

JUVENTUS MAKES IT WORTH THE WAIT AGAINST BARCELONA

TURIN: Juventus had to wait two years for another chance against Barcelona. It was worth it. "It's certainly a great night," Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini said after his team beat Barcelona 3-0 in the first leg of the Champions League quarter-finals. "In comparison with two years ago, we wanted to prove to ourselves we had grown technically and tactically." In 2015, Barcelona beat Juventus 3-1 in the final, winning the European Cup for the fifth time. "We would pay to play that final in Berlin again with this conviction," said Chiellini, who missed that

match because of injury. "Now we have to get to another final, the one in Cardiff, hoping it will finish in another way." Juventus has brought in several players over the last two seasons, including Argentina internationals Gonzalo Higuain and Paulo Dybala. It was the latter who made the difference on Tuesday by scoring two goals. The core of the Juventus team remains the same, with the ever-present BBC of Leonardo Bonucci, Andrea Barzagli and Chiellini in front of veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon.

And it's that mix of experience and youth that could see Juventus win European soccer's greatest club prize for the first time since 1996. The reliance on both was typified when the 39-year-old Buffon made a crucial stop to deny Andres Iniesta. Moments later, the 23-year-old Dybala scored his second to give Juventus a 2-0 lead. "I'm there to make saves," Buffon said. "It was an important and difficult save because it's a question of thousandths of a second. If I have the ambition of being considered still a great

goalkeeper, I need to do these things." The Spanish press was more effusive about Buffon, calling the 2006 World Cup winner a "legend" and using the word "divine" to describe his save as they raved about him and Dybala being the orchestrators of Barcelona's downfall. Dybala has been adamant that he does not want to be compared to Lionel Messi, but that seems inevitable - especially after Tuesday's match. One Italian sports newspaper ran the headline "The New Messi" above a picture of Dybala, while another went with "Messi who?

The alien is Dybala." Another simply said "Immense Joya," playing off Dybala's nickname "La Joya" (jewel) and the word joy. Dybala has improved by tremendously since joining from Palermo for 32 million euros (then \$36 million) in June 2015. "Paulo is a world class talent, more than anything because he has taken really quick steps," Chiellini said. "He came to Juventus at 22 after one really great season at Palermo. In one and half years, almost two, we are talking of a player of international level.—AP

FIRED-UP MOURINHO RENEWS BATTLE WITH CONTE'S CHELSEA

LONDON: By the time Chelsea walk out at Old Trafford on Sunday their Premier League lead may again have been cut to a slender four points. For the second weekend running, Antonio Conte's side kick off after their main pursuers Tottenham Hotspur but, unlike last Saturday when they were always odds-on to restore their advantage by beating Bournemouth, real danger lurks in the form of Manchester United - and ex-manager Jose Mourinho.

When the teams last met the Portuguese appeared unusually relaxed, eschewing the regulation collar and tie he always wore as Blues manager for gilet and trainers. But he still ended up squaring up with Conte on the Stamford Bridge touchline during a fractious FA Cup quarter-final that saw Ander Herrera sent off.

Chelsea's 1-0 win was their second over United this season and although the result was much closer than the 4-0 league drubbing, the chasm that has opened between the teams was clear.

Sunday marks the start of a testing period for United with fixtures against City, Arsenal and Spurs looming, alongside their continuing Europa League campaign.

Mourinho will respond to the workload by rotating his squad. In the process he will highlight one of the big differences between United and Chelsea this season: while the Portuguese has made 85 team changes in his Premier League line-ups, Conte has switched personnel just 31 times, an average of one per game and the fewest in the league.

That consistency has provided the bedrock of their title challenge and Conte can approach Sunday's game knowing it is Mourinho's United who must take the initiative on a ground where they have already drawn nine times this season.

Even their wins have often been scratchily unimpressive and Chelsea will set up to play on the counter-attack with N'golo Kante prowling and ready to pounce in midfield.

Much has been made of Kante's impact this season, when he has perfected the art of perfect tackling at a time when referees punish the slightest aberration.

