

AC Milan snatch victory in Madrid

Pato scores twice, Dida's blunder covered up

By MARTIN MURPHY
Epoch Times Staff

AC Milan fought back from a goal down to beat Real Madrid 3-2 in the Santiago Bernabéu stadium in Wednesday's Champions League group stage feature game.

Milan's victory makes them now joint table-toppers with Real Madrid in Group C with six points each. The top two teams from each group will progress to the knock-out stages of the competition in February.

At the start of the game when players shake hands, Kaka, who Real signed from Milan in the summer, received a warm welcome from his former Milan teammates.

Real Madrid started the first half in great style despite missing key players Cristiano Ronaldo and Ruud van Nistelrooy. However, Raúl González picked up the mantle and scored Madrid's opener after 19 minutes.

It was the Spaniard's 66th Champions League goal and probably not his most stylish one, as it came from a horrific goalkeeping error by Milan's Dida. A long distance shot from Esteban Granero was bobbled and fumbled by the Dida. Raúl pounced on the loose ball and slotted it into the gaping net.

Milan seemed to sit back and defend deep in their end, inviting Madrid to come toward them. Usually, when these teams meet, it's the home team that tends to come out on top, so it looked like a done deal when the first half ended with Milan down a goal without a shot on target.



TWO-GOAL HERO: Alexandre Pato received a lot of attention from Madrid players but still managed to score twice. PIERRE-PHILIPPE MARCOU/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

SECOND HALF

The shots on target statistic were essentially reversed in the second half, with ten for Milan compared to one for Madrid. Milan started pushing forward with real haste after the one hour mark.

Real Madrid needed to shut the door with another goal, but failed to do so before conceding to Milan after 62 minutes. The equalizer came from a stunning 35-yard shot from Andrea Pirlo, which came against the run of play. Prior to the equalizer, Milan had no shots on target and this goal was the stimulus the Italians needed. From then on they pressed forward with more gusto.

Four minutes later, the ball was in the back of the Real Madrid net again. Milan midfielder Massimo Ambrosini sent a terrific through ball that Real Madrid keeper Iker

Casillas tried to charge down but missed. This left young Brazilian striker Alexandre Pato with an open goal, which he duly converted.

Five minutes after that Milan full-back Gianluca Zambrotta's long shot scraped past the outside of the post. Madrid was on the ropes and Milan was in the ascendancy.

The Royston Drenthe substitution after 66 minutes paid off for Real as he put the hosts back on level terms 10 minutes later. He took a short corner from Raúl on the edge of the penalty area and drove a long and low shot into the bottom left corner past Dida.

The second half was played with great pace, the action moved from one end of the pitch to the other in complete contrast to the first half.

Milan finished off Madrid with an 88th-minute goal. Clarence

Seedorf's pinpoint pass found an unmarked Pato at the back post and the Brazilian volleyed the ball into the back of the net for his second goal of the night.

Milan gladly took all three points back to Italy. The reverse fixture will take place at the San Siro on Nov. 3. The Milan fans will have a chance to see their former hero Kaka once again.

OTHER ACTION

Elsewhere, Chelsea beat Atletico Madrid 4-0 at Stamford Bridge with two goals from Salomon Kalou. Manchester United recorded a 1-0 win at CSKA Moscow as Antonio Valencia converted a flick header from Dimitar Berbatov. Bordeaux defeated Bayern Munich 2-1 and Juventus beat Maccabi Haifa 1-0.

Surging currency gives Canada's pro teams temporary financial advantage

TORONTO (Reuters)—Canadian professional hockey, basketball, and baseball teams could beef up rosters and make more money if Canada's currency, up nearly 20 percent this year, moves above the U.S. dollar and stays there.

The biggest single expense for Canadian sports teams—salaries—is priced in U.S. dollars, while revenues are mostly in Canadian dollars. Historically, this has left them at a disadvantage versus U.S. teams when hunting for talent.

But last week the Canadian dollar shot to its highest level in nearly 15 months versus the U.S. currency, putting it within striking distance of rising above the greenback for the first time in over a year.

