

# Real Madrid, Barcelona Play to 3-3 Draw

**BARCELONA, Spain, March 11**--Barcelona and Real Madrid drew, 3-3, at the Nou Camp on Saturday in a pulsating latest edition of Spain's "el clasico" match, reported AFP.

Real led three times after two early goals from Rued van Nistelrooy and a third from Sergio Ramos, but were pegged back by a brilliant Lionel Messi hat trick, as the teams grabbed a point apiece in the 26th round of the Primera Liga.

Barca played the whole second half with 10 men after Oleguer Presas was sent off just before the break. Both teams came into the derby match under intense pressure after being disappointingly knocked out of the Champions League this week.

Real lost, 2-1, to Bayern Munich and went out on the away goals rule, as did Barcelona, despite a lucky 1-0 over Liverpool at Anfield.

The Catalans had also lost their lead at the top of the Primera Liga with a painful 2-1 defeat at Sevilla last weekend.

In light of those failures, coach Frank Rijkaard had

been expected to ditch his controversial 3-4-3 formation against Real Madrid.

However, the Dutchman once again opted for three at the back, with Oleguer, Lilian Thuram and captain Carles Puyol starting in defense.

Mexican Rafael Marquez was once again deployed in the midfield holding role, alongside the more creative trio of Deco, Xavi and Andres Iniesta.

Ronaldinho shook off a knock to start up front alongside Samuel Eto'o and Messi.

Meanwhile, Fabio Capello had been under even more pressure than Rijkaard in the build-up to the match.

The Spanish press claimed that the Italian coach would be sacked if his side lost this match, with former Real striker Michel set to take over.

For a game of such importance, Capello could have done with the experience of David Beckham, Roberto Carlos, Fabio Cannavaro and Jose Antonio Reyes, but all four missed the trip through injury and the Italian was forced to field a severely weakened side.

## Roddick Defeats Lopez

**INDIAN WELLS, USA, March 11**--Andy Roddick defeated Feliciano Lopez 7-6 (5), 6-4 in his opening match of the \$5.4 million Pacific Life Open on Saturday night, said AP.

In a second-round matchup of hard-servers, Roddick started the first-set tiebreaker with a 137-mph ace and finished it with another ace at 123 mph. The third-seeded American got a quick break in the second set and cruised from there against his Spanish opponent.

Lopez didn't have a break in the match. Second-seed Rafael Nadal, who lost to James Blake in last year's semifinal, beat France's Arnaud Clement 6-3, 7-6.

"I feel very good with my forehand," the 20-year-old Spaniard said. "Maybe today was not my best match, but ... I am a more complete tennis player now than in 2005."

Earlier, California teenager Sam Querrey



Andy Roddick

defeated Belgium's Christophe Rochus 6-2, 6-4. Querrey will next play fourth-seeded Nikolay Davydenko of Russia. Querrey is hoping home-court advantage will help.

"Hopefully, all my friends will be out there and maybe get into his head," he said. The 19-year-old from Thousand Oaks grew up a three-hour drive west of the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

of France, 6-3, 7-6; Russia's Elena Likhovtseva upset countrywoman Olga Poutchkova (26th), and Alicia Molik of Australia beat Anabel Medina Garrigues of Spain (24) in three sets.

In other men's matches, Czech Republic's Jan Herych beat England's Tim Henman, a two-time Indian Wells finalist, 7-5, 3-6, 7-5.

Guillermo Canas of Argentina needed 49 minutes to beat Czech Republic's Jan Hajek 6-1, 6-1, and move on to a third-round match with Roger Federer, winner of 41 consecutive matches and the world's No. 1 the past 161 weeks. Federer won here the past three years.

"I am still in the tournament, this is good," said Canas, trying to focus upon the bright side. "The second thing, I'm playing with one of the most important players in the decade, in the history. I'm gonna try to enjoy this."

In the lone upset on the men's side, Argentine Jose Acasuso defeated 16th-seeded Mikhail Youzhny of Russia, 7-6, 6-4.

In women's second-round play, Russians Svetlana Kuznetsova and Nadia Petrova, the second- and fourth-seeded players, advanced in straight sets. But three other seeds stumbled.

Unseeded Chicagoan Laura Granville bowed No. 27 Severine Bremond

## Frenchman Extends Mexico Lead



Sebastian Loeb advances on the Rally of Mexico.

**MEXICO CITY, March 11**--French World Champion Sebastian Loeb tightened his grip on the Rally of Mexico to lead by more than a minute going into the final day.

