● SPORTS LETTERS 36
● RACING 38, 37
● CRICKET 38

**Manchester United back again in European glory as the Cup Winners' Cup final marks a successful return for English clubs**

# Hughes provides the spark

Barcelona ..... 1
Manchester United ..... 2

FROM STUART JONES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT
ROTTERDAM

MARK Hughes last night crowned a night as glorious for English football as for Manchester United. In scoring two goals within seven minutes in the Feyenoord stadium, he completed the nation's successful reintegration into Europe by winning for his former club the Cup Winners' Cup.

The country's reputation, tarnished by the Heysel tragedy in 1985, was restored both by the manner of United's convincing victory and by the behaviour of their supporters. Unlike their predecessors, who, mixed in wild, wet and windy conditions, was as enthralling on the pitch as it was peaceful off it.

Not since being hailed as the European champions 25 years ago, had United challenged for a continental trophy. It was appropriate that the prolonged wait should officially be ended by Bryan Robson, aged 34 and a loyal servant for both his club and country, who received the cup.

It was fitting, too, that Hughes, the players' player of the year, should exact revenge on the club which discarded him. In doing so, he enabled Alex Ferguson, who as Aberdeen in the same piece of sweetness in 1983, to match the feat of Johnan Cruyff. He had already claimed it with Ajax and, two years ago, Barcelona.

Moreover, Hughes has assured United of another season in Europe; they automatically re-enter the competition.

Although Barcelona have already won their domestic championship, John Toshack believes that the Spanish first division is the weakest he has seen. Missing the injured Stoichkov, they became the fourth of United's victims to finish with less than a full complement. The dismissed miscreant was Nando.

His departure in the 84th minute was irrelevant. Although both goalkeepers — Bruce for United and Zubizarreta, aged 33, and Sealey, in his first appearance since being injured in the Football League Cup final — were spared early involvement, United had by then firmly grasped the cup.

Ferguson had one surprise in store. He omitted Webb, Cruyff, without the suspended Christiansen and Amor, concentrated an attack featuring the enterprising McClair, in a more advanced role than usual, by using Alexanco as the sweeper behind Kozman and Ferrer. Nando was instructed to shadow Hughes.

United, though they were the more forceful and enterprising team before the interval, declined to shake the composure of Bucquet in the first European final to be shown on television in more than 100 countries.

Koeman and Alexanco, experienced Dutch and Spanish Dutch internationals, organised their protective shield and set an offside trap which regularly caught Hughes, in particular, unawares. Yet it was sprung in the tenth minute when Pallister, after his central defensive colleague, Bruce, had caused anxiety in his own area, advanced and noticed the enterprising McClair making a timely run on the right.

The Scottish international, after outpacing Alexanco and Ferrer, accelerated towards Bucquet and appeared to be caught in two minds about which spot he should strike. In the end, it dribbled around his boot over the bar. He denied himself and United the opening which might have upset Barcelona's composure.

Hughes, however, with characteristic aggression familiar to his former colleagues, had an attack which functioned at a notably higher speed than Barcelona, whose approach was comparatively ponderous. Sealey had no need to make a save until a few moments before half-time.

Even though United were unable to release Sharpe, who has so often been their spark of inspiration, the pressure they applied mounted early in the second half and eventually told. Hughes, who had twice been within a whisker of nodding in crosses, from the left and then from the right, was to be inadvertently the creator and executioner.

In the 69th minute he was fouled by the leaden-footed Alexanco. Robson floated in the free kick, and before Bucquets could reach it, Bruce headed towards the unguarded net. He was diverted from his twentieth goal of the season by Hughes, who claimed his own twentieth from a couple of feet.

United, now more effervescent and over-flowing with belief, were forward with even more urgency and seemed to have decided the destiny of the trophy within another seven minutes. Robson, as commanding as usual, freed Hughes through the middle. He drifted away from the young goalkeeper and, even though he had given himself no oblique angle from which to shoot, he scored with a nonchalant drive.

Bakero and Robson were both booked as tensions rose, and the excitement reaching feverish height after Robson had committed another foul and ended being sent off instead, his own team was punished. Koeman curled the free kick over the wall and Sealey could not prevent it from bumbling in off his hands and the right-hand post.

