

## Pogba faces spell on the sidelines with hamstring injury

## Mourinho slams players despite Man U big win

**MANCHESTER, Sept 13, (RTRS):** Jose Mourinho set the Champions League bar high for his Manchester United team after criticising them for trying to play "fantasy football" in a 3-0 win over Basel on Tuesday.

Marouane Fellaini, Romelu Lukaku and Marcus Rashford all scored their first Champions League goals as United eased past the Swiss side at Old Trafford.

Mourinho, bidding to win the competition for a third time having taken Porto and Inter Milan all the way, accused his side of switching off after Lukaku's goal put them 2-0 ahead shortly after the interval, having dominated the first half.

"Three points are important when you start the group phase at home," Mourinho, who took United to the Europa League title last season in his first campaign in charge, told BT Sport.

"Until 2-0 we were very stable, with confidence and patience, with good choices, played quite well.

"After that everything changed. We stopped to think, we stopped playing simple, we stopped making the right decisions on the pitch and we could have put ourselves in trouble.

"But they didn't score. We tried to play fantasy football, tricks, and when you stop to play seriously I don't like it.

You gamble a bit. Maybe they felt the game was under control. But football is football, you have to respect opponents."

Basel did have some chances but never really threatened to punish United for some sloppy second-half passing.

Mourinho, however, will know that those kind of mistakes will be punished by sides with more bite

than the Swiss.

"I keep saying the same, Fellaini is a player with special qualities he does things that other players cannot do.

He gives me a multiple area of actions and positions and philosophy on the pitch and is one of my most important players."

Mourinho was pleased to welcome back wing back Ashley Young who provided the cross for Fellaini's opener on his first match since injuring himself in the Europa League semifinal, second leg against Celta Vigo in May.

Paul Pogba faces "a few weeks" on the sidelines after injuring his hamstring.

Pogba was taken off after 18 minutes against the Swiss team at Old



Trafford and the French midfielder looks certain to miss United's Premier League clash at home against Everton on Sunday.

"I don't know. I just know from experience it's a muscular injury. In my experience, muscular injury stops you from playing for a few weeks, I think," Mourinho told the club's website.

"It looks for me, too, (like a hamstring injury) but I haven't spoken yet to the medical department."

Fellaini is a contender to fill in for the Frenchman against Everton. "Squads are for this, squads are for injuries, squads are for suspensions," Mourinho said.

"We don't cry with injuries. So if no Paul for Sunday, we have Herrera, we have Carrick, we have Fellaini and we have Matic," he added.

League leaders United have made a strong start to the season with three wins from their first three games before a 2-2 draw against Stoke City. Everton have one win from four games.

## Conte gamble pays off as Chelsea rout Qarabag

**LONDON, Sept 13, (AFP):** Antonio Conte believes his decision to rest several of Chelsea stars for their Champions League demolition of Qarabag will be rewarded when the Blues face Arsenal on Sunday.

Conte left out David Luiz, Antonio Rudiger, Victor Moses and Alvaro Morata for Tuesday's 6-0 thumping of the Azerbaijan minnows at Stamford Bridge.

## SOCCER

With those key players kept fresh and Eden Hazard coming off the bench for only his second appearance since close-season ankle surgery, Conte is confident Chelsea will go into their London derby in good condition to claim three valuable points.

"It was a good start, a perfect start us," Conte said.

"To play the first game of the Cham-

pions League, then to win with a good result, to score many goals, to finish the game with a clean sheet.

"I saw a lot of positive things. Now we have to rest and get ready for a tough game against a strong Arsenal team."

Conte's selection gamble was never in danger of backfiring as goals from Pedro, Davide Zappacosta, Tiemoue Bakayoko, Cesar Azpilicueta and Michy Batshuayi ensured Chelsea made a strong start to their group stage campaign.

Giving his understudies a chance for valuable game time was an added bonus for Conte, who said: "I wanted to give a chance to Michy and also to Andreas Christensen."

"To play in the Champions League means the coach trusts you.

"My message tonight was this: I trust all my players, not with only words, but with facts.

"Last season we played with only 13 players, to do that again would be crazy.

"We have to develop these players, to try and create a good competition, a positive competition, between them. It's very important."

Conte was also encouraged by Zappacosta's first start following his deadline day move from Torino.

The Italy right-back capped a lung-bursting run with a cross that flew in for Chelsea's second goal.

"He played a really good game. For sure he knew very well my style of football and for this reason I decided to start with him," Conte said.

"It's not easy to change your life in one week, but his answer was very good.

"He scored and that's important us but I'm more pleased for his performance."

Despite Hazard's solid showing as

a second half substitute, Conte admitted it might be too soon for the Belgian playmaker to start against Arsenal.

"It's early to speak about this. We must have a bit of patience with Eden," Conte said.

"We must give him the possibility to recover very well, to be totally fit.

"We must have calm to do the best for the player and the team. Otherwise we risk a bad injury."

