

**MASK FOR FABREGAS**

Cesc Fabregas will wear a protective face mask for Chelsea after breaking his nose last weekend - and Sportsmail can exclusively reveal what the Spanish midfielder's shield will look like. Fabregas suffered the break during Chelsea's win over Stoke City at the weekend, taking a hit to the face from Charlie Adam's forearm minutes before the Scot struck a 66-yard wondergoal at Stamford Bridge. The Spaniard has since travelled to Milan to see a specialist, who produced masks for Fernando Torres, Petr Cech and Demba Ba previously, in the hope of



**Russia awarded 3-0 win**

AFP, Nyon  
 UEFA on Wednesday awarded Russia a 3-0 win over Montenegro after crowd trouble forced a European Championship qualifier between the two countries to be abandoned. European football's ruling body ordered Montenegro to play their next home qualifier in an empty stadium and fined the federation EUR50,000. The Russian federation was also fined EUR25,000 for improper conduct by their supporters who were accused of lighting flares and throwing objects onto the pitch.

**Belgium up to best ever 3rd**

AFP, Paris  
 Belgium are basking in their highest ever FIFA ranking on Thursday, as last year's World Cup quarterfinalists move up one place into third on the strength of good form in Euro 2016 qualifying.

Marc Wilmot's Red Devils, who lost out to Argentina in Brazil, climbed to the top of their Euro qualifying Group B after Marouane Fellaini's goal earned them a 1-0 win over Israel 10 days ago. Above them, the FIFA summit is unchanged, with world champions Germany on top and Argentina in second.

Brazil, up one into fifth, have flipped places with the Netherlands.

**TOP TEN**

1. Germany
2. Argentina
3. Belgium (+1)
4. Colombia (-1)
5. Brazil (+1)
6. Netherlands (-1)
7. Portugal
8. Uruguay (+1)
9. Switzerland (+3)



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates his 300th goal for the club against Rayo Vallecano during their Primera Liga encounter at the Vallecas Stadium on Wednesday.

**RONALDO'S REAL MILESTONE**

SEASON	GOALS
2009-10	33
2010-11	53
2011-12	60
2012-13	55
2013-14	51
2014-15	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>

PHOTO: REUTERS

**300 up for Ronaldo**

AFP, Madrid



Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 300th Real Madrid goal as the European champions remained four points adrift of La Liga leaders Barcelona with a 2-0 win at Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday.

Earlier, Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez were on target as Barca eased past Almeria 4-0.

Barca took over half an hour to make the breakthrough, but Messi did so in style as he curled home his 44th goal of the season into the far corner.

Suarez made the game safe when he fired into the top corner 10 minutes after the break and bagged his second of the evening in stoppage time after Marc Bartra headed home the third from Xavi's corner.

Madrid suffered a much more uncomfortable evening in a capital derby at Rayo before Ronaldo and James Rodriguez struck midway through the second-half.

Rayo dominated the first period in

**RESULTS**

Barcelona 4 (Messi 33, Suarez 55, 90+3, Bartra 75)  
 Almeria 0  
 Deportivo la Coruna 1 (Florin 87-og)  
 Cordoba 1 (Florin 55)  
 Granada 1 (Ibanez 3) Celta Vigo 1 (Bongonda 90+3)  
 Rayo Vallecano 0 Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 67,

terms of possession, but it was still Madrid who had the better chances as Rodriguez shot straight at Diego Cobeno when unmarked inside the area before Ronaldo headed over from the Colombian's free-kick.

At the other end, Iker Casillas made a fine save to keep the visitors level at the break as he parried Roberto Trashorras's back post header to safety.

Madrid started much stronger after the break and were inches away from an opener when Gareth Bale's header from Rodriguez's cross looped just wide.

There was then a huge moment of controversy when Ronaldo was booked despite appearing to be clearly brought down by Antonio Amaya inside the area meaning he will miss

Saturday's visit of Eibar to the Santiago Bernabeu.

The chances continued to come and go for Real as Benzema, Marcelo and Bale fired just off target in a matter of minutes, and the goal finally arrived when a fine run and cross from Dani Carvajal picked out Ronaldo and he sealed his triple century of goals for Madrid in just 288 games.

Six minutes later it was 2-0 as Ronaldo turned provider this time for Rodriguez to curl home his first goal since returning from a two-month layoff with a foot injury.

