

ANELKA HANDED FIVE-MATCH BAN FOR 'QUENELLE' SALUTE

LONDON: West Bromwich Albion forward Nicolas Anelka has been banned for five matches and fined 80,000 pounds (\$133,400) for making an alleged anti-Semitic gesture in a match in December, the Football Association said on Thursday.

The Frenchman, who made a "quenelle" salute after scoring in a 3-3 draw against West Ham United on Dec. 28, has also been ordered to complete a compulsory education course. "An Independent Regulatory Commission has found an aggravated breach of FA Rule E3 against Nicolas Anelka proven and has issued a five-match suspension and a fine of 80,000 pounds, pending appeal," the FA said in a statement.

The punishment will not be implemented until the outcome of any appeal or until the player informs the

FA of his decision not to appeal. West Brom, however, have suspended the player immediately until the conclusion of the governing body's disciplinary process and will carry out their own internal investigation, they said in a statement.

"The club cannot ignore the offence that his actions have caused, particularly to the Jewish community, nor the potential damage to the club's reputation," they added. The FA found Anelka guilty of making a gesture that "was abusive and/or indecent and/or insulting and/or improper." They also found it to be an "aggravated breach" in that it included "a reference to ethnic origin and/or race and/or religion or belief."

The FA added in their statement that they "did not find that Nicolas Anelka is an anti-Semite or that he

intended to express or promote anti-Semitism by his use of the quenelle".

Anelka had denied he was anti-Semitic or racist and claimed the gesture, which has been described as an inverted Nazi salute, was a tribute to his French comedian friend Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala who invented it.

West Brom said they were now awaiting the written reasons for the panel's decision, from which time Anelka has seven days to decide whether to appeal.

The gesture has already had repercussions for the club. Zoopla, a property market search engine co-owned by Jewish businessman Alex Chesterman, has said it would not renew its three million pounds (\$4.93 million) West Brom shirt sponsorship deal after this season because of Anelka's actions. — Reuters

SPURS RESTORE ENGLISH PRIDE IN EUROPA LEAGUE

LONDON: Emmanuel Adebayor scored twice in four minutes as Tottenham Hotspur overturned a two-goal aggregate deficit to beat 10-man Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk 3-2 over two legs on Thursday to reach the last 16 of the Europa League.

It was a painful return to London for Tottenham's former coach Juande Ramos whose side took the lead on the night through Roman Zozulya.

Forward Zozulya was then sent off in the 62nd minute, six minutes after Christian Eriksen had levelled, and Adebayor grabbed his quickfire double to give twice UEFA Cup winners Spurs a 3-1 second-leg victory.

Nabil Ghilas, of twice former champions Porto, netted in the 86th minute to secure a 3-3 draw at Eintracht Frankfurt, the Portuguese side going through on away goals after the tie ended 5-5 on aggregate.

Napoli, with coach Rafa Benitez attempting to win back-to-back Europa Leagues after picking up the trophy with Chelsea last season, and Ludogorets also came out on top in thrilling second-leg matches.

The Serie A team scored two late goals to beat Swansea City 3-1 on the night and on aggregate while Bulgarians Ludogorets ousted Lazio after an 88th-minute goal from Juninho Quixada gave them a 3-3 home draw and a 4-3 win overall.

Ramos looked on course for revenge over the club that sacked him five years ago

when his Dnipro team took the lead on the night through Zozulya who headed in unmarked early in the second half.

Joy soon turned to despair for the Spanish coach, who led Tottenham to their last trophy when they won the English League Cup in 2008, as Eriksen scored with a free kick and Zozulya saw red for appearing to head-butt defender Jan Vertonghen.

Tottenham were then firmly in command and Adebayor converted an Eriksen cross from close range on 65 minutes before grabbing his second after collecting a long-ball and finishing with a clever flick.

The Togo striker now has 11 goals from his last 15 games, making it harder to see why he was left out earlier in the season under former manager Andre-Villas Boas before being brought back into the fold by new boss Tim Sherwood. "I'm very glad to be back scoring goals and happy with my team," Adebayor told ITV Sport.

I have to keep focused and keep going. I want to say thank you to the new manager who came in and gave me my stage to perform."

