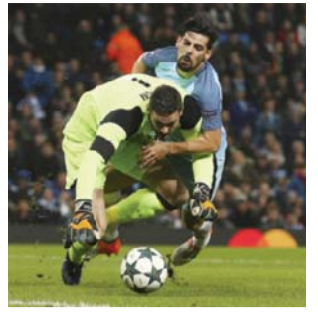


# Sports

Warner century as  
Australia reclaim  
series over N  
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Iheanacho up to  
speed as Man City,  
Celtic draw



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MUNICH: Atletico Madrid's Montenegrin defender Stefan Savic and Bayern Munich's German defender Mats Hummels vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League group D football match between FC Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

## LEWANDOWSKI SEALS BAYERN WIN OVER ATLETICO

MUNICH: A Robert Lewandowski free-kick sealed Bayern Munich's 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid yesterday in the Champions League with both teams already through to the knock-out stage.

Despite the result at Munich's bitterly cold Allianz Arena, Atletico go into the draw for the last 16 as Group D winners with Bayern second.

Having been knocked out in the semi-finals by Atletico last season, Bayern avenged their 1-0 defeat in Madrid in September and extended their record streak in Champions League to 15 wins at home.

But Lewandowski's superb first-half strike was the difference. "He's been hitting those in training all season," said Bayern's Germany defender Mats Hummels.

"We allowed them a couple of big chances early on and then nothing after that. "We did a good job and the most important thing is that he has things in hand defensively."

Atletico, who were close to full strength, suffered their first defeat in the group stages this season having been the only team to win all of their previous five.

It denied them a club record of a perfect six. Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti switched from the 4-2-3-1 formation, which won 3-1 at Mainz in the Bundesliga, with a 4-3-3 formation, surprisingly leaving Thomas Mueller on the bench.

Lewandowski played either side of Arjen Robben and Douglas Costa on the wings with Thiago Alcantara,

Arturo Vidal and teenage Portugal international Renato Sanches in midfield.

Diego Simeone's Atletico made a bright start with Yannick Carrasco, who scored when the hosts won 1-0 in Madrid in September, twice forcing Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer into action.

Bayern took the lead when Poland's Lewandowski majestically floated his free-kick over the wall from the edge of the box and into the top corner on 28 minutes.

It was from almost exactly the same position Lewandowski scored from in Friday's 3-1 win at Mainz, but Madrid goalkeeper Jan Oblak was powerless to stop it. It was Lewandowski's 24th goal in 24 appearances for club and country this season.

In celebration, the 28-year-old shoved the matchball under his playing shirt and stuck his thumb in his mouth amidst rumours in the Polish media that his wife Anna is pregnant.

Atletico's defence closed down the Bayern attack after the break with Sanches twice unable to get a clean shot away from good positions due to Madrid shirts blocking him. The hosts starved Atletico of the ball with Bayern enjoying just under 75 percent possession.

Thiago squandered a golden chance to add a second on 78 minutes.

Costa whipped in a pin-point cross, but the Spain international's half volley from five metres out flew over the bar with the goal at his mercy. — AFP



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Lionel Messi smiles during the Champions League, Group C, soccer match between FC Barcelona and Borussia Moenchengladbach at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday. — AP

## BARCA WINS BUT MESSI FALLS SHORT OF RONALDO'S RECORD

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi opened the scoring in Barcelona's 4-0 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach yesterday, but fell short of matching Cristiano Ronaldo's goal record in the group stage of the Champions League.

Messi struck his 10th group-stage goal this season, one less than the 11 netted by Ronaldo with Real Madrid last season to set the record. Arda Turan scored a hat trick for Barcelona, which had already secured first place in Group C. Moenchengladbach finished third and will play in the Europa League next season. All positions had already been decided ahead of Tuesday's final round. Manchester City drew 1-1 with Celtic in England in the other match of the group. Barcelona finished with 15 points, six more than Man City. Moenchengladbach ended with five

points and winless Celtic with three.

Messi scored in the 16th minute at Camp Nou after a one-two with Turan inside the Moenchengladbach area. The Argentine slid behind the defenders and fired home a low left-foot shot after receiving Turan's return pass. Messi had a great chance to match Ronaldo's record in the 73rd, but his close-range header was brilliantly saved on the goal line by goalkeeper Yann Sommer. Turan scored in the 50th, 53rd and 67th minutes to help the Catalan club end a three-game winless streak. It conceded a 90th-minute equalizer in a 1-1 home draw against Real Madrid in the Spanish league on Saturday. Barcelona was without forward Neymar and midfielder Ivan Rakitic because of suspensions.

Coach Luis Enrique also rested striker Luis

Suarez, giving a chance to recently signed forward Paco Alcacer, who has been criticized by Barcelona fans for his lackluster performances. Ronaldo last year became the first player to reach double figures in the six games of the group stage. Messi played in only five matches for Barcelona this season, but he twice scored hat tricks - in the home games against Celtic and Manchester City. He also netted once against City in Manchester and twice against Celtic in Glasgow.

Ronaldo today will try to become the first player to score 100 goals in European competitions. He is two short of the milestone heading into the game against Borussia Dortmund at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Messi now has 93 goals overall in the Champions League, two less than Ronaldo. — AP

## PSG FAILS TO SECURE TOP SPOT AFTER 2-2 DRAW WITH LUDOGORETS

PARIS: Mistakes cost Paris Saint-Germain dearly as it missed out on top spot in Group A following a 2-2 home draw with Ludogorets in the Champions League yesterday.

PSG needed a home win to guarantee first place and faced an unheralded Bulgarian side that had not won any of the previous five group games. Instead, the draw meant PSG qualifies in second - two points behind Arsenal, which won 4-1 away to Swiss side Basel. Dutch forward Virgil Misidjan scored in the 15th minute and Brazilian forward Wanderson made it 2-1 in the 68th, shortly after Edinson Cavani had leveled for PSG. Winger Angel Di Maria saved face for PSG in the second minute of injury time with a scuffed shot, and Cavani was desperately close to grabbing the winner in the dying seconds.

That would have been harsh on Ludogorets. PSG's shortcomings at the back are still glaringly evident for a team hoping to be among the contenders to win Europe's biggest club trophy.

Following a mistake by midfielder Thiago Motta, Misidjan headed the Bulgarian league

leaders ahead and PSG's players were jeered off the field at halftime. Cavani grabbed the equalizer in the 61st with an overhead kick from close range after Ludogorets had failed to clear Di Maria's cross from the right. It was Cavani's sixth goal of the campaign so far and the Uruguayan striker appears full of confidence.

The defense is not, having leaked goals in a 3-0 loss away to Montpellier in the French league last weekend.

Brazil defender Marquinhos clumsily lost possession when receiving a throw-in. He turned his back on play, allowing Brazilian forward Jonathan Cafu to steal the ball off him and burst down the left, before pulling it back to countryman Wanderson to finish with a low drive under the body of goalkeeper Alphonse Areola. PSG beat Basel 3-0 in its previous home game but it was far more difficult than the result suggested, with Basel missing several chances. This time, Ludogorets punished PSG's mistakes to secure third place and a spot in the Europa League. — AP



PARIS: Ludogorets' Virgil Misidjan, right, scores his team opening goal as PSG's Blaise Matuidi, left, looks on, during the Champions League Group A soccer match between Paris Saint Germain and Ludogorets yesterday. — AP