It was a chastening first taste of the Champions League group stage for Qarabag, but Gurban Gurbanov, boss of the Azerbaijan minnows, insisted it was still a proud day for his club.

"The game was very difficult for us, Chelsea played very well," he said.

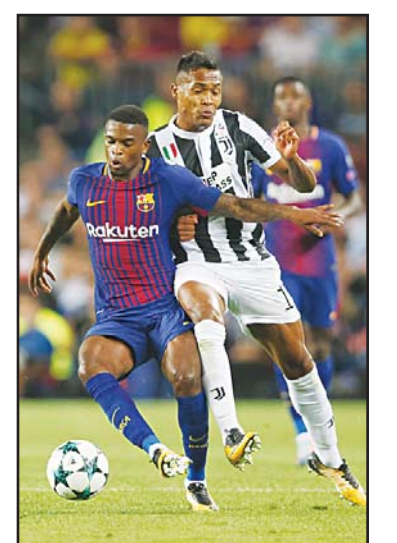
"We made lots of errors. I accept we must play better but I'm still satisfied with the performance given the quality of the opponent.

"We are happy we are part of this tournament."

## Messi 'lifts' Barca mood

Catalans dominate Juve

**BARCELONA, Sept 13, (RTRS):** When Barcelona's Andres Iniesta was serenaded off the pitch on Tuesday following a vintage display in a 3-0 win over Juventus that was only rivalled by Lionel Messi, it was easy to forget the gloom that had gripped the Nou Camp two weeks ago.



The club had been left red-faced by the failure to sign top targets Philippe Coutinho and Angel Di Maria when the transfer window shut and the squad looked weakened following the world record departure of Neymar to Paris St Germain.

A resounding 5-1 aggregate Spanish Super Cup defeat by arch rivals Real Madrid added to the sense of despondency.

Tuesday's stunning opening Group D display against last season's Champions League finalists, however, showed that Barca are still in safe

## SOCCER

hands as long as the old guard of Messi and Iniesta remain at the club and are fit and firing.

Barca captain Iniesta, 33, struggled for large parts of last season as injuries took their toll but he rolled back the years against Juve with a seamless display that recalled the days when Pep Guardiola was manager and Barca dominated in midfield.

The veteran ran the usually solid Italian champions ragged throughout the game and capped the display with a pinpoint pass to Messi for the Argentine's second goal, Barca's third, earning him a warm reception when he was substituted late on.

"It's important to play a lot of minutes but the key is looking after yourself properly," said Iniesta, who is out of contract at the end of the season.

"When the team functions well we all play better. We struggled a bit at first as is normal in European games but we just needed a bit of patience and then we began to control the game."

The Juve clash, a repeat of last season's quarter-final tie won by the Italians and the 2015 Champions League final in which Barca triumphed, was one of the most eagerly anticipated fixtures in Europe this week.

But the match began in a subdued atmosphere, while outside the Nou Camp opponents of the board campaigned for a motion of no confidence in president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

Once Iniesta and Messi had finished outclassing Juventus, however, there was a party mood inside the ground, with little signs of any rebellion.

Iniesta's display was only upstaged by Messi, who ended his hoodoo against Juve keeper Gianluigi Buffon with lethal strikes either side of half-time, scoring for the seventh time in three games.

He also had a shot cleared off the line which was turned in by Ivan Rakitic for the second goal and hammered the post in the second half. He was a constant threat and at times freely danced past the visiting defence, torturing a helpless Juve rearguard.

"I have the feeling that whenever Leo picks the ball up something is going to happen, anything can happen, and it's always good for us," said Barca coach Ernesto Valverde.

"Leo scored an extraordinary goal and blew the game open. He is one of the best players in the history of the game.

"I've had to suffer a lot against him in the past but now I'm lucky enough to be able to enjoy him," added Valverde, who came from Athletic Bilbao and has managed several Spanish clubs.

## Lothar 'slams' Ribery tantrum

**BERLIN, Sept 13, (AFP):** Germany legend Lothar Matthaeus has criticised Franck Ribery for defiantly throwing off his Bayern Munich shirt after being substituted in Tuesday's Champions League win over Anderlecht, prompting a passionate response from the Frenchman.

Having picked up an early booking for arguing with the referee in the 3-0 home victory, Ribery was taken off with 12 minutes to go in Munich and hurled his shirt at the Bayern bench.

"Ribery has been here long

## SOCCER

enough now — he is emotional, but you can't throw your shirt on the bench like that," ex-Bayern midfielder and Germany captain Matthaeus told Sky.

"That is a bad."

Bayern head coach Carlo Ancelotti was equally unimpressed by the 34-year-old Frenchman's behaviour.

"Of course, the player wants to play 90 minutes, but I decided to take him off because there were 10 minutes left, we had the game under control and he already had a yellow card," said the Italian.