Barcelona also started slowly at the Camp Nou as boss Luis Enrique made six changes with one eye on Saturday's tough trip to Sevilla.

However, Messi opened the scoring in brilliant fashion when he found space on the edge of the area and curled into the far corner with pinpoint accuracy.

Suarez made sure of Barca's 20th win in their last 21 games in all competitions with a little help from Cuesta the keeper got a hand to the Uruguayan's powerful effort but couldn't keep it out.

**Carlos's C. League dream team**

DAILY MAIL

Former Brazilian and Real Madrid's left back Roberto Carlos has won the champions league competition three times in five seasons with Los Blancos.

Now Carlos has revealed his champions league dream team and has kept himself in the XI but has left out two legends of current times Messi and Ronaldo.

**CARLOS'S DREAM TEAM:**  
 Goalkeeper - Iker Casillas;  
 Defenders - Cafu, Paolo Maldini, Fabio Cannavaro, Roberto Carlos; Midfielders - Clarence Seedorf, Claude Makelele, Zinedine Zidane; Attackers - Ronaldino, Luis Figo, Ronaldo

**Ibra faces long ban**

AFP, Paris

A day after scoring a brilliant hat-trick, Paris Saint-Germain's tempestuous striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic will find out Thursday his punishment for comments attacking France and its referees.

The 33-year-old Swedish star faces up to five matches on the Ligue 1 sidelines for a widely televised rant in which he said France did not deserve a team like the star-studded Paris Saint-Germain because of the way it is treated.

The French league's disciplinary commission, which starts hearing his case at 1600 GMT could impose a four match ban on Ibrahimovic and activate a suspended one match ban imposed in January.

**Bayern reach semis**

AFP, Berlin



Holders Bayern Munich reached the German Cup semifinals after beating Bayer Leverkusen 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out on Wednesday as their last eight clash finished goalless after extra time.

This is the sixth year in a row that Bayern have reached the semifinals.

Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer was Bayern's hero at Leverkusen's BayArena after saving Swiss striker Josip Drmic's first spot-kick penalty to give Bayern the advantage.

Thomas Mueller, Robert Lewandowski, Xabi Alonso, Mario Goetze and finally Thiago Alcantara, who is just back from a year's absence with injury, all then drilled home their spot kicks to put Munich in the last four.

"No-one deserved to lose a game like that," said Neuer. "You could really see that no-one wanted to make a mistake."

"Of course, it's a bitter result for Leverkusen, they really put a lot into it."

In the semifinals, Bayern will host Borussia Dortmund with Wolfsburg home to third-division Arminia Bielefeld when the semifinals are played on April 28 and 29.

"That's ok for us, if you want to win the cup you need to beat the best teams, so it's Dortmund for us," said Bayern coach Pep Guardiola.

Earlier, minnows Bielefeld produced a classic German Cup upset by knocking out Bundesliga high-fliers Borussia Moenchengladbach as their quarterfinal was also decided by a penalty shoot-out.

Lucien Favre's Gladbach, who are set to play Champions League football next season, become the third Bundesliga side after Werder Bremen and Hertha Berlin to lose to Arminia on their march to the semifinals.

Bielefeld held their nerve to win the penalty shoot-out 5-4 as it finished 1-1 after extra-time.

Arminia took the lead at their sold-out Schueco-Arena after midfielder Manuel Junglas fired home with 26 minutes gone.

But Gladbach, who are third in the Bundesliga table, drew level six minutes later when striker Max Kruse converted a penalty.

Third-division leader Bielefeld will pick up at least two million euros (\$2.1m) for reaching the semifinals.

On Tuesday, a thunderbolt of a shot from veteran midfielder Sebastian Kehl sealed Borussia Dortmund's 3-2 extra-time win over Hoffenheim to book their place in the last four.

**Coutinho fires L'pool**

AFP, Blackburn



Philippe Coutinho produced a moment of magic to earn Liverpool a much-needed 1-0 victory at second-tier Blackburn Rovers in their FA Cup quarterfinal replay on Wednesday.

The Brazilian fired in an accurate low drive in the 70th minute at Ewood Park to earn Brendan Rodgers's side an FA Cup semifinal date with Aston Villa at Wembley on April 19.