Barcelona, spirited and urgent, looked for an equaliser, but were caught on the break by another move featuring Robson, McClair and Hughes. The Welshman was felled deliberately on the edge of the area by Nando, who was sent off for the professional foul.

Though the Spaniards were reduced to ten men, they almost extended the Dutchman an extra half-hour in the closing minutes. After Bruce had mishit a back pass and appeared to his goalkeeper, Black more was forced to clear off the line from Laudrup. Only that could United's support entrake up the song which has become their theme in this competition. "Always look on the bright side of life", they sang. At last United could.

Clearing the last hurdle: Hughes bounds over the challenge of Busquets to score United's second goal last night

## MATCH FACTS

At De Kuip stadium, Rotterdam — Pitch: 8; Kertesz (Swe)

| HT: 0-0 | MAN UTD 2 | BARCELONA 1 |
|---|---|---|
| Scorers: | Hughes 68, 74 | Koeman (f) |
| Dismissals: | — | Nando 84 |
| Cautions: | Robson 76 | Bakero 76 |
| Subs: | — | Pinilla 32 (Alexanco) |

| | MAN UTD | BARCELONA |
|---|---|---|
| Shots (on target/total) | 5 13 | 13 5 |
| Corners (right/right) | 7 4 | 3 2 |
| Crosses (left/right) | 7 5 | 7 17 |
| Free kicks/points conceded | 17 19 | 19 17 |
| Offsides | 1 | 3 |
| Possession (general/foot) | 48 35 | 55 39 |

| MANCHESTER UTD (4-4-2) | | | | | Fouls | BARCELONA | | | | | Fouls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Player | Goal | Crosses | L | R | By | Player | Goal | Crosses | L | R | By |
| Sealey | | | | | Ge | Zubizarreta | | | | | Ge |
| Bruce | | | | | Cd | Busquets | | | | | Cd |
| Pallister | | | | | Cd | Koeman | | | | | Cd |
| C Blackmore | 4 | 8 | | | Ld | J Alexanco | | | | | Ld |
| A Bruce | | | | | Rd | Nando | | | | | Rd |
| M Phelan | | | | | Lm | A Ferrer | | | | | Lm |
| M Hughes | 2 | | | | Rm | Bakero | | | | | Rm |
| R Robson | | | | | Cm | Eusebio | | | | | Cm |
| P Ince | | | | | Cm | Eusebio | | | | | Cm |
| M McClair | | | | | Cm | Laudrup | | | | | Cm |
| M Hughes | 2 | | | | Cf | R Laudrup | | | | | Cf |
| L Sharpe | | | | | Rw | Beguiristain | | | | | Rw |
| Unused: G Walsh, M Donaghy, N Webb, M Rotting, D Wallace | | | | | | Unused: M Angel, M Soler, R Serna, S Pinilla | | | | | |

● Compiled by Julian Geeraerts

## Ferguson savours United's triumph

A DELIGHTED Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said: "It was nerve-racking at the end but we got there. I think that over the years English clubs have proved that we can do it in Europe, but the most important thing tonight is Manchester United and their supporters.

"It's a wonderful day for the club, having waited 23 years since our last European triumph. Ferguson, who led Aberdeen to victory in the 1983 competition, said, "It is expected for Manchester United to be in games like this. Aberdeen was a fairy tale, but I can believe what happened tonight.

"Mark Hughes could not have scored his second goal on a better day. I had my eyes closed in the point when Clayton Blackmore cleared off the line."

Barcelona's Dutch manager, Johan Cruyff, thought neither side played well. "When you play a final you have to impose your game or you wind up losing," he said. "Manchester United stuck in their normal style of play and if you do that you have the luck. They had one more chance than we had. I don't think they were superior to us."

## Supporters win praise of police

THE behaviour of the supporters of Manchester United, who were the first English club to appear in a European final since the Heysel stadium disaster in 1985, was praised by the Dutch police (John Cowdery writes).

"Manchester has won. The United supporters realised that they caused trouble at Heysel and they have tried to make sure that. They just wanted to have a good show," Willem Stoop, a police spokesman, said. There were no serious outbreaks of hooliganism. By the game's end, the police had arrested only 25 people, 18 Dutch and five English, few minor offences.

