

## 95% kits sold are United's

INTERNET

An interesting study has produced rather embarrassing findings about how popular Manchester teams are in their own city.

Sports Direct sell shirts to fans all over the globe and, as a result, have gathered a fair amount of data in determining the popularity of clubs in certain areas.

Arguably the most interesting statistic shows just how far Manchester City will have to go before they can compete with United commercially.

An astonishing 95% of shirt sales between the two clubs in Manchester are red while a measly 5% are sky blue.

Despite spending hundreds of millions of pounds, City are still overlooked by local fans.

This is evidenced in their two-for-one ticket deals earlier in the season as well as the empty sections of the Etihad during their Champions League games.



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus pumps her fist in celebration after beating Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark in the second round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday. Azarenka won 6-4, 6-2.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, Melbourne



Serena Williams was slow to get going before finding her groove to bulldoze into the Australian Open third round Thursday, joining rampant fellow world number one Novak Djokovic and comeback queen Victoria Azarenka.

With the temperatures again sizzling around 33 degrees Celsius at Melbourne Park, the American 18-time Grand Slam champion took time to adjust to the sauna-like conditions against Russian veteran Vera Zvonareva.

She had to save two set points before exploding into action in the second set to easily win 7-5, 6-0 and keep alive her dream of a sixth Australian title.

Djokovic, gunning to be crowned champion a fifth time, was on fire in his showdown against Andrey Kuznetsov, crushing the hapless Russian 6-0, 6-1, 6-4, while defending champion Stan Wawrinka had to work hard to get past Marius Copil.

The Romanian took the fourth seed to two tiebreakers before the Swiss star triumphed 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. Japan's Kei Nishikori also went through.

In a blockbuster evening clash, two-time champion Azarenka crushed close friend and eighth seed Caroline Wozniacki 6-4, 6-2 as her comeback from injury gathers steam.

While the old guard of Williams and Maria Sharapova are safely into the third round, the new generation of Eugenie Bouchard and Simona Halep have looked more impressive in the early rounds.

Sixth seed Agnieszka Radwanska is also in ominous form after hiring former great Martina Navratilova as her coach.

The Pole, a semifinalist last year, took just 44 minutes to brush aside Sweden's Johanna Larsson 6-0, 6-1 and has only lost four games in two matches.

## Advantage Barca

AFP, Madrid

Lionel Messi struck five minutes from time to hand Barcelona a vital 1-0 lead heading into the second leg of their Copa del Rey quarterfinal with Atletico Madrid.

Atletico looked set to round off a fine day for the club after the confirmation that Chinese billionaire Wang Jianlin will spend 45 million euros (\$52 million) for 20 percent of the club by holding out for a 0-0 draw.

However, Juanfran was penalised for kicking Sergio Busquets inside the area late on and Messi was relieved to slot home at the second attempt after seeing his penalty saved by Jan Oblak.

The two sides will meet again at the Vicente Calderon in Madrid on Wednesday, January 28.

Fernando Torres was paired once more with Antoine Griezmann up front for Atletico after the pair combined to allow Torres to score in the opening minute of each half as they secured a 4-2 aggregate win over Real Madrid in the last 16 last week.

However, just like in their league meeting 10 days ago, it was Barca who made a fast start this time and Atletico 'keeper Oblak was forced into a fine save to turn Neymar's

curling effort behind just four minutes.

Atletico weathered the early storm without any more scares, though, and grew into the game as it wore on. Torres saw a low shot deflect wide off Gerard Pique, whilst Guilherme Siqueira's cross from the left was just too high for Griezmann as the Frenchman's header sailed harmlessly over.

Barca's best chance of the opening half arrived 10 minutes before the break when Ivan Rakitic's ball into the box landed at the feet of Luis Suarez, but he somehow blazed over with just Oblak to beat from point-blank range.

Torres then failed to find Griezmann as he gifted the ball to Pique to end a promising break and that was to be the former Chelsea striker's last involvement as he was replaced at half-time by Mario Mandzukic.

