

**YELLOW FOR REF!**

Chelsea defender Cesar Azpilicueta showed his sense of humour after the Blues' 1-0 win over Thailand All-Stars by giving the referee a yellow card! The official, clearly star-struck by the quality of Jose Mourinho's squad, asked Eden Hazard for a post-match selfie, much to the joking disdain of the Spanish full-back. Azpilicueta made light of the incident by robbing the referee of his yellow card and booking him. Dominic Solanke's goal gave the Blues a narrow victory in the post-



**MESSI'S magical moment**

Lionel Messi changed last night's Copa del Rey final in 13 seconds on Saturday night with what will most likely go down as the goal of the season. Another majestic performance from Lionel Messi put Barcelona on the brink of becoming the first team ever to win the treble twice as they put Athletic Bilbao to the sword 3-1.

And just as with Guardiola's sides, the catalyst has been Messi, with the addition of Neymar and Luis Suarez allowing him the extra freedom needed to be even more deadly. The Argentine struck twice, including a sensational individ-

**COLOROFINFINITY**  
The whole run, I kept saying "no way" and then next thing you know the ball's in.

**KLUEY**  
Dribble should be impossible, turn should be impossible, finish should be impossible. But it's Messi...

**DMITCHELL927**  
See that Jerome Boateng? You don't have to be that embarrassed.

**THELARRYMULLEN BAND**  
Seriously Messi, you should go play another sport. You're making everyone else look bad.



**OUT OF THIS WORLD:** Lionel Messi has been labelled as an 'alien' many times in his career for his unbelievable moves and this superimposed image shows a UFO lifting Messi, presumably to take him back to his home planet. PHOTO: INTERNET

**I won't change: Neymar**

Brazilian star Neymar has insisted he won't be bullied into curbing his repertoire of skills after a host of Athletic Bilbao players reacted angrily to his show-boating towards the end of Barcelona's 3-1 Copa del Rey final win on Saturday.

Neymar flicked the ball over Unai Bustinza with both feet with two minutes to go and Barca well on their way to sealing a 27th Copa del Rey to go with the La Liga title they won two weeks ago.

Bilbao's outraged players immediately surrounded the 22-year-old with Barca's veteran captain Xavi Hernandez having to lead his teammate away from the fracas.

"They can be angry, but it is my way of playing and I have done so for years. Just because others get angry doesn't mean I am going to change my style of play," said Neymar.

However, Barca boss Luis Enrique had strong words for his star.

"In Spain this is looked on very badly. If I was an Athletic player I would have reacted the same, or even worse," said Enrique.

"In Brazil this is normal, so we have to

understand the context. He didn't do it to humiliate his opponent, it is difficult to explain it when someone is losing but we will try to control it with time."

Athletic coach Ernesto Valverde also claimed Neymar needs to learn that such gestures will not be tolerated in Spain.

"It is not even looked upon well by his own fans," he said.

"When the game is won we are very well aware to maintain certain respect for the opponent. There are things that he will learn with time."

The incident took the shine off another brilliant display for Barca, and in particular Messi, that leaves them just one game away from sealing a treble.

Enrique's men face Juventus in the Champions League final and will be strong favourites with the Messi in such form.

And Athletic captain Andoni Iraola believes Neymar could also learn from the attitude shown by Messi.

"For me it didn't seem elegant or sporting at all," said the 32-year-old, who was playing his final game for the Basques.

"He has examples in his own team that he should pay attention to because he has much to learn from them."

**MNS ON TOP**

The South American trio of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez took their tally for the season to **120** goals, surpassing the previous record of **118** set by Real Madrid's trio of Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzem and Gonzalo Higuain in the 2011-12 season for the most

goals. Messi has scored **58** of those goals. Neymar has **38** and Luis Suarez, despite missing the first two months of the season, scored **24**. They will have a chance to extend the



**Defender Gerard Pique, along with his wife pop star Shakira, celebrate Barcelona's Copa del Rey triumph.** PHOTO: AFP

**Klopp's bitter end**

Jurgen Klopp says leaving Borussia Dortmund is the 'hardest moment of his career' after losing the German Cup final with the charismatic coach now unemployed and weighing up his future.

Dortmund were denied the fairytale farewell at Berlin's Olympic Stadium as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's early strike was cancelled out by three goals in 16 first-half minutes as Wolfsburg claimed a 3-1 victory on Saturday.

This was Klopp's final bow after seven years as Thomas Tuchel takes over next season. His farewell party in East Berlin went on until just before 0500 local time on

Sunday. "This is here and now my hardest moment," Klopp told guests at his party.

"The pain of saying goodbye is building slowly and it really hurts. I have tried to express my thanks to each player, because it has been to me an extraordinary pleasure, a great honour to work with them and I find it hard to let go.

"The disappointment from the defeat is huge, but it was a fitting final."

Dortmund fans chanted Klopp's name after the final whistle, but he said it was little comfort.

"It was a great thing to hear, but was little consolation after the defeat. We've grown together over the years, but it wasn't any comfort. When you have wanted something so badly, you need a moment to gather yourself," concluded Klopp.

**Rafa confirmed by accident!**

Real Madrid vice-president Eduardo Fernandez de Blas has unwittingly unveiled the expected appointment of Rafael Benitez as the club's new coach at a fans' meeting.

De Blas let slip Benitez's arrival when questioned by angry supporters why the Italian had been let go.

"Carlo Ancelotti is a phenomenon. We thank him. Until three days ago for me he was the best coach in the world, just like two years ago Jose Mourinho was and starting from next week Rafael Benitez will be," De Blas was recorded as saying. Benitez confirmed last week that he will leave Napoli after their crucial clash against Lazio. However, many of the Madrid faithful remain unconvinced because of his inability to deliver a league title for 11 years ago now.

**Kiwis fight back**

BJ Watling became the first New Zealand batsman to score a Test century at Headingley as the tourists eyed a series-levelling victory over England on Sunday.

Watling's 100 not out took New Zealand to 338 for six in their second innings at stumps on the third day, with their lead also 338 after both sides made first innings totals of exactly 350.

South Africa-born Watling, playing as a batsman only in this match after he injured his knee keeping wicket at Lord's, went to his hundred in just under three hours off 136 balls, including 13 fours and a six, when he hooked James Anderson down to long

leg for a single. It was the 29-year-old Watling's fifth hundred in just 31 Tests and his first against England.

It meant England would have to rewrite the record books were they to win this match and take the series 2-0 after their 124-run victory in the first Test at Lord's.

The most any England side have made to win in the fourth innings of a Test is the 332 for seven they posted against Australia at Melbourne back in 1928/29.

Earlier, Stuart Broad proved a thorn in the side of New Zealand with both bat and ball early on the third day. Broad's 46 helped England make 350. He then took two wickets for four runs in 12 balls, with Tom Latham and Kane Williamson both caught behind before the Kiwis fought back.

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