"He had had problems (an injury knock) at the weekend, so I don't understand his reaction and I will talk to him about it."

Ribery's rage could well have consequences.

"We are FC Bayern, that is not okay and we will talk about it," added director of sport Hasan Salihamidzic.

However, Ribery later defended his actions in an emotional statement.

"I have always been one of the honest and loyal players in this business, I respect the fans and I respect the club I love," he wrote on his Facebook page.

"Throwing my wet jersey last night has nothing to do with disrespect, or anything else that I am accused of by people who pretend to know me.

"This wet jersey, in which I have given everything for more than ten years, with all my impulses, my will to win and in which I have achieved so much.

"Some will never understand what it means to give everything to your club and I'm sorry for them."

"As long as I stand on the pitch, I, Franck Ribery, will defend our colours and be involved in every game with all my passion."

Bayern played nearly 80 minutes against 10 men after Anderlecht had defender Sven Kums sent off just before Robert Lewandowski converted a penalty.



Qarabag's Azerbaijani defender Maksim Medvedev (left), vies with Chelsea's Belgian striker Michy Batshuayi during the UEFA Champions League Group C football match between Chelsea and Qarabag at Stamford Bridge in London on Sept 12. (AFP)

## Celtic charged over pitch invasion

## Emery warns five-star PSG can only get better

**GLASGOW, Sept 13, (AFP):** Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) coach Unai Emery says his side have learned lessons from the past after they started their Champions League Group B campaign with a 5-0 thrashing of Celtic.

Neymar, Kylian Mbappe, Edinson Cavani's double and a Mikel Lustig own goal consigned Celtic to their record home European defeat and propelled PSG to the top of the table on goal difference from Bayern Munich, who they host on match day two.

It was a real statement of intent from this summer's big spenders who signed Brazilian Neymar and teenage sensation Mbappe in a bid to make a real impression on the competition.

After four consecutive seasons of reaching the quarter-finals, PSG fell at the round of 16 last season when they capitulated against Barcelona after winning the first leg 4-0.

It was a result that convinced their Qatari owners to break the world transfer record to bring Neymar to the French capital.

The 6-1 defeat to the Catalan giants in the second leg was a humbling for PSG but Emery says they are approaching this season's campaign with a renewed confidence.

"We did learn from the past and what happened last year. We have worked really hard to improve things within the team," the Spanish coach said.

"I think my team showed a lot of character. What I was really pleased with was the fact we were in control with the ball and without the ball.

"Of course we have added to the team but it is more about all the people working together. As far as this is concerned I am really, really happy."

The French side's formidable front line terrified the Celtic defence and Emery warned they would only get better.

The PSG coach singled out Mbappe, who PSG have an option to buy from Monaco for a fee that could reach 180 million Euros, for praise.

## SOCCER

"This is what he needs at the moment. He has to be a great player and he is going to grow up into that role," Emery said of the 18-year-old who scored his second goal in two games.

"They have only played a few games together ... but the key is that the team is going to improve more and more."

Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers said

his side, who conceded five at home for the first time since Rangers beat them 5-1 in September 1960, said his side weren't at the same level of the French superstars.

"You have to give credit to them. They are a really special team and they are going to be close to winning it for sure," the Northern Irishman said.

"This is a level where you have to look after the ball, and you have to make the ball work for you, and in the first half we didn't do that."

European football's governing body UEFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against Celtic following a pitch invasion during their Champions League tie against Paris Saint-Germain.

A supporter raced onto the Parkhead pitch late in the first half on Tuesday

with the hosts 3-0 down and darted towards 18-year-old superstar Kylian Mbappe.

He aimed a fresh-air kick at the former Monaco striker but failed to make contact before being whisked away by stewards.

Celtic have been charged with a count of "field invasion" and will have their case heard by the UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body on Oct 19, a UEFA statement said.

Celtic have already been fined 11 times in less than six years over fan-behaviour issues ranging from pro-IRA chants to firework, crowd disturbances and illicit banners.

PSG have also been charged after their fans were accused of breaking seats at Celtic Park and will have their matter addressed at the same hearing as Celtic.

Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers expressed his frustration with Tuesday night's incident and said the Parkhead club would take its own action.

"The crowd reaction said it all. It is disappointing at any ground that a supporter gets on to the pitch," he said.

"I am sure the club will deal with that. It shouldn't be anything that we should see on a football field. The crowd in their reaction told you everything you need to know."

Police said they made seven arrests at Celtic Park, including a 21-year-old man accused of an alleged pitch incursion and assault.

Four men are expected to appear in court later Wednesday.

UEFA has also opened proceedings against Basel after fans set off fireworks at Old Trafford on Tuesday. The Swiss club lost 3-0 to Manchester United.



Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian striker Neymar (right), celebrates with teammates after scoring the opening goal of the UEFA Champions League Group B football match between Celtic and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) at Celtic Park in Glasgow, on Sept 12. (AFP)



Messi