A similar pattern ensued after the break as Barca enjoyed plenty of possession without being able to create too many clear-cut chances against the well-organised ranks of Atletico defence.

Oblak was alert to a low drive by Andres Iniesta from the edge of the area, but Barca's frustrations began to bubble over as both Suarez and Javier Mascherano were booked for taking the protests towards the referee too far.



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi celebrates his all-important goal against Atletico Madrid during their Copa del Rey quarterfinal first leg clash at the Nou Camp on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Real top money league

AFP, London

Manchester United became the world's second highest-earning club last season despite a disastrous campaign on the pitch, financial consultants Deloitte revealed in their latest Football Money League published on Thursday.

The 2013-14 season was United's first since the retirement of legendary manager Alex Ferguson and saw them slump to a seventh-place finish in the Premier League, with Ferguson's successor David Moyes losing his job.

It meant United missed out on a place in the Champions League, but revenues of 518 million euros (\$602.6 million) saw them climb to second place behind Real Madrid in the list of world football's top-earning clubs.

"Despite a poor on-pitch season in 2013-14, United's commercial strategy of securing global and regional partners is delivering substantial growth," said Deloitte senior manager Austin Houlahan.

"Commercial revenue has grown 83

TOP 10			
Rank	Pre Rank	Team	Revenue(€)
1	(1)	Real Madrid	549.5
2	(4)	Manchester United	518.0
3	(3)	Bayern Munich	487.5
4	(2)	Barcelona	484.6
5	(5)	Paris Saint-Germain	474.2
6	(6)	Manchester City	414.4
7	(7)	Chelsea	387.9
8	(8)	Arsenal	359.3
9	(12)	Liverpool	305.9

percent in the last three years. Thanks to the latest Premier League media deals, broadcast revenue also increased 34 percent to 162.3 million euros.

"Their absence this season from European competition will be felt in next year's Money League position, but if they can return the Champions League in 2015-16 there is a strong possibility they could be top in two years' time."

With revenues of 549.5 million euros, Real Madrid topped the chart for the 10th season running, after a year in which they claimed their 10th Champions League crown, known as 'La Decima'.

The club witnessed revenue growth of 30.6 million euros due to increases of 15.9 million euros in broadcast revenue and 19.9 million euros in commercial revenue.

The other clubs in the top 10 were Bayern Munich, Barcelona, who slipped from second place to fourth, Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal, Liverpool and Juventus.

Overall, revenue for the top 20 highest-earning clubs reached 6.2 billion euros, which represented a 14 percent rise on the previous year.

"The growth experienced within the top 20 has been remarkable," said Dan Jones from Deloitte's Sports Business Group.

"Although only Manchester United and Real Madrid have gone past the 500 million euros revenue marker so far, we predict that all of the top five clubs may reach that point by next year."

Bumper broadcast rights deals meant that there were eight clubs from the money-spinning Premier League in the top 20, with all 20 teams who competed in the English top flight last season making it into the top 40.

## Sagor clinches Rating Chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagor clinched the title of the Prime Bank 17th International Rating Chess Tournament at close of the ninth and final round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

Sagor of Bangladesh Navy drew with IM Abu Sufian Shakil in the last round to emerge unbeaten champion with eight points from nine matches.

FIDE Master Aminul Islam became runner-up in a tie-break with GM Enamul Hossain Rajib after the players earned 7.5 points each. Rajib finished third while FM Saifuddin Lavlu and IM Abu Sufian Shakil finished fourth and fifth respectively with 6.5 points each.

**Disqualified owner back as chef**

INTERNET

A funny story was reported by Leeds United manager Neil Redfearn after the Whites claimed a 1-0 win over Bournemouth in the Championship.

It's been another difficult week for Leeds after it was announced that Massimo Cellino had seen his appeal against disqualification as owner of Leeds United rejected by the Football League.

Despite Cellino's personal setback, the Italian failed to get too down about the decision this week as he decided to personally cook the Whites' dinner before the game against the Cherries.