According to AFP, the Citroen driver finished on Saturday with a one-minute advantage after winning four out of eight special stages to extend his cushion.

Championship leader Marcus Gronholm jumped four places to lie second, with Dani

Sordo a further 35 seconds back.

Loeb said: "I have a good feeling for the car and don't take too many risks."

Triple champion Loeb led by 27 seconds overnight after early pacesetter Petter Solberg was sidelined with an oil leak on his new Subaru Impreza's world rally debut.

Loeb more than doubled that lead to one minute 0.8s over Gronholm.

## Tickner, Yelling Claim Titles

**SUNDERLAND, UK, March 11**--Frank Tickner completed a clean sweep of domestic winter titles at the English National Cross Country Championships at Sunderland.

Tickner added the title to his European and World trials successes plus his UK Inter-Counties win, said AFP.

The 24-year-old finished the 12km race 40 seconds clear of his nearest rival, marathon international Huw Lobb.

Commonwealth marathon bronze medalist Liz Yelling defeated her sister-in-law Hayley to win the women's race.

Tickner said: "I didn't start off too quickly and just felt really good. It was one of those rare occasions when you feel fine right through

the race.

"I managed to push it up the hills and into the wind. Hugh Lobb kept up with me for the first lap but once I shook him off and I knew I was clear, I could push on."

Yelling was also happy with her run, saying: "It was really hard with the wind, but I felt really strong."

"It was a real cross-country course--it's fantastic to run in such a big parkland."

## Klitschko Triumphant

**MANNHEIM, Germany, March 11**--Wladimir Klitschko retained his International Boxing Federation heavyweight title Saturday night at Mannheim, Germany, stopping American challenger Ray Austin in the second round, according to AP.

After measuring Austin for one round, Klitschko knocked him down 87 seconds into the second with at least three left hooks. Austin climbed to his feet, but referee Eddie Cotton stopped the fight.

Klitschko improved his record to 48-3 with 43 knockouts in the mandatory defense, and Austin, of Cleveland, fell

to 24-4 with four draws and 16 knockouts.

Both fighters were listed at 6-foot-6 and 246 pounds, with Austin's camp hoping another big heavyweight would trouble Klitschko. But the champion caught him on the ropes with two shots seconds apart to end the bout.

Omar Narvaez retained his World Boxing Organization flyweight title with a unanimous decision over Ibrahim Asloum at Le Cannet, France. Narvaez remained unbeaten with 24 wins and two draws in 26 fights. It was the second loss for Asloum in 22 fights.

## Chinese Clinches Singapore Victory

**SINGAPORE, March 11**--China's Liang Wen-Chong won a play-off against Malaysia's Iain Steel to take victory in the Singapore Masters.

According to AFP, Steel fired his tee shot into the water at the first extra hole meaning a par was enough for Liang to win the title.

It was Liang's first win outside China and he now has a two-year exemption on the European Tour.

The pair finished one shot clear of Britain's Simon Dyson, with Jean van de Velde, David Lynn, Anthony Wall and Nick Dougherty a shot further back.

Meanwhile, European Tour rookie Gary Lockerbie was well placed to record his first victory as a professional after his third round of 69 at the Singapore Masters.

The 24-year-old Cumbrian hit seven birdies to enter a two-way tie for the lead with China's Liang Wen-Chong. But Lockerbie missed a four-foot par putt at the 18th which would have made him the outright leader.

Second-round leader Jyoti Randhawa is one shot behind with Ireland's



Liang Wen-Chong in action at the Singapore Masters.

Peter Lawrie tied for fourth on 10 under.

Alongside him is Malaysia's Iain Steel, who held a two-stroke lead midway through the third round but then slipped back after a double-bogey and four dropped shots.

Simon Dyson is on nine under after hitting a 67 while fellow Englishman Nick Dougherty shot a 66--the best of the day--to lie joint eighth on eight under.

Lockerbie, the 2003 English amateur champion, picked up two early birdies but a double-bogey at the eighth halted his progress. However, he then had three birdies in the next four holes to challenge for the lead.

He said he would try not to put pressure on himself going into the final round of the \$1.1m (£569,000) tournament. "I plan to get off to a steady start on Sunday and not try to do anything

fancy because I don't think it's going to be a really low score which wins," he said. "If I can knock it around in three or four-under, I am not going to be that far away."

I find myself in a strong position now and if the time is right, I am sure it will happen. I am not going to do anything different from what I have done the rest of the week and just take it as it comes."

