

Mbappe Scores as Real Madrid Kick Off Champions League With Win



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe (right) vies for the ball with Stuttgart's Anthony Rouault during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Real Madrid and VfB Stuttgart at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, in Madrid, Sept 17, 2024.

MADRID (Reuters) - Real Madrid began their Champions League defense with a 3-1 win at home against Stuttgart, where

the German side will feel they let Real Madrid off the hook.

Kylian Mbappe put Madrid ahead just moments into the second half after a first 45 minutes in which Madrid had to thank goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois for keeping the scores level. The Belgian made crucial stops to deny Enzo Millot, Angelo Stiller, and Deniz Undav, who also saw an effort hit the woodwork.

Mbappe was Madrid's most dangerous player in the first half, creating several decent chances, while the VAR overturned a penalty initially given for a foul on Antonio Rudiger.

Rodrygo, who has become a bit of a forgotten man since Mbappe's arrival, set up the opening goal with a run into space and a pass that left the French interna-

tional with a tap-in to score.

However, if anyone expected that to open the floodgates, they were mistaken as Stuttgart continued to press. Rodrygo and Vinicius were close to doubling Madrid's lead, with Rodrygo taking too long to shoot and Vinicius hitting the bar.

Undav got his reward, leveling the score in the 67th minute for Stuttgart after a corner.

A costly mistake from Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nubel, who misjudged the flight of a Luka Modric corner, allowed Rudiger to head Madrid back into the lead with eight minutes left. The keeper was again at fault deep into injury time as he allowed Endrick's long-range shot to beat him when he should have done better.

Roma Fire Daniele De Rossi After Going Winless in 4 Serie A Matches



Roma's head coach Daniele De Rossi waits for the start of the Europa League second leg semifinal soccer match in Leverkusen, Germany, May 9, 2024.

ROME (AP) — Roma fired coach Daniele De Rossi on Wednesday in a move that was surprising despite the Giallorossi going winless in their opening four Italian league matches.

De Rossi, a former Roma captain, was hired in January to replace the fired Jose Mourinho and impressed so much during the second half of last season that he was given a contract extension in June through 2026-27.

"The club's decision is made in the best interests of the team, to get back on the desired path as soon as possible at a time when the season is still in its early stages," Roma said. "A heartfelt thank you to

Daniele, who will always be at home at the Giallorossi club, for the work done in recent months with passion and dedication."

Roma added that "communication regarding the team's technical guidance will follow."

Roma hosts Serie A leader Udinese on Sunday.

Ivan Jurić, who formerly coached Genoa, Hellas Verona and Torino, was close to formalizing a deal to replace De Rossi, the Gazzetta dello Sport reported. Jurić coached Torino the last three seasons, leading the club to 10th-place finishes in his first two campaigns and ninth place last season.

Italy's World Cup Icon Schillaci Dies Aged 59

ROME (AFP) - Italian icon Salvatore Schillaci, the top scorer at the 1990 World Cup, has died aged 59.

Schillaci, better known as 'Toto', scored six goals to win the Golden Boot at the 1990 World Cup on home soil.

Italy lost in the semifinals, but Schillaci was also awarded the Golden Ball as the best player and gained hero status.

Schillaci was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2022.

Capped 16 times for his country, scoring seven goals, he represented Italian giants Juventus and Inter Milan after beginning his club career at Messina.

Juventus, whom Schillaci joined in 1989, said: "We immediately fell in love with Toto. His desire, his story, his being so wonderfully passionate, and it showed in every game he played."

"We at Juve were lucky enough to get excited about him before - in that incredible summer of 1990 - the whole of Italy did, captivated by those wonderfully energetic celebrations of his."

Schillaci scored his first goal of the 1990 World Cup as a substitute against Austria, and after another substitute appearance



Salvatore Schillaci scored six goals in seven appearances at the 1990 World Cup

against the United States earned his first start against the Czech Republic.

Partnering Roberto Baggio up front, Schillaci scored again as Italy's campaign built momentum, and his hero status was confirmed with further goals in the subsequent knockout round matches against Uruguay and the Republic of Ireland in the quarter-finals.

Despite opening the scoring in the semi-final against Argentina, Italy lost out on penalties in Naples - but Schillaci sealed the Golden Boot with his sixth goal of the tournament in the third-place play-off against England.

He would finish runner-up to

Germany's World Cup-winning captain Lothar Matthaus for the 1990 Ballon d'Or.

Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni said: "A football icon is leaving us, a man who has entered the hearts of Italians and sports fans around the world."

"The striker from the magic nights of Italia '90 with our national team. Thanks for the emotions you gave us, for having made us dream, celebrate, embrace and wave our national flag."

Serie A president Lorenzo Casini described Schillaci as "a champion who lit up the magical nights of the 1990 World Cup in Italy".

"His desire to emerge and reach the highest levels of football has been and will continue to be a source of inspiration for the many young people who chase the dream of playing in Serie A."

Schillaci scored only one more goal for Italy and did not appear for his nation again at a major tournament.