After the game, the police shepherded rival supporters into different areas of Rotterdam, the English to the north, the Spaniards to the south.

In London, Superintendent Adrian Appleby, of the National Football Intelligence Unit, said: "The system of screening applicants for tickets seems to have worked very well."

Two coaches were turned back at Dover because the United followers did not have tickets for the game.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In some restaurants a ringing cellphone rarely is more exciting than the bill. Help us to aggravate that. Phone Mr Talkland today!! And save money!!

ONLY NEC P3 £299 + VAT

CARPHONES
(Hands-free, safe on motorways)
NEC CM3 £94 inc VAT
MOTOROLA 4600 £125 inc VAT

PORTABLES
(Very quiet in restaurants)
MOBIRA CITYMAN 100 £249
PANASONIC F SERIES £349

COME TO MGS COMMUNICATIONS AND ENJOY FREEDOM OF SPEECH!

0384 401142
FAX: 0384 401143

Name
Address
Postcode
Tel No

TALKLAND
M.G.S. COMMUNICATIONS
Unit 6, Darwin House, Dudley Interchange Centre, Kingsmead, West Midlands DY5 1XW

## Fighting spirit breaks back of Barcelona

DAVID MILLER
CHIEF SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Rotterdam

Manchester United last night exhibited resolve and character beyond expectation, to stamp their name once more on a European trophy. There was a maturity, and now and then a style, in their victory over Barcelona that must have warmed the veteran founder of their fame, Sir Matt Busby. The smile on an old man's face at the finish spoke volumes.

Inspired by a sense of occasion, by the unending torrent of vocal encouragement from the vast bank of their supporters in the corner of the stadium that had begun over an hour before hand, Bryan Robson and his team played with a composure which showed how much they have gained from a season back in European competition: even if previously against moderate opponents.

Johan Cruyff may have said afterwards that it was not a good match, that United had the luck, that they played their "own game — a disparaging piece of condescension — that there was doubt about the legality of Hughes's second goal. Cruyff is normally objective, but this is Holland, not more than sour grapes. Frankly, Barcelona were unsettled by the skill and speed of an English team, and they had not the skill to punish those aspects of the match where United's lack of technique exposed them.

English football, we know, does lack sophistication, accentuated by the absence from European competition; yes now does are back fully in the fray. Why will regain some of the strength they have lost and last night they showed just why it is that foreign television audiences find the English game so appealing for its conscious action.

Manchester United won because, above all, they had the will to do so, because every player rose above himself against opponents who were expected to be tactically the more astute. If Barcelona were hardly capped by the absence of the injured Stoichkov and the suspended Amor, that is no more than the hand of fortune, partially self-inflicted.

If they threw everything into attack in the last quarter of an hour to an extent that nearly overrun United when it was all too late, that is a lesson they and Cruyff will no doubt remember.

Alex Ferguson has finally freed himself from the shadows, some of his as yet has not a team with the consistency likely to win Leagues. Rotten. He must, however, take the credit for returning with United that element of attacking persistence which is the chalk tradition, even if until last night it is so frustratingly intelligent in its success. Robson, too, must be applauded for reminding footballers, with his leadership, of that element in the English game that lies in application and has nothing to do with technique.

From the kick-off Manchester carried the game, thrusting at the heart of Barcelona's defence, extending the 34-year-old Alexanco. Cruyff chose to play with Alexanco as sweeper, and with Koeman and Ferrer as the markers on Hughes and McClair. It was a policy always vulnerable because of Koeman's instinct for breaking forward, as he does with a sweeper; and it served to assist Hughes's exploitation of the break-away second goal. That was the moment when Barcelona's back was broken.

For 45 minutes you might have thought we were watching a Liverpool team of Bob Paisley's, and was the discipline of United in their simplicity of the use of the ball, in not getting caught ball-watching, in supporting each other in possession.

Although outnumbered three against four in midfield, Phelan, Ince and Robson were continuously pushing Barcelona back; so that with the meaningful running of Hughes, in, McClair, Sharpe and Bruce, with the constant threat from Sharpe, inexperienced but dangerous on the left — only restrained by the equally meaningful running of Nando ("Nando", who was even usually set off he alone on Hughes — and the suffling ness of the journeyman Phelan to make room on the right, United's flow of play was always likely to bring scoring chances.