Meier double

Porto looked to be heading out when they trailed 2-0 in Frankfurt, Stefan Aigner prodding the German side ahead from close range and Alexander Meier converting a cross to double the lead.

Two second-half headers from defender Eliaquim Mangala made it 2-2 and levelled the tie 4-4 on aggregate.

Eintracht regained the advantage through Meier but Ghilas latched on to a loose ball when keeper Kevin Trapp could only parry a shot and slid the ball into the empty net to give the visitors an away-goal victory.

Ludogorets had won the first leg against Lazio 1-0 but were quickly behind in the return game when Balde Diao Keita bundled the ball into the net after a minute and Brayan Perea converted an Ogenyi Onazi pass to make it 2-0 on the night early in the second half.

Goals from Roman Bezjak and Hristo Zlatinski made it 2-2 but the Italians again looked set to advance when Miroslav Klose poked in a rebound with eight minutes remaining.

Quixada then pounced on a long pass to flick the ball over the on-rushing Lazio keeper and put the hosts into the last 16.

Napoli scored early through Lorenzo Insigne's dinked finish but Swansea equalised through Jonathan de Guzman. Gonzalo Higuain's predatory instincts then came to Benitez's rescue as the Argentine swivelled and volleyed home with 12 minutes remaining before Napoli keeper Jose Reina pulled off a remarkable reflex save from Dwight Tiendalli's header.

Gokhan Inler netted deep into injury time to take the tie out of Swansea's reach. Serie A champions Juventus comfortably beat Trabzonspor 2-0 in Turkey to progress after winning by the same scoreline in Italy last week while Benfica scored three goals in nine second-half minutes to beat PAOK Salonika 3-0 on the night, 4-0 overall.

Salzburg, who won all six group matches earlier in the competition, thrashed Ajax Amsterdam 6-1 on aggregate after winning 3-1 in Austria in the second leg.

Spanish club Real Betis secured a 3-1 aggregate victory over Russians Rubin Kazan, winning 2-0 away with Nono and Ruben Castro on target.

Sevilla beat Slovenians Maribor 2-1 with goals from Jose Antonio Reyes and Kevin Gameiro to go through 4-3 on aggregate while Viktoria Plzen defeated Shakhtar Donetsk 2-1 to advance 3-2 overall. Alexandre Lacazette scored in the 80th minute for Olympique Lyon against Chernomorets Odessa to progress 1-0 on aggregate and Fiorentina drew 1-1 at home to Esbjerg but went through 4-2 overall. — Reuters



LONDON: Dnipro's Ukrainian midfielder Yevhen Cheberyachko (R) looks on as Tottenham Hotspur's Togolese striker Emmanuel Adebayor (2nd L) scores their second goal during the UEFA Europa League round of 32, 2nd leg, football match between Tottenham Hotspur and FC Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk at White Hart Lane in north London on Thursday. Adebayor scored twice as Tottenham won the game 3-1, (3-2 on aggregate). — AFP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Stoke City v Arsenal 18:00
beIN SPORTS 11 HD
beIN SPORTS 1 HD

Southampton v Liverpool 20:30
beIN SPORTS 1 HD
beIN SPORTS 11 HD

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

AS Roma v Internazionale 22:45
beIN SPORTS 3 HD

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA

Malaga v Valladolid 18:00

beIN SPORTS 2 HD
beIN SPORTS 13 HD

Levante v Osasuna 20:00
beIN SPORTS 6 HD

Getafe v Espanyol 22:00
beIN SPORTS 2 HD
beIN SPORTS 12 HD
beIN SPORTS 14 HD

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

FC Augsburg v Hannover 17:30

Dubai Sports

Dortmund v Nuremberg 17:30

Dubai Sports

Bayer 04 v Mainz 05 17:30

Dubai Sports

Braunschweig v Borussia 17:30

Dubai Sports

Bremen v Hamburger 17:30

Dubai Sports

Bayern Munich v Schalke 10:30

Dubai Sports

FRENCH LEAGUE

Saint Etienne v Monaco 19:00

beIN SPORTS 5 HD

Stade Reims v Valenciennes 22:00

beIN SPORTS 8 HD

Stade Rennes v Guingamp 22:00

beIN SPORTS 9 HD

Sochaux v Girondins 22:00

beIN SPORTS 10 HD