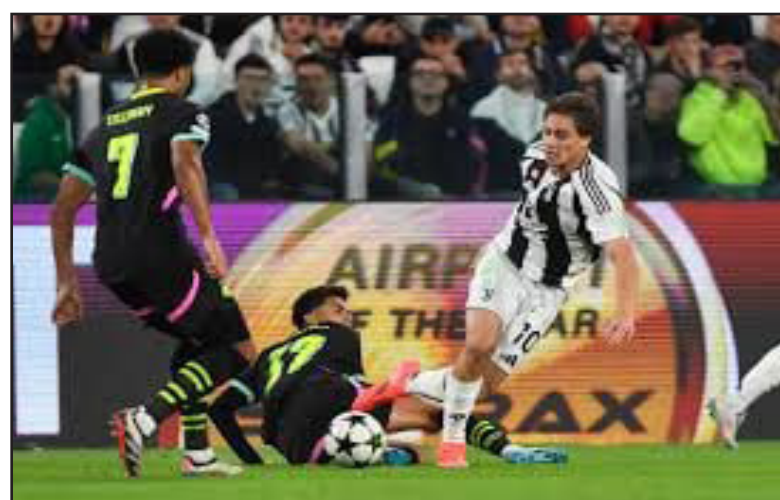
He became the first Italian player to play in Japan's J-League before retiring in 1999.

The president of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), Gabriele Gravina, said of Schillaci: "His face was a symbol of shared joy [and] will forever remain a common heritage of Italian football."

"Toto was a great footballer, a tenacious symbol of will and redemption. He was able to thrill the Azzurri fans because his football was full of passion and it was precisely this indomitable spirit that made him appreciated by everyone and will make him immortal."

Former Italy team-mate Baggio said: "The magic nights of Italia '90 we experienced together will always remain imprinted in my heart. Brothers of Italy forever."

Juventus Return to Champions League With 3-1 Win Against PSV



Juventus' Pierre Kalulu in action with PSV Eindhoven's Ismael Saibari

TURIN (Reuters) - Juventus started their Champions League campaign with a comfortable victory over PSV Eindhoven at Allianz Stadium.

Kenan Yildiz gave Thiago Motta's side the lead in brilliant fashion in the 21st minute with a powerful, curling effort that flew in off the post.

The 19-year-old's strike means he has replaced Juventus legend Alessandro del Piero as the club's youngest goalscorer in Europe's elite competition.

Buoyed by Yildiz's goal, Juve pushed forward and added a second goal six minutes later through former Leeds midfielder Weston McKennie.

The United States interna-

tional slotted beyond PSV goalkeeper Joel Drommel with a first-time finish from seven yards out.

Six minutes into the second half, Dusan Vlahovic guided a beautiful pass across the box to find Nicolas Gonzalez.

The Argentine took one touch to set himself before firing beyond Drommel to score his first for Motta's side to make it 3-0.

With the last kick of the game, Ismael Saibari netted a consolation for the Dutch Eredivisie champions after being found by a fine pass from Johan Bakayoko.

Juventus travel to Germany next to take on RB Leipzig, while PSV welcome Sporting Lisbon to Philips Stadion.

FIFA Teams Up With WHO on Global Concussion Campaign

GENEVA (AP) — FIFA teamed up with the World Health Organization on Wednesday for a campaign to educate the soccer industry about the risks of concussion injuries.

"Concussion is a public health issue of concern at all levels of football, and many other sports, requiring greater levels of aware-

ness and action," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

Ten years after the alarming case in the 2014 World Cup final of Germany player Christoph Kramer, world soccer governing body FIFA is sending a toolkit to each of its 211 national federations to

help teach at all levels of soccer that symptoms of a head injury can take up to 72 hours to appear.

Kramer continued to play in the final against Argentina for 14 minutes after being injured despite being in clear distress. Match referee Nicola Rizzoli later said he alerted Germany players after Kramer

asked if he was playing in the final.

At the 2022 World Cup, Iran goalkeeper Ali Beiranvand was treated for several minutes on the field after clashing heads with a teammate, then continued to play on against England before finally being replaced.

Britain Beat Swiss to Make America's Cup Challenger Final

BARCELONA (Reuters) - Britain clinched a 5-2 semifinal win over Switzerland in the America's Cup challenger series on Wednesday to secure a place in final in Barcelona.

In the other semifinal, the United States kept their hopes alive with a crucial win over Italy, who suffered dramatic equipment failure during their second race of the day.

"Looks like we've broken the

traveller track," Jimmy Spithill, co-helm on the Italian team, said of the damage to a key part of the AC75 foiling monohull's rig, which produced a massive bang and a temporary loss of control when it broke.

The United States are now on three wins, with Italy on four in the first-to-five semi-final. Whoever wins will face Britain in the final at the end of the month.

The winner of the Louis Vuitton Cup then gets to challenge defenders New Zealand for the coveted "Auld Mug", which dates back to 1851 and is the oldest international sporting trophy.

Britain under skipper Ben Ainslie had raced to a 4-0 lead, but the less-experienced Swiss crew won a reprieve on Monday.

The Swiss had looked set to cause another upset when they beat the British in the first race

on Wednesday, narrowing the gap to 4-2. But they could not capitalise on their improving form in the second race in tricky conditions.

"We are all very relieved to have got through today and to have survived and made it through to the final," Ainslie said on the America's Cup live broadcast after his team's victory on what he described as a "tough day".