This is welcome news to Canada's six National Hockey League teams, Major League Baseball's Toronto Blue Jays, and the National Basketball Association's Toronto Raptors, whose bottom lines will benefit if the Canadian dollar stays high.

"If there's a 10 percent move upward in the Canadian dollar versus the U.S. dollar, then that effectively reduces their payrolls by the same percentage," said Marc Ganis, president of SportsCorp Ltd, a Chicago-based sports consulting firm.

Experts say a prolonged rally means teams not bumping up against league salary caps can offer lucrative contracts to big name players. The NHL and NBA have salary caps, while baseball does not.

And teams that have little or no salary cap space can pay down debt, or put more money into coaching and upgrading facilities, Ganis said.

A stronger Canadian dollar could also help cities hoping to lure back NHL teams lost to the United States in the 1990s, when the currency sank toward a record low.

"We definitely want a stronger [Canadian] dollar because it means your U.S. expenses don't cost you as much

in Canadian dollars and therefore you have more available Canadian cash," said Ian Clarke, chief financial officer of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, which controls the Maple Leafs and Raptors.

"But many of the clubs, including ourselves, try to protect against fluctuations in the dollar, so in cases like drastic increases we do not capture the full benefit, but in worse times you don't get hurt to the same extent either."

A recent Reuters poll showed currency market experts expect the Canadian dollar to trade comfortably above 90 U.S. cents for at least the next year.

'REMAIN VERY CAUTIOUS'

Of the major North American sports leagues, experts agree the NHL, with the biggest Canadian presence, would be the main beneficiary of a rallying Canadian dollar as Canadian broadcast and sponsorship deals generate high U.S. dollar returns.

The currency's surge could also help hockey-starved Canadian cities looking to land a NHL franchise, as smaller markets become more viable and relocation fees more manageable.

Quebec City recently said it plans to build a new arena with the aim of landing an NHL team. Its former team, the Quebec Nordiques, moved to Colorado in 1995.

Winnipeg, Manitoba is often mentioned as a city seeking a team. Its Jets moved to Phoenix in 1996.

"I think you'll see Canadian teams becoming a little more active in the market for free agents," said Michael Cramer, professor of sports management at New York University and a former president of the group that owned the Texas Rangers and Dallas Stars.

"But I have to say, if I am a Canadian team owner, I'd remain very cautious for a season or maybe even longer because it's hard to project what's going to happen with the dollar, and you don't want to put yourself in an unstable position."



GREAT BUTTON: Jenson Button wrapped up the F1 Championships with a fifth place finish at Interlagos in Brazil last Sunday. MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

Button wins Formula One championship

Brawn GP wins Constructors' Championship

By JAMES FISH
Epoch Times Staff

Jenson Button became the second British World Drivers' Champion in a row last Sunday, clinching the title with an aggressive drive in the Brazilian Formula One Grand Prix at Interlagos in Sao Paulo.

Button started 14th and finished fifth, driving with the abandon fitting a man eager to grab the championship before anything more could go wrong with his season.

After winning six of the first seven races, Jenson Button, lead driver for the Brawn GP team, had a string of bad finishes, while his teammate, Rubens Barrichello, suddenly ignited, scoring well in every race. Fans and experts alike began to ask if Button's early wins were due merely to the Brawn's technological edge. Many pointed to his uneven performances throughout his 10-year career.

As he crossed the finish line, Button broke into an impromptu chorus of "We Are the Champions," pumping his arms in the air. As soon as he parked his car, he ran to his crew to thank them.

After Button qualified terribly in Interlagos, his hopes for clinching the championship in Brazil seemed slim, particularly since Barrichello put his Brawn on the pole. But Jenson Button was not waiting for luck or fate to assist him—though it did. Button jumped ahead from the start, battling past everyone in his way, earning the title through effort and skill.

Red Bull's Mark Webber won the race, beating BMW's Robert Kubica to the line by 7.6 seconds.

"We've had quite a few victories this year off the back of some tough seasons at Red Bull, totally confirming second for us in the Constructors," Webber said. "Obviously we weren't good enough over the whole season to win any championships, but we've done ourselves very proud as a team, as a unit."

