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SPORTS

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Barcelona FC strides through Europe

Karan Jeet Singh
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It was the second leg of the UEFA Champions league quarter finals, with Barcelona cruising through to the semi-finals, and Bayern giving the possibly most surprising second leg comeback ever.

Neymar did a double, as Barcelona head through to the semifinal when they hosted Paris SG at Camp Nou for the last leg of the quarter-final match. With Barcelona already 3-1 up on aggregate, Paris SG was expected to be menacing, but the story was opposite altogether. Barcelona opened the match on a very high note and it was the magical run by Iniesta who made a box to box run through the

pitch, running past defenders before providing a telling assist to Neymar who took it past the keeper and slotted it into the back of the net, which decided the match. A few minutes after that, it was Dani Alves with an assist who got the ball high up the pitch and tracked the ball back before feeding it back into the box and onto the head of Neymar, who once again provided his sublime, touch and Barcelona was two goals up in no time. After that it was game over for Paris SG who now head out of the Champions League for the fourth year running. Barcelona 2(5), Paris SG 0(1).

With two goals down on aggregate, Bayern Munich was looking at exiting the competition at the quarter-final stage for the first time in six years, and with critics breathing

down the neck of Pep Guardiola, it was a managerial masterclass by the German giants. Bayern Munich once again showed their class as they took the two-goal deficit and turned it around into a three-goal lead on aggregate, with the match ending with six goals in Bayern's pocket. The scoring started in the 14th minute when the man who scored the away goal in their last tie scored a wonderful header after a fantastic ball in, begging to be hit. That goal took Bayern's spirit to a whole new level, soon afterwards it was another headed goal by Boateng which teasingly slipped past the goalkeeper's fingers and into the back of the net, and this took Bayern level on aggregate. And within the first half Robert Lewandowski scored a brace and Muller scored a long ranged

seeker, which meant game over for Porto. The second half started with Bayern, hungry for even more—they weren't content with just five goals—but Porto was able to get the shine off their win by scoring a well built up goal bringing down Bayern's lead to two goals. Just as the match was about to end Porto conceded a free kick very close to their box, and it was Xabi Alonso who stepped forth to take it. Scoring his second goal in the last six years, he popped the ball right into the left corner well beyond the goalkeeper's reach. Bayern Munich now head into the semi-finals as they meet Barcelona at Camp Nou next week. Bayern Munich 6(7), FC Porto 1(4).

Real Madrid headed to UEFA final?

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The quarter final stage of the UEFA Champions league comes to an end with two nail-biting matches between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid, and Monaco and Juventus. With all the teams in top form, it was an exciting week in the European Championship.

Real Madrid hosted their local rivals Atletico and turned it into the most thrilling match of the championship. It was deemed to be the recap of last year's final and it turned out to be so, in some fashion. Both team played really well with Atletico doing what they do best, i.e. defending. The first half belonged to Real Madrid territorially as they kept most of

the possession and took few fairly good shots at the goal, but the Slovenian keeper was at his best once again and was able to keep all of them out. The second half started with Gabi being substituted in and joining the defense force of Atléti. The match turned more and more aggressive as it always does when these two sides meet, and Atletico was determined to not go out without a fight, literally. At 75th minute Arda Turan made a reckless challenge at Sergio Ramos, and Ramos being at his theatric best made sure that the referee got to know about it. Referee showed Arda the red card and the task of going through to the semifinals turned even more difficult for Atléti as they went a man down. Real translated into an opportunity as they increased their work rate, and at the

88th minute, the spell was finally broken. Ronaldo did a wonderful 1-2 with James and found himself looking for a player to pass to inside the box, and at that moment Chicharito presented himself at the perfect location for Ronaldo to pass to, and he shot home. Last year it was the late strike by Sergio Ramos that took Real Madrid into the extra time, and this year it was the late strike by Chicharito, who is on loan from Manchester United, that takes Real Madrid through to the semifinal. Real Madrid 1(1) Atletico Madrid 0(0).

After 12 years Juventus are finally in the Europe's elite as they head into the Semifinal after beating Monaco on aggregate. Monaco hosted their Italian rivals with a high paced football with experienced and seasoned players

like Berbatov kept on the bench and fresh legs of Bernardo Silva given a chance. Monaco played really well coming close to almost breaking Juventus' defense a few times but it was a pie they weren't able to take bite of, Juventus also came close to scoring with Andrea Pirlo's 35-yard screaming free kick hitting the woodwork in the second half. The match ended goalless, but Juventus go ahead in the competition with Vidal's last week's penalty being the decider in two legs of this contest. Monaco 0(0) Juventus 0(1).

Juventus now meets Real Madrid for their semifinal match, and being the form Real Madrid is in right now, it won't be a surprise if they take out Juventus and head into the finals as they defend their title for the tenth time.