Coutinho seems to enjoy playing cup



**Mario Balotelli hit back at those criticising his absence for Liverpool's FA Cup quarterfinal win over Blackburn Rovers due to illness by attempting to prove he had a high temperature. Balotelli holds a thermometer reading 38.7 Celsius — 1.7C above 'normal' body temperature. With the snap, Balotelli wrote: 'Nothing stop me to watch my team winning. At least this time you know the real reason I am out. Miss the pitch so much #unluckysession #YNWA #illbeback [sic].'**

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

replays in this part of northwest England, having also scored the winner against Bolton Wanderers in the fourth round.

It was hardly comfortable and it was not pretty, but for Rodgers this victory was more than welcome.

Since Blackburn held out for a goalless draw at Anfield in the original tie a month ago, Liverpool have seen their hopes of a place in the Premier League's top four fade, with two defeats in three matches.

By Rodgers's admission, it had placed extra significance on this competition, which the Reds have not won since 2006, and particularly with the final falling on the day that departing captain Steven Gerrard celebrates his 35th birthday.

Rodgers made three changes to the team humbled 4-1 by Arsenal on Saturday, with Dejan Lovren coming in for his first appearance since the match against Rovers at Anfield.

A narrow midfield of Lucas Leiva, Joe Allen and Jordan Henderson helped Liverpool enjoy the majority of possession in the first half, but both teams saw goal-scoring opportunities come and go.

With Rudy Gesteira -- Liverpool's tormentor in the first game -- only fit enough to come on for the final 26 minutes due to a hamstring strain, Blackburn had Jordan Rhodes as their lone striker for most of the match.

It meant players had to drive forward from midfield to offer support and Craig Conway almost benefited from doing so when an error from Mamadou Sakho nearly let him, only for the Frenchman to slide in and atone.

It was to be Sakho's last notable involvement before he was replaced by Kolo Toure after appearing to injure his right hamstring.

Rhodes has 17 goals to his name this season, but he headed a glorious chance over the bar from Ben Marshall's left-wing cross.

Quiet for most of the first half, Coutinho forced a smart save from Simon Eastwood in the Blackburn goal after Henderson's corner caused problems shortly before the interval.

**MSC maul Ctg Abahani**

SPORTS REPORTER



Having shrugged off the first-half poor performance, a youthful Mohammedan SC came strongly to blank Chittagong Abahani 5-0 in their opening encounter of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

In the day's second match under the floodlights, Brothers Union were held to a goalless draw by Team BJMC.

Guinean hitman Ismael Bangoura struck two goals while local striker Towhidul Alam Sabuj and Masuk Mia Jonny and captain-cum-defender Arup Kumar Baddya netted one goal each to give the Black and Whites a moral boosting start.

It was Mohammedan's biggest victory in five years since their identical 7-0 win records produced against Arambagh KS and Shuktara Jubo Sangsad in the third edition of the professional football league in 2009-10 season.

The Motijheel-based outfit looked nervous in the first half and came close to conceding the lead twice, thanks to a timely clearance from goalkeeper Mohammad Nehal, who tipped a dipping shot from Mohammad Hemu over the crosspiece at the last moment for corner in the 22nd minute.

Three minutes later, Chittagong Abahani were deprived off a lead when Sumon Ali raced into the box to latch onto a

**MOHAMMEDAN 5-0 CTG ABAHANI**  
**BROTHERS 0-0 TEAM BJMC**

powerful shot only to be denied by the post.

However, the scenario changed in the second half which belonged to Mohammedan till the last minute. The backline of Abahani fell apart in face of waves of Mohammedan attacks and conceded goals one after another.

Ismael danced past two defenders to break the deadlock with a low drive in the 59th minute while Sabuj capitalizing on the misunderstanding among Ctg defenders and the goalkeeper doubled the margin from close range in the 65th minute before tapping in a rebounder to make it 3-0 in the 68th minute.

Afterwards, Ismael widened the margin in the 86th minute when a Masuk Mia shot came in his way following a fist from goalkeeper Ershad while Arup wrapped up the victory with a placing shot three minutes into the stoppage time.

"The boys were a bit of nervous and could not perform according to their merit in the first half but they overcame it to come out successfully finally. I have confidence in these young boys, who are actually sleeping lions," said Mohammedan coach Josimuddin Ahmed Joshy.

"We lost because of inconsistent performance in the second half where the defenders and the goalkeeper made a lot of mistakes," said Ctg Abahani coach Ahsanuzzaman Jhantu.



Mohammedan's Guinean striker Ismael Bangoura (2nd from L) celebrates one of his two goals with teammates during their Bangladesh Premier League match against Ctg Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

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