINEUP
Liverpool v Chelsea
Tottenham v Sheffield United
Two-legged ties to be played on January 20/21 and 27/28

blunder from visiting keeper Jak Alnwick, who made a complete mess of corner, presented Bentaleb with the chance to hook home from four metres.

Chadli doubled the lead with a measured effort from 25 metres, Kane netted with a slightly scuffed finish and Soldado added his name to the scoresheet when he pounced on a loose ball with 20 minutes to play.

At Bournemouth, the hosts' hopes of an upset were scuppered by their own profligacy against eight-times winners Liverpool, who were far

more clinical.

A glaring early miss from the hosts' Callum Wilson was punished on 20 minutes when Sterling headed the visitors ahead from close range.

Liverpool, who had won only two of 10 matches since they last played in the League Cup and spurned six good chances against United on Sunday, seemed to have rediscovered their scoring touch when Lazar Markovic doubled the lead seven minutes later.

The Serbian wide player, who has been labelled one of Rodgers' transfer mistakes after failing to break into the side following a 20 million-pound (\$31.2 million) move from Benfica in the close season, walloped home a rebound from the edge of the area.

Sterling finished precisely when through on goal six minutes after the break, before Dan Gosling grabbed a consolation when his shot beat keeper Brad Jones, who should have done better.

Chelsea and Sheffield United had booked spots in the semifinals after winning their last-eight ties on Tuesday.

AFP, Berlin



Ailing German giants Borussia Dortmund remain in the Bundesliga's relegation places after a battling 2-2 draw with second-placed VfL Wolfsburg on Wednesday.

The draw leaves defending champions Bayern Munich 11 points clear at the top of the table.

Dortmund twice let the lead slip, a piece of sloppy defending five minutes from time ultimately costing them the three points when Wolfsburg' Brazil defender Naldo headed home having been left unmarked at a corner.

Despite reaching the last 16 of the Champions League, where they will face Juventus, Dortmund have the worst record in the Bundesliga with nine defeats in their first 16 matches and are 16th in the table.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's early goal for Dortmund was cancelled out by a Kevin de Bruyne free-kick in the first-half.

Ciro Immobile restored Dortmund's lead with a stunning strike 14 minutes from time before Naldo rescued a point for

RESULTS
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Aubameyang 8, Immobile 76) VfL Wolfsburg 2 (De Bruyne 29, Naldo 85)
Borussia Moenchengladbach 4 (Kruze 32, Wendt 38, Kramer 64, Hrgota 88) Werder Bremen 1 (Junuzovic 51)
Hoffenheim 0 Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Kießling 79)
Eintracht Frankfurt 4 (Aigner 43, Seferovic 58, Meier 90, 90+1) Hertha Berlin 4 (Brooks 21, Ben-Hatira 33, Schieber 37, Niemeyer 90)
Paderborn 1 (Ayhan 31-og) Schalke 04 2 (Choupo-Moting

Wolves.

Ten-man Werder Bremen, who host Dortmund on Saturday, remain rooted to the bottom of the table after their 4-1 defeat at Borussia Moenchengladbach, who move up to third.

Striker Max Kruse and defender Oscar Wendt put Gladbach 2-0 up at the break before Bremen's dead-ball specialist Zlatko Junuzovic smashed home a second-half free-kick.

But Bremen had Luca Caldirola sent off with an hour gone for a second bookable offence before Christoph Kramer and Swedish striker Branimir Hrgota added Gladbach's goals.



San Lorenzo midfielder Pablo Barrientos celebrates his opening goal against Auckland City during their Club World Cup semifinal at the Marrakesh Stadium in Morocco on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

San Lorenzo scrape past Auckland

REUTERS, Marrakech



South American champions San Lorenzo needed extra-time to see off the gallant challenge of Auckland City as they beat the New Zealand part-timers 2-1 in the Club World Cup semi-final on Wednesday.

Auckland's unlikely dream of facing European champions Real Madrid in Saturday's final in Marrakech ended when substitute Mauro Matos fired San Lorenzo's winner four minutes into extra-time.

The rank outsiders had given San Lorenzo an almighty scare when Angel Berlanga equalised in the 67th minute to cancel out Pablo Barrientos' opener for the Argentines in first-half stoppage time.

San Lorenzo will attempt to become the first Argentine side to win the tournament since it began in its current format in 2005, although they face a near-impossible task if Wednesday's poor display is anything to go by.

Auckland had battled their way past host team Moghreb Tetouan on penalties and

African champions ES Setif without conceding a goal as they became the first Oceania side to reach the semifinals.

In a scrappy first half, they created an early opening when Argentine Emiliano Tade wriggled free and had a low shot saved by San Lorenzo goalkeeper Sebastian Torrico.

San Lorenzo offered little threat until Emmanuel Mas broke to the byline and pulled the ball back into the middle of the area to Barrientos, who fired a left-foot shot just inside the near post.

However, neither the goal nor non-stop singing from around 5,000 of their fans could inspire San Lorenzo and they were stunned by an equaliser in the 67th minute.

Tade's pass through the heart of the defence evaded San Lorenzo Torrico and ran loose to Angel Berlanga who slotted home from an acute angle.

The game suddenly came to life and San Lorenzo went close with a brilliant effort by Martin Cauteruccio who flicked the ball over an opponent and crashed a dipping volley against the post.

'Starc's body language soft, not himself'

AFP, Brisbane

Shane Warne was in damage control Thursday after Australia coach Darren Lehmann threatened to confront him after the spin great blasted fast bowler Mitchell Starc as "soft".

During a commentary stint during the second Test in Brisbane on Wednesday, Warne demanded more aggression from an Australian team wilting in blistering heat during the second Test against India, singling out Starc.

"He has to change his body language, it needs to be stronger -- he looks a bit soft," Warne said on Channel Nine.

"He needs to puff his chest out a bit, look harder."

Lehmann was not impressed when later told of the comment.

Mainz plot Bayern upset

AFP, Berlin



Mainz 05 are hoping to find runaway leaders Bayern Munich distracted by the winter break on Friday with Pep Guardiola's side hunting more Bundesliga records in their final match of 2014.

"An hour after the game, they'll be on holiday," joked Mainz manager Christian Heidel, "so maybe they'll be in the appropriate mood."

Not if Bayern coach Pep Guardiola has anything to do with it.

"No excuses, we're flying to Mainz

to win," insisted the Spaniard.

Visitors Bayern are poised to snap up another league record at Mainz,

FIXTURES

(1430 GMT unless stated)

Friday

Mainz 05 v Bayern Munich

Saturday

Schalke 04 v Hamburg, Bayer Leverkusen v Eintracht Frankfurt, Augsburg v Borussia Moenchengladbach, Werder Bremen v Borussia Dortmund, VfB Stuttgart v Paderborn, VfL Wolfsburg v Cologne (1730)

Sunday

Hertha Berlin v Hoffenheim, Freiburg v Hanover 96

having conceded only three goals all season and with the current record for fewest goals against at the halfway stage standing at seven.

The Bavarians show no sign of easing their iron grip on a third straight Bundesliga title and have not conceded a goal in their last six league games.

They restricted Tuesday's opponents Freiburg to just 19 percent possession in Munich and mid-table Mainz can expect something similar on Friday.

"We aren't dreamers, Bayern know no mercy," said Mainz president Harald Strutz glumly.

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