



LONDON: Chelsea's Gary Cahill (left) and Loic Remy (right) hug Oscar (center) after he scored 2-0 with a penalty during the Champions League Group G soccer match. — AP

## MOURINHO GAMBLE PAYS OFF AS CHELSEA TRIUMPH

LONDON: Jose Mourinho's selection gamble paid off as Chelsea got their spluttering season back on track with a 4-0 rout of Maccabi Tel Aviv in the Champions League yesterday.

Mourinho's side went into their Group G opener in turmoil after Saturday's dismal 3-1 defeat at Everton left them with only one win from their first five Premier League matches.

That miserable sequence was Chelsea's worst start to a season since 1988 and it provoked a barrage of criticism for Mourinho and his underperforming English champions. But Mourinho promised changes after the Everton loss and the Blues boss was true to his word as he axed John Terry, Diego Costa, Pedro Rodriguez, John Obi Mikel, Nemanja Matic and Branislav Ivanovic.

It seemed the switches might backfire after Eden Hazard's shocking penalty miss in the first half at Stamford Bridge. But lacklustre Maccabi were the perfect opponents for Chelsea to rediscover a semblance of their form and Willian opened the scoring before Oscar showed Hazard how to do it by converting a penalty on the stroke of half-time.

Costa came on to net in the second half and Cesc Fabregas added gloss to the scoreline with a late tap-in. It was far from a vintage Chelsea performance, but Mourinho will hope it provides a foundation for future success, starting with a sterner test against Arsenal in the Premier League this weekend. There was an early indication of Chelsea's frustration at their recent predicament when Loic Remy and Willian, two of the players drafted in by Mourinho, combined to earn a fifth minute penalty.

Remy's defence-splitting pass put Willian through on goal and the Brazilian winger was sent crashing to the turf by Maccabi goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic. However, Mourinho still felt hard done by when German referee Felix Zwayer decided not to send off Rajkovic and he screamed in anger on the touchline when he

saw the yellow card. There was even worse to come as Belgium midfielder Hazard, showing a lack of composure that encapsulated his current struggles, blazed the penalty high over the crossbar.

### FORTUNATE ESCAPE

It was a comically bad effort and could have shattered Chelsea's already fragile morale. Yet, crucially, Rajkovic's fortunate escape turned into a bonus for Mourinho as Chelsea took the lead in the 15th minute when the keeper misjudged Willian's inswinging free-kick and allowed it to curl past him untouched into the far corner.

A first goal of the season was as good as it got for Willian, who limped off in the 23rd minute to be replaced by Costa. After such an uninspiring start from Maccabi, Chelsea were lulled into a false sense of security at the back and the Israelis should have equalised when

Eran Zahavi was left unmarked from Nikola Mitrovic's free-kick, but the forward's tame header looped harmlessly over. But the hosts doubled their lead four minutes into stoppage-time when former Chelsea defender Tal Ben Haim was ruled to have fouled Costa, even though he got a toe on the ball before tripping the Spain striker.

Brazil playmaker Oscar calmly sent Rajkovic the wrong way from the spot. Mourinho had bristled when grilled on a perceived lack of success in his third year at the majority of his previous clubs, but his approval rating remains high at the Bridge and his name was loudly sung by Chelsea's fans. With their confidence returning, Chelsea's most stylish flourish came in the 58th minute as Costa caressed a fine volley into the top corner from Fabregas's cross. Fabregas has been pilloried for his ineffective displays of late, so he will have welcomed that assist and the close-range finish that brought Chelsea their fourth goal in the 78th minute. — AFP



KIEV: Porto's Ruben Neves (center) challenges for the ball against Kiev's Miguel Veloso (left) during a UEFA Champions League, Group G soccer match at the Olympiyskiy national stadium. — AP

## BUYALSKIY RESCUES KIEV

KIEV: Vitaly Buyalskiy scored a last minute equaliser to rescue a point for Dynamo Kiev in a 2-2 Champions League draw with Porto in Ukraine yesterday.

Midfielder Oleh Gusev had opened the scoring for the Ukrainian champions in the Group G encounter at the National Olympic Complex, but a brace from Cameroon international forward Vincent Aboubakar turned the tie on its head.

The point left Dynamo and Porto joint second in the group behind favourites Chelsea, who thrashed Maccabi Tel-Aviv 4-0. Porto, who remained unbeaten in seven visits to the Ukraine, created the first opportunity when Algerian forward Yacine Brahimi shot inches over the crossbar with a well-struck freekick in the 15th minute.

In the 20th minute, Dynamo skipper Gusev put his side 1-0 up as he converted Denis Garmash's cross from the right past Porto goalkeeper Iker Casillas from the edge of the six-yard box. The visitors pulled level just three minutes later when Miguel Layun found the unmarked

Aboubakar in the area with a pinpoint cross from the left, and the Cameroonian netted with a header from 10 yards out. With just a minute to go before the break, Garmash missed a clear chance to restore Dynamo's lead as he miscued an excellent cross by Gusev, allowing Casillas to push the ball out for a corner.