MESSY START

The start was simply a mess. First, Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen collided with Force India's Adrian Sutil. Then, Sebastian Vettel in the Red Bull hit McLaren's Heikki Kovalainen, almost spinning him into Giancarlo Fisichella's Ferrari.

The carnage was not over. Near the front of the pack, Kimi Raikkonen, who used KERS to charge from fifth to third, tried to get past Red Bull's Mark Webber, who cut him off sharply, breaking off the Ferrari's front wing.

Seconds later, Toyota's Jarni Trulli made a desperate outside overtaking attempt of Adrian Sutil, who slowed to avoid the Ferrari wing. Trulli spun the Force India driver across the track into Renault's Fernando Alonso, knocking all three out of the race—a huge boon for Jenson Button.

The drama was not over. Many cars dove for the pits under the ensuing yellow, including both McLarens. Lewis Hamilton swapped to Prime tires and made a clean escape, but Heikki Kovalainen's crew chief, wanting to get his driver out ahead of Kimi Raikkonen, gave the "Go" signal while the fuel hose was still attached.

Kovalainen pulled out trailing a plume of gasoline, which ignited when it hit the hot exhaust of Raikkonen's Ferrari, engulfing the Finn in a fireball. Raikkonen, a.k.a. 'The Iceman,' coolly continued on his way despite having gasoline in his eyes.

After the restart, Rubens Barrichello retained the lead, but could not open a gap on Webber. Barrichello needed four seconds to be able to pit and re-enter with good track position, but Webber was too fast. The Red Bull driver took over the lead when Barrichello pitted and never gave it up.

Behind Webber, Button, Vettel and Hamilton were all driving with pace and passion. Vettel managed to finish fourth, just behind Hamilton. Hamilton had an unfortunate coming-together with Barrichello, puncturing Barrichello's left rear tire, dropping the Brawn driver to eighth overall.

Brawn GP clinched the Constructors' Championship, outscoring Red Bull 161-135.5. McLaren managed to edge past Ferrari into third, continuing a long-lasting battle between the two.

Bolt looking to 'chill' in Jamaica

DISCOVERY BAY, Jamaica (Reuters)—Triple Olympic and world champion Usain Bolt has enjoyed a record-breaking two years, but is now looking to slow down and "chill" a little, he told Reuters in an interview.

Back home in Jamaica after another globe-trotting season in which he broke the 100 metres world record for the third time, Bolt is finally hoping to relax before a year in which he is likely to compete and travel less.

The sprinter has been back in Jamaica for around a month, after attending various awards ceremonies and other functions last Sunday, he took part in what should have been a fun, laid-back event, a charity cricket match.

But Jamaica's most famous son does not get much in the way of personal time when he ventures out in public; and he was constantly surrounded by fans, spending a good chunk of the day signing autographs and posing for photographs.

Asked if he was able to have any kind of normal life, Bolt revealed a little frustration, but was careful to show appreciation for his fans.

"No, no, if I go out to an event, I can't get five minutes just to chill out. Everyone is always asking me to take pictures, coming up to me wanting autographs, and so on," he said.

"I've seen a lot, though, so it's not hard to deal with and it's good for me to take time with my fans and take pictures," he said.

As well as a fan base to take care of, the 23-year-old, who on Monday was awarded the Order of Jamaica making him the youngest person to win the nation's fourth-highest hon-

our, also has the responsibility for being the most identifiable symbol of the Caribbean island.

Bolt has not committed to the Commonwealth Games and said no decision had been taken on that event or any other races next year.

"Before the season, I always sit down with my coach and we decide what races we want to do for the season and we look at conditions and places where we enjoy competing," he said in an interview organized by his sponsor, Digicel.

LESS RACING

He will not discuss specifics, but said that with the World Championships in 2011 and the Olympics a year later, there would be much less racing and travelling in 2010.

"That's the plan. We aren't trying to do too much this season because we have two championships in the two years after. We want to take our time and not do too much," he said.