**SAN ANTONIO, USA, March 11**--Manu Ginobili can't explain the reason for the Spurs' 12-game winning streak. He just wants it to keep going, reported AP.

"I really can't say," he said after Saturday's 93-77 victory over the New Jersey Nets. "Defensively we're doing much better. We're not as irregular as before. But then it's just confidence. We're making big shots down the stretch."

Ginobili had 12 points, while Tony Parker led the Spurs with 19. Tim Duncan added 17 points

and 13 rebounds, and Brent Barry scored 11 points.

"It's great, especially when you compare it with the way we were playing before," Ginobili said.

"We're very happy but at the same time we have to keep improving for when it counts."

Bruce Bowen said the Spurs are trying to care of business now, especially at home, ahead of the playoffs.

"There has been a sense of urgency," he said. "We let some great opportunities get away here at home."

Duncan called the streak "a start."

"We still have some things to work on," he said. "We're starting to get a consistency level that we need and that we want."

Vince Carter had 17 for the Nets, who have lost five straight. Mikki Moore added 14 points and Josh Boone scored 11, but Jason Kidd had only seven before he was ejected in the third quarter after picking up a pair of technical fouls.

Nets coach Lawrence Frank was also ejected. "Obviously we didn't see eye-to-eye with the offi-

## Al Taleiah Lose a Humdinger In Syria

**DAMASCUS, Syria, March 11**--Al Taleiah failed to take advantage of the top two teams' inactivity in the Syrian League and close the gap after going down to Al Jaish 3-2 in the 17th round recently.

According to AFC, with the match between leaders Al Itihad (41 points) and Al Karameh (40) postponed to a later date, third-placed Al Taleiah could have moved four points behind the pace-setters had they won the home game.

The start was promising for Al Taleiah as Aref Agha put them ahead in the sixth minute with his first goal. Raed Kurdi leveled for Al Jaish in the 36th minute before Majed Al Haj doubled the advantage 15 minutes from time. But Agha equalized four minutes later and a draw looked the likely outcome when Al Haj broke Al Taleiah hearts with his 87th minute winner.

In other matches, Al Majid lost ground after losing to Al Fatowah 1-0, Hottain drew 3-3 with Al Wahda and Thlshreen beat Jablah 2-1.

## San Antonio Overcome New Jersey

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cial," Frank said. "The calls that went against us were hard to swallow because it was obvious that we had good intent."

Bostjan Nachbar's dunk with 8:20 left in the fourth quarter brought New Jersey within nine points, and Carter's alley-oop slam 31 seconds later made it 74-67.

But Ginobili sank a 3-pointer, then made a dunk off a pass from Duncan for an 81-67 lead with 6:28 left.

"I got it right on time, in the right place," Ginobili said. "So I felt good to go and finish."

## Boateng: Ref Denied Our Win

**LONDON, March 11**--Middlesbrough skipper George Boateng has claimed referee Rob Styles cost his side victory over Manchester United in Saturday's FA Cup tie, which ended 2-2, reported AP.

With Boro 2-1 up, Styles ruled Boateng handled in the area and Cristiano Ronaldo scored from the penalty. Boateng, who had put Boro ahead, said: "I am devastated. I can't believe it. The referee has robbed us. I was not deliberately trying to handball it. The referee gave a bad decision again."

The penalty was given after a Ryan Giggs corner was flicked on by Rio Ferdinand and Boateng, who was standing right behind the United defender, blocked the ball from hitting his face with his hands.

And Boro boss Gareth Southgate diplomatically brushed referee Styles' award of the penalty into question.

He said: "I can see why he has given it because George has got his hands up."

"We don't like to complain about referees really but he's a yard away when it's flicked so I'm not quite sure what he can do to adjust his position."

Southgate added: "Having gone ahead against them you want to win the game. The lads gave absolutely everything and in the second half we played very well."

"In the first half we were on the back foot for a lot of it but I'm proud of what the players have given and with a little bit more fortune we might have gone through."

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson was in happier mood and paid tribute to his side's battling qualities.

"We never gave in," said Ferguson. "We are expected to keep going. We did and got our deserved equalizer."

"We got the penalty kick for the equalizer and I am glad we are still in the Cup."

Wayne Rooney had put United ahead but Lee Cattermole and Boateng struck for Boro before Ronaldo's spot-kick.

"We dominated the first half and had a lot of chances," added Ferguson. "It was one of our best performances for weeks. We had our rhythm and speed back and it was terrific to see that."