After the break, last season's quarter-finalists Porto, whose manager Julen Lopetegui was serving a touchline ban, dominated possession but to no immediate avail as Dynamo defended stoutly, stifling the visitors' attacks. In the 76th minute, Dynamo's Brazilian forward Junior Moraes failed to find the net with a close-range header from a corner. Aboubakar gave Porto the lead with nine minutes remaining when he shot home into the far corner following an error by Dynamo goalkeeper Oleksandr Rybka, who failed to clear a Maxi Pereira cross. But second-half substitute Buyalskiy saved the day as he headed home a rebound after a freekick by Serhiy Rybalka with just a minute to go. — AFP

# MUELLER BRACE LIFTS BAYERN

PIRAEUS: A Thomas Mueller brace and a Mario Goetze snap shot lifted Bayern Munich to a 3-0 win over Olympiakos in their Champions League Group F opener yesterday as tensions boiled over on the terraces. Mueller's first was a long range fluke in the 52nd minute and a nervy Bayern had been watching the clock before a late Goetze shot and Mueller penalty in time added on clinched the three points. Olympiakos won all three home games in the group phase last season, but this revamped side with a new coach - 38-year-old former Sporting Portugal man Marco Silva - saw an 11 games unbeaten run rudely stopped.

Mueller's opener will cause great debate after his miss-hit cross bamboozled Olympiakos' keeper Roberto, who raced desperately back to his line and had to watch in horror as the ball hit the top corner. With Bayern in full flow Roberto then made amends with a superb reflex save to stop an effort from Mueller on 68 minutes.

Goetze's goal though was all style in the 88th minute when he twisted on the edge of the six yard box and beat Roberto with both the power of his shot and his speed of thought, from a tight angle. Then after Olympiakos substitute Arthur Masuaku had fouled his French compatriot Kingsley Coman, Mueller also converted in style from the spot in time added on.

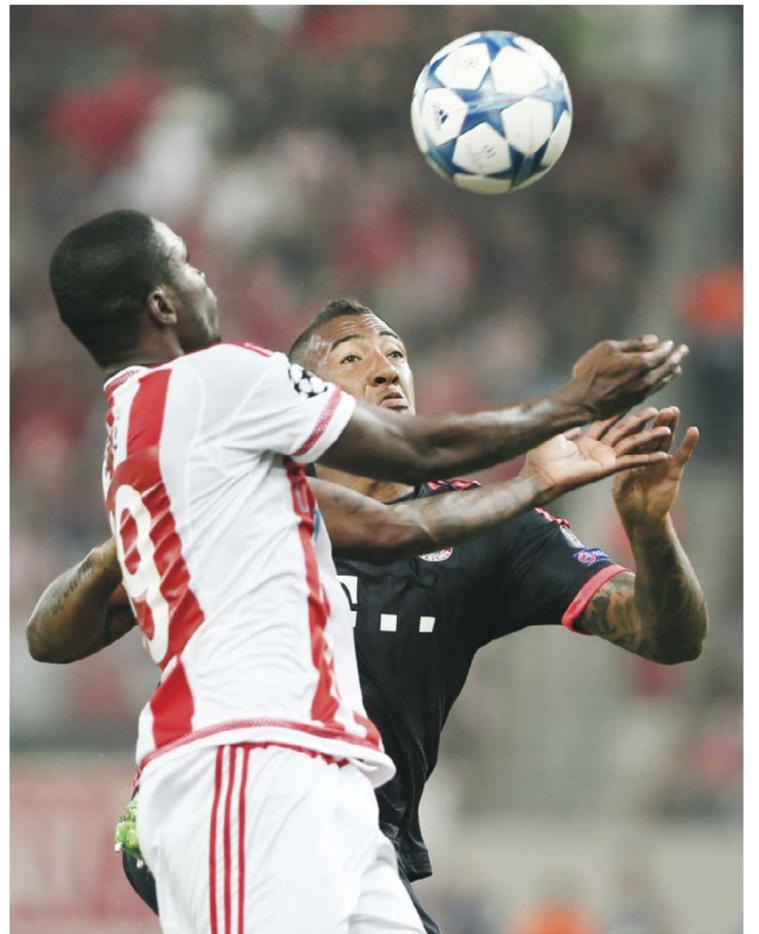
Although Bayern controlled the ball for the greater part of the second half, Olympiakos had two ideal opportunities to break the deadlock.

The first came four minute after Bayern's tally when goalkeeper Manuel Neuer leapt high to tip the ball away from a deadly shot by Ideye Brown.

Without wingers Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben, coach Pep Guardiola, in his third campaign with the 2013 Champions League winners, pacing the sidelines Mueller and Alonso both went close in a goalless first-half. The visitors suffered a real scare when Ideye found himself alone in front of the imposing Germany stopper Neuer. But the Nigerian international fluffed his chance and was off-side anyway. Olympiakos had three weak headers from up close by Pajtim Kasami, Brown and Manuel da Costa caught easily by Neuer.

One other threat by the home team came one minute before halftime when Alejandro Dominguez cleverly got by two defenders but was stopped by defender Jerome Boateng.

The match was marred by clashes between riot-trained police and Bayern fans before kickoff resulting in at least one injured spectator.