He is expected to be named on the PFA player of the season shortlist along with Eden Hazard later this week.

You can probably bet Paul Pogba's transfer fee on United's midfielder not joining them on the six-man shortlist because despite costing 59 million pounds (\$73.77 million) more than Kante, he has made a fraction of the impact.

Sunday provides Pogba with the perfect opportunity to make the big-match statement that has been lacking for United, who are unbeaten in 21 league games but still 18 points adrift of the leaders in fifth place.

Nothing irks Mourinho more than suggestions that Conte represents the future while he encapsulates the past, a once great manager out of tune with current sensitivities. But his recent public criticism of Luke Shaw and David de Gea has added to the narrative and he too has something to prove on Sunday. If his brain is really big enough to do Shaw's thinking for him, as he bizarrely claimed recently, then surely it can come up with a plan to outwit Conte?

Success would hand a huge boost for Spurs, who entertain Bournemouth in Saturday's early kickoff knowing they can again pile the pressure on Chelsea. Third-placed Liverpool travel to West Bromwich Albion on Sunday while Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger must wait until Monday's match against Middlesbrough for the chance to silence his detractors and check a disastrous run of four away defeats. — Reuters



DORTMUND: Monaco's Bernardo Silva is surrounded by, from left, Dortmund's Raphael Guerreiro, Nuri Sahin and Shinji Kagawa during the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and AS Monaco in Dortmund, Germany, yesterday. — AP

SOCCER

MBAPPE STUNS DORTMUND DAY AFTER BUS ATTACK

DORTMUND: Kylian Mbappe struck twice as Monaco claimed a thrilling 3-2 win at Borussia Dortmund in yesterday's rescheduled Champions League quarter-final first leg to seize the advantage in the tie.

Police ramped up security in the city as German investigators detained an Islamist suspect over three explosions that rocked Dortmund's team bus on Tuesday and left Spain international Marc Bartra with a broken wrist.

Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel had criticised the decision to go-ahead with the game. "We would have liked to have had more time to work through it," he said. "There are players who easily brushed it off, but there are also players who really took it to heart. They are more thoughtful." Dortmund defiantly vowed not to "give in to terror" after the harrowing events from 24 hours earlier, but the home side struggled early and fell behind on 19 minutes-although only after Fabinho missed a rare penalty. Mbappe bundled in the opening goal from an offside position before Sven Bender, filling in for Bartra in defence, headed into his own net to compound Dortmund's problems. Ousmane Dembele pulled one back for Dortmund on 57 minutes, but Mbappe fired in his second of the game to leave Monaco as favourites to reach the last four despite Shinji Kagawa's late strike. Extra forces were deployed around team hotels and their buses took designated safe routes to the stadium.

Dortmund players wore t-shirts bearing a message of support for Bartra prior to kick-off, while goalkeeper Roman Burki warmed up in the defender's number five jersey.

The 26-year-old was replaced in the line-up by Bender, although Tuchel elected against rushing Marco Reus back into the side having been sidelined since March 4 with a hamstring injury.

Monaco were without midfielder Tiemoué Bakayoko, their last-16 hero against Manchester City, due to suspension, while full-backs Djibril Sidibe (appendicitis) and Benjamin Mendy (groin) were both ruled out. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, scorer of a hat-trick when Dortmund brushed aside Benfica in the previous round, rifled a snap shot just over as the hosts fired an early warning.

But Monaco were awarded a penalty when Mbappe was tugged back by Sokratis Papastathopoulos, only for Brazilian Fabinho who had converted all 16 previous career spot-kicks to drag wide of the left-hand post.

PENALTY PAIN SHORT-LIVED

Their anguish lasted just two minutes, although there was a huge element of fortune involved as Monaco took the lead through Mbappe.

Bernardo Silva found Thomas Lemar on the edge of the area, with the Frenchman's miscued effort forced in by Mbappe at the far post despite the forward straying offside.

Kagawa then scuffed wide from an inviting low cross from Matthias Ginter, and that miss proved increasingly costly when Bender headed Andrea Raggi's delivery into his own net on 35 minutes.