McClair, when he seemingly missed a simple one after 11 minutes, probably had a difficult bounce of the ball on a rough pitch; which with one and two-touch play is anything but a slight one.

The momentum remained with United after Hughes's goal, despite a nonsense of Cruyff's analysis. In the first 15 minutes of the game Sealey had flinged heavily failed to connect with a free kick after Sharpe had been felled yet again, then Hughes twisted just two defenders to have a shot deflected over the top and a header-play by Sharpe from 20 yards thudded into the side netting a foot the wrong side of the post.

So Hughes's goals were hardly unexpected, the first made by Robson from another free kick conceded in the attempt to stop Hughes, while his second recalled some of the glories of the old United.

We all hardly dared look or breathe as Manchester entered under the vast, belated onslaught of the Spaniards, but somehow they held out. Now, perhaps, a new phase of Manchester United's history has begun.

Thereafter ready, page 39

## Botham is upstaged by an old friend

By ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

*WORCESTER (West Indians won toss): West Indians have scored 176 for six wickets against Worcestershire*

VIVIAN Richards may lose his composure more than he once did, and his eye and concentration may not be quite as sharp as they were, but any suggestion that the West Indies' captain is unable to joyless decline must be revoked after yesterday's masterful century at New Road.

He was in competition with a strong cast, in which his old pal Ian Botham bowled valiantly and skilfully and his opening batsman Phil Simmons scored a very English century. But Richards played them all off the stage, batting with such fluency and power that his 111th century occupied little more than two hours.

His diamond, having made 131 in 133 balls, was more a case of the batsman standing down than the bowler defeating him.

Batting all day, West Indies, even without the injured Haynes, established a foundation for the first of the nine wins they must secure against the greatest to qualify for a £96,000 bonus from the sponsors Tetley Bitter.

Each of the leading characters dominated a session, and the first belonged to Richards. He is as Tom Dexter was saying the other day, on the burly side, but his matchfitness, which is all that matters this time, is beyond doubt. He grabbed the ball at start of play and did not relinquish it until tiffin-time, by when he had taken two for 40 in 18 overs of thoughtful swing and seam.

This is far from the Botham of old, charging in with hair, adrenalin and outrageous good fortune all flowing for him. If that was off-the-pace mobility, this is stage-to-stalls sure precision, and if it lacks the excitement of his youngest days it is still a credit to a man who has refused to allow the years to overtake him.

He began with three consecutive maidens, the third containing a raucous lbw shout against Simmons, who then proved him just short of slip. This was the closest he was to come to the wicket of his old, short height and from foot mark should serve him well in his closing. But when Simmons arrived in prodigious Botham soon gained deserved reward.

Greenidge, whose tenure may eventually be under threat this summer, mistimed a drive and Richardson, never yet a force on English pitches, was delivered by outswing and caught at first slip.

Simmons was at his best either side of lunch, stretching forward to drive the quicker bowlers and leaning back to cut square on late when Illingworth's length faded him. Lara, too, played some pleasant strokes but when he was bowled by the first ball of a new spell from Newport, neither forward nor back, the entertainment dropped a pole.

Richards was off the mark second ball with a one-and four through cover, almost closer to mid-on. He is now the only false shot he plays, a weakness of precious few, and when Botham bowl him outside off stump just before tea it was enough of a rarity to have the crowd gasping in delight, but often hard was stopped chasing pulses and laughing all day, bearing himself in frustration.

There was an air of patient determination about Richards's bat when Lampitt dropped short, on Newport overpitched on leg stump, he was merciless in his punishment. If England seek a consolation it is that he made only one century on the last tour here in 1988, and that was also in the opening match.

Illingworth at length bowled Simmons round his legs after the two had doubled the score but Richards's response was to whip Lampitt into the pavilion at mid-wicket, tilting to deep Illingworth over the green into the school field. Botham playfully pulled him towards the pavilion, over the pitch, into New Road, but after another stream of savage boundaries, outside off and leg-flicking, his cap to the large crowd as he went.

Richards, now 35 years, Richards decline and decline and then day ended as it had begun, Botham bowling tightly and now, signalling graphically for a bat back