Next week, though, the fastest man in the world plans to travel around Jamaica in search of a place to escape to a "Bolt hole," perhaps.

"I don't really go on holidays in Jamaica. I've promised myself I should find some place in Jamaica because I travel a lot, but I don't really travel a lot in Jamaica," he said.

"I've decided that next week I am going with some friends and my brother to just travel around Jamaica and see some places," he added.

Then it will be time at home doing what he likes to do when it comes to chilling out.

"Music, dancing, I love to play video games. I am always on video games at home," he said.

But he knows that while he might



CHARITY CRICKET: Usain Bolt's time off includes many public appearances. ANTHONY FOSTER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

be ready to ease off, his rivals, primarily fellow Jamaican Asafa Powell and Tyson Gay, will be looking to get closer to his world records.

"Definitely, Asafa has said he is going to work harder this season. He had a few setbacks [last year], so he will be coming up, and definitely Tyson, he just came in with 9.69 and that's good so I know he is going to be good."

"I am definitely looking forward to next season—it should be exciting," he said.

But what Bolt is looking forward to most just now is a quiet Sunday in Trelawny with his family.

"Just be at home and maybe go and play soccer in the evening and just chill out with some friends," he said.

| TENNIS RANKINGS | | MEN'S GOLF RANKING | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--|-------------|
| Women | | | |
| Name | Points | Name | Avg. Points |
| 1. (1) Serena Williams (U.S.) | 7,945 | 1. (1) Roger Federer (Switzerland) | 10,805 |
| 2. (2) Dinara Safina (Russia) | 7,940 | 2. (2) Rafael Nadal (Spain) | 9,095 |
| 3. (4) Svetlana Kuznetsova (Russia) | 5,981 | 3. (4) Novak Djokovic (Serbia) | 7,950 |
| 4. (3) Venus Williams (U.S.) | 5,896 | 4. (3) Andy Murray (Britain) | 7,390 |
| 5. (5) Elena Dementieva (Russia) | 5,875 | 5. (5) Juan Martin del Potro (Argentina) | 6,315 |
| 6. (6) Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark) | 5,575 | 6. (8) Nikolay Davydenko (Russia) | 4,700 |
| 7. (7) Vera Zvonareva (Russia) | 4,810 | 7. (6) Andy Roddick (U.S.) | 4,690 |
| 8. (8) Victoria Azarenka (Belarus) | 4,451 | 8. (7) Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (France) | 4,040 |
| 9. (9) Jelena Jankovic (Serbia) | 3,965 | 9. (9) Fernando Verdasco (Spain) | 3,400 |
| 10. (10) Agnieszka Radwanska (Poland) | 3,720 | 10. (11) Robin Soderling (Sweden) | 3,235 |
| 11. (12) Marion Bartoli (France) | 3,245 | 11. (12) Fernando Gonzalez (Chile) | 2,780 |
| 12. (11) Flavia Pennetta (Italy) | 3,160 | 12. (10) Gilles Simon (France) | 2,765 |
| 13. (15) Samantha Stosur (Australia) | 2,945 | 13. (13) Marin Cilic (Croatia) | 2,355 |
| 14. (13) Ana Ivanovic (Serbia) | 2,825 | 14. (16) Radek Stepánek (Czech Republic) | 2,165 |
| 15. (14) Maria Sharapova (Russia) | 2,820 | 15. (14) Gael Monfis (France) | 2,125 |
| 16. (16) Li Na (China) | 2,690 | 16. (15) Tommy Robredo (Spain) | 2,110 |
| 17. (17) Nadia Petrova (Russia) | 2,670 | 17. (18) Tommy Haas (Germany) | 1,825 |
| 18. (18) Kim Clijsters (Belgium) | 2,310 | 18. (19) David Ferrer (Spain) | 1,805 |
| 19. (19) Virginie Razzano (France) | 2,300 | 19. (20) Tomas Berdych (Czech Republic) | 1,760 |
| 20. (20) Yanina Wickmayer (Belgium) | 2,159 | 20. (17) David Naibandian (Argentina) | 1,715 |

Rankings as of Oct. 19. Last week's rankings in parentheses.