

Ronaldo back in style

Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo wasted no time in showing Real Madrid what they have been missing during his five-game domestic suspension, by scoring twice as the holders began their Champions League defence with a routine 3-0 win over APOEL Nicosia on Wednesday.

Ronaldo, banned for pushing a referee after being sent off in the first leg of the Spanish Super Cup, opened the scoring after just 12 minutes from Gareth Bale's low cross.

The Portuguese doubled his tally from the penalty spot before Sergio Ramos's

overhead kick rounded off the scoring. Real move to the top of Group H alongside Tottenham Hotspur, who ended their Wembley hoodoo with an impressive 3-1 win over Borussia Dortmund.

Ronaldo has now struck 12 times in his last six Champions League games.

"He is the best in the world. We know he will always score goals," said Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane.

Ronaldo described the length of his ban as "persecution" on the part of the Spanish football federation and his absence has been felt by Real in profligate performances in being held

at home by Valencia and Levante.

"We are on a run of games without scoring many goals, but you can't thrash teams all the time," said Ramos.

Bale excelling

Zidane admitted that the club's failure to replace Alvaro Morata had left his striking options limited, particularly in the absence of Karim Benzema through a hamstring injury.

However, with Bale excelling back on the left, Ronaldo filled that void as he swept home at the back post from the Welshman's cross.

Ronaldo then headed into the side-netting from a similar position from another Bale delivery moments later.

Real suffered an injury setback midway through the half as Mateo Kovacic limped off to be replaced by Toni Kroos.

And the hosts' rhythm was disrupted as they struggled to create more clear-cut chances

against the dogged Cypriot champions before the break.

Ronaldo thought he had doubled his tally a minute into the second half as his volley from Dani Carvajal's pinpoint cross came off the underside of the bar, but didn't cross the line despite his protests.

Madrid's luck turned moments later when Roberto Lago was very harshly penalised for handball from Bale's deflected cross and Ronaldo smashed home the resulting penalty. (AFP)



Real Madrid's forward Cristiano Ronaldo scores on a penalty kick

FIFA rankings

September 14, 2017

- 1 Germany (+1)
- 2 Brazil (-1)
- 3 Portugal (+3)
- 4 Argentina (-1)
- 5 Belgium (+4)
- 6 Poland (-1)
- 7 Switzerland (-3)
- 8 France (+2)
- 9 Chile (-2)
- 10 Colombia (-2)

Source: FIFA

© AFP

Other results:

Maribor	1	Spartak Moscow	1
Liverpool	2	Sevilla	2
Feyenoord	0	Manchester City	4
Shakhtar Donetsk	2	Napoli	1
RB Leipzig	1	Monaco	1
Tottenham Hotspur	3	Borussia Dortmund	1

England keeper Heaton 'out for months'

Burnley

Burnley goalkeeper

Tom Heaton is set to be sidelined "for months" after undergoing surgery on his shoulder, Clarets manager Sean Dyche said yesterday.

Heaton, capped three times by England, landed awkwardly on his shoulder after colliding with team-mate Ben Mee as he caught the ball in the first half of Burnley's 1-0 Premier League win at home to Crystal Palace last weekend.

The 31-year-old was taken off in the 36th minute after being treated on the pitch for several minutes.

Heaton had emerged as a genuine contender for the England goalkeeper role currently held by West Ham's Joe Hart.

After the Palace match at Turf Moor, Dyche said he expected Heaton to be out of action for months and, asked if that was still the case, the Burnley boss said Thursday: "Yes, it won't be weeks, it will be a longer period."

Heaton joined northwest side Burnley in the summer of 2013 and had played every league game in each of his three seasons before last term, when he only missed three.

Dyche, speaking about Heaton's operation, added: "It was successful in its immediacy, I'm told that went very well. Tom was good afterwards."

"We all know the extent to which Tom's professionalism goes, and he's as good as it gets." (AFP)



Tom Heaton

Golovkin skips birth to train for title fight

Las Vegas

Gennady Golovkin is one of the most dedicated boxers in the world and even the birth of his daughter couldn't pry him out of the gym.

The three-belt champion missed the birth on Friday because he was training for his upcoming world middleweight title fight.

Golovkin stayed in the gym for two hours after his wife, Alina, gave birth to the couple's second child. They also have a son.

"He didn't leave the gym until 6 pm," Golovkin's trainer Abel Sanchez said. "The baby was born at 4 pm."

"His wife was in the hospital for one day. She came home next day so he was home with them."

Golovkin, who holds the World Boxing Council, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation middleweight belts, will face Canelo Alvarez in a 12-round mega

title fight on Saturday in Las Vegas.

Sanchez said he was concerned during the long training camp about how Golovkin was doing with the baby on the way and the most important fight of his career around the corner.

"I started to voice my concern. 'The baby's not here'. He said 'coach the baby is going to come whether I am there or not. I have already done my part.'"

Sanchez said Golovkin has been in high spirits as the fight preparation shifted this week from their training camp to Las Vegas.

"He is in a great mood. I don't know if it is because of the baby being here or if because he finally

got the fight he wanted," Sanchez said.

Sanchez says Golovkin is a good father and just as dedicated to his family as he is to his work.

"Golovkin is a family man. He has always been very, very, very focused," Sanchez said.

"He has never been the type of guy to go out at night. You are never going to lose him for a day."

"He just bought his first car six months ago. He didn't have a car before because he said he spends all his time in the gym."

Golovkin declined to speak about the birth at a news conference on Wednesday at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino. (AFP)



Golden Boy Promotions Chairman and CEO Oscar De La Hoya (C) looks on as Canelo Alvarez (L) and WBC, WBA and IBF middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin pose during a news conference