Tuchel rolled the dice at half-time by introducing American teenager Christian Pulisic and Nuri Sahin in place of the hapless Bender and Schmelzer, and the changes immediately reaped rewards. Pulisic tormented Raggi on the right wing, but it was a cross from Raphael Guerreiro on the left that led to Dembele reviving Dortmund's hopes. Aubameyang acrobatically flicked the Portugal international's cross into the path of Kagawa who squared for Dembele to slide into an

empty net just before the hour. Guerreiro drilled a dangerous low ball across the face of goal as Dortmund pressed for an equaliser, while Falcao nearly landed a sucker punch only to blaze over on the stretch after rounding Burki following a superb pass from Lemar. But Mbappe was less forgiving, intercept-

ing a risky pass from Lukasz Piszczek and sprinting towards the Dortmund goal before finishing superbly past Swiss international Burki.

Kagawa grabbed a lifeline for Dortmund with six minutes left, expertly controlling a Sahin cross and wriggling past Jemerson to slot beyond Monaco goalkeeper Danijel Subasic.—AFP

WORK STARTS ON QATAR W CUP FINAL STADIUM

DOHA: Work has begun on Lusail Stadium, the 80,000-seater venue which will host the Qatar 2022 World Cup final, tournament organisers in the Gulf have said.

Allowing cameras onto the site for the very first time, officials said they hope the stadium would be completed by 2020. Lusail, which is some 20 kilometres north of the capital Doha, will also host the opening game of the 2022 tournament. Ground is currently being cleared on the one million square metres site, but would soon begin to resemble the stadium which the whole world will see in five years' time, said project manager Tamim Loutfi Elabed. "Foundations will go in later this year," he said.

"If you dropped by to visit us the same time next year, you would be happy." Despite the early stages, the pitch's centre circle-where the \$200bn (187 billion euros) tournament will kick off-has already been identified and marked out with barriers.

Elabed said it was "symbolic" as well as "a surveying point". Eventually, up to 7,000 workers will be employed on site. "At the moment we're still in the early mobilisation stages so we haven't hit the first thousand. We're at about 500 workers," he added. Since being chosen as the 2022 host, Qatar has come under heavy criticism for the treatment of its migrant workforce, claims which it has largely denied. As well as being built from scratch, Lusail Stadium is itself part of a completely new \$45 billion city taking shape in the desert outside Doha. There was nothing on the site prior to it being selected as the venue for the World Cup final, though it is apparently close to one of Qatar's first recorded settlements.

The stadium is being developed in a joint venture between a Qatari and Chinese compa-

ny. The design, likely to be revealed later this year, is being undertaken by renowned British architects, Foster and Partners. As well as the stadium, construction work has also begun on a nearby metro station, part of an ongoing \$18 billion light railway project, which fans will use during the tournament.

Although FIFA has not yet made a final decision on how many stadiums will be used during 2022, there will be at least eight venues. Up to \$10 billion will be spent on stadium infrastructure costs, Qatar's senior World Cup organiser Hassan Al-Thawadi, has said. Qatar is spending almost \$500 million every week on major infrastructure projects for football's biggest tournament, Doha's government said earlier this year.

Lusail Stadium could potentially be used in 2021 as a venue for the Club World Cup. Qatar is currently in talks with FIFA about hosting the tournament in four years' time, as a rehearsal event for the World Cup. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE	
Anderlecht v Manchester United	22:05
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Celta de Vigo v KRK Genk	22:05
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
Ajax Amsterdam v Schalke	22:05
beIN SPORTS HD	
Olympique Lyonnais v Besiktas	22:05
beIN SPORTS HD 4	



Dele Alli



DOHA: Tamim Loutfi Elabed, project manager of the construction of Lusail stadium, the 80,000-seater venue which will host the opening and final of the Qatar 2022 World Cup, holds the football to be used in the starting match at the site in Lusail, some 20 kilometres north of the capital Doha, on April 11, 2017. — AFP