ATHENS: Bayern's Jerome Boateng fights for the ball against Olympiakos' Alfred Finnbogason during a Champions League Group F soccer match. — AP

Bayern fans were seen throwing broken plastic seats and plastic bottles at Olympiakos supporters forcing the police to use their batons to bring order. Some 1700 travelling fans had been under

heavy police protection due to tensions concerning Germany's stance on austerity in the Greek economic bailout. Bayern lodged an official complaint against treatment by the police of their fans. — AFP

# HULK POWERS ZENIT TO VICTORY

VALENCIA: Two stunning strikes from Brazilian international Hulk guided Zenit St Petersburg to a 3-2 win at Valencia yesterday despite a spirited fight back by the Spanish side.

Hulk thumped home two powerful efforts to give the Russians a 2-0 half-time lead before Joao Cancelo and Andre Gomes hauled Valencia level after the break.

However, the home side's good work was undone when Axel Witsel struck the winner moments later to give Andres Villas-Boas's men the perfect start in Group H.

Zenit lead Gent and Lyon by two points after the Belgians salvaged a point with nine men in a 1-1 draw in the other match in the group.

Valencia had started the stronger as a Cancelo drive from distance deceived Yuri Lodygin and came back off the post. However, the hosts were stung after just seven minutes by a flowing counter-attack from the Russian champions as Hulk received the ball on his favoured left foot and arrowed a shot into the far corner. The Spanish side were dominant in possession but struggling to create clear-cut chances and were left frustrated when Scottish referee Craig Thomson turned down a strong penalty appeal for a handball by Javi Garcia.

Zenit then doubled their advantage in spectacular fashion just before half-time when Hulk took aim from 25 yards and thumped the ball past the helpless Jaume Domenech.

Valencia boss Nuno Espirito Santo made a double substitution at the break as Paco Alcacer and Gomes were introduced and both made their presence felt as the hosts roared back in the second-half.

Alcacer had a goal narrowly ruled out for off-side before Cancelo did half the arrears with an



SPAIN: Valencia's Shkodran Mustafi (centre) duels for the ball with Zenit's goalkeeper Yuri Lodygin (centre in air) during a Group H Champions League soccer match. — AP

intelligent hit from a narrow angle which caught Lodygin by surprise.

Gomes pulled a volley wide from the edge of the area as the pressure from Valencia continued to build. And the Portuguese midfielder then levelled 17 minutes from time with a neat turn and shot that Lodygin should have made a bet-

ter fist of keeping out.

Yet, just when it seemed Valencia were in pole position to complete a famous comeback, Zenit struck the winner as Witsel was left unmarked on the edge of the area and his low drive found the net via the inside of the far post. — AFP

# HERNANDEZ STRIKES, LEVERKUSEN ROUT BATE

LEVERKUSEN: Javier Hernandez scored on his first start for Bayer Leverkusen in their 4-1 rout of BATE Borisov yesterday as the Germans topped Group E ahead of Barcelona.

Turkey midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu netted twice in the rout as Bayer put the Belarus side to the sword in their opening Champions League tie.

Swiss striker Admir Mehmedi gave Bayer an early lead, but Serbia midfielder Nemanja Milunovic headed BATE level on 13 minutes. Calhanoglu then put the hosts 2-1 up after the break before Mexico's Hernandez scored Leverkusen's third.

Calhanoglu netted a late penalty as the hosts dominated, using their 65 percent possession to fire in 20 shots on goal to BATE's paltry two efforts.

Hernandez's goal was no more than the 27-year-old ex-Manchester United and Real Madrid forward deserved as 'Chicharito' justified replacing Stefan Kiessling in Leverkusen's starting line-up with an impressive display. Having made his debut off the bench in Leverkusen's shock 1-0 Bundesliga defeat to Darmstadt last Saturday, Hernandez received a standing ovation from the BayArena crowd when he made way for Germany striker Kiessling on 72 minutes.

After Barcelona's 1-1 draw at Roma, Leverkusen's victory is a confidence booster ahead of their clash with the defending champions at the Camp Nou in a fortnight.

However, the win came at a cost as Leverkusen captain Lars Bender limped off in clear discomfort on 44 minutes with a knee injury to be replaced by fellow Germany inter-

national Christoph Kramer.

Leverkusen took an early lead when Switzerland international Mehmedi curled in Hernandez's cross off the outside of his boot with just four minutes gone. BATE drew level when Milunovic headed home off a Leverkusen defender which wrong-footed home goalkeeper Bernd Leno.

Calhanoglu restored Leverkusen's lead

just after the break when he drove home Karim Bellarabi's cross on 47 minutes before Hernandez scored his first goal in the Bayer shirt when he slotted home Kevin Kampl's final pass on 59 minutes. It turned into a rout on 76 minutes when left-back Filip Mladenovic handled and Calhanoglu hit an unstoppable penalty into the left-hand corner. — AFP



GERMANY: Leverkusen's Jonathan Tah (right) and BATE's Nikolai Signevich (left) challenge for the ball during the Champions League Group E soccer match. — AP