No surprises it was pasta but it wasn't bad. His new role might be club chef.

## Gabriel to Arsenal '50-50'

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger expressed cautious optimism over his side's move for Villarreal's Brazilian centre-back Gabriel Paulista on Thursday, describing the transfer as "50-50".

Gabriel, 24, reportedly has a release clause of 20 million euros (\$23.3 million) in his contract, but British press reports claim Arsenal have offered a fee rising to around 13 million euros.

Any deal would also be contingent on the player being granted a work permit by the British government.

## Odegaard signs for Real

INTERNET



After going on a European tour to several countries and playing alongside the first teams of Bayern Munich, Ajax, Liverpool, Barcelona and Real Madrid, sixteen year old wonderkid Martin Odegaard has officially found a new club.

The Stromsgodset youngster, who has been trailed by every top club in Europe, eventually elected to sign for Carlo Ancelotti's Real Madrid.

On their official website, Real Madrid confirmed the signing and reported that Odegaard will be introduced to the press at 13:30 tomorrow.

Martin Odegaard, a former teammate and friend, informed Norwegian TV station TV2 that he was told by Odegaard that Ronaldo had told him that he needs to be the heir to his goal-scoring throne.

"He said he spoke to Cristiano, who said: In a couple of years I will stop scoring these goals and you need to take over."

Already with a senior cap for Norway, Martin Odegaard is expected to play in the Real Madrid Castilla side for the remainder of the season.

## Cahill sinks China

AFP, Brisbane

Tim Cahill's brilliant double strike sank China and took Australia into the Asian Cup semifinals on Thursday as Son Heung-Min defied illness to lead South Korea into the last four.

Hosts Australia had the upper hand against China without crafting the breakthrough, until 35-year-old Cahill pulled out a stunning bicycle-kick just after half-time.

The latest uber-strike from Cahill, whose World Cup volley against the Netherlands was short-listed for goal

of the year, was followed by a trademark header for the 2-0 win.

Australia's victory ended an encouraging tournament from China, who won all three group games for the first time to end their 11-year absence from the knock-out stages.

The Socceroos will now face either Japan or UAE at Newcastle's modest Hunter Stadium, the smallest of the Asian Cup venues, on January 27.

The Socceroos deserved the win against a willing but outgunned Chinese side, who scrambled well in the first half but folded under the weight of possession enjoyed by the Australians.

After Cahill's goals, China refused

to concede and they forced two diving saves from Australian keeper Mathew Ryan, but ultimately paid for their lack of fire-power.

Earlier in Melbourne, Bayer Leverkusen's Son fought off the lingering effects of a flu bug to strike twice in extra time and see off Uzbekistan -- before being stretchered off due to sheer exhaustion.

The man dubbed "Sonaldo" by his team-mates scored with a diving header after 104 minutes and slammed home a second moments before the final whistle, leaving on a stretcher with exhaustion as the Koreans set up a meeting against either Iran or Iraq in the last four.

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## বিশেষ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে, সাম্প্রতিকালে কিছু দুর্ঘত মোটরসাইকেল ব্যবহার করে বিভিন্ন যানবাহনে বোমা হামলাসহ ব্যাপক সহিংসতা ও নাশকতা চালাচ্ছে। এ ধরনের নাশকতা ও সহিংসতারোধ এবং জননিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিতকরণে ১৯৮৩ সালের মোটরসাইকেল ব্যবহারে পুনরাবৃত্তি না দেয়া পর্যন্ত (১৯৮৩ সালের ৫৫ নম্বর অধ্যাদেশ) এর ৮৮ ধারায় প্রদত্ত ক্ষমতাবলে পুনরাবৃত্তি না দেয়া পর্যন্ত সরকার সারাদেশে মোটরসাইকেলে চালক ব্যতীত অন্য কোন যাত্রী/সঙ্গী বহন নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করেছেন।

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পরিচালক (এনফোর্সমেন্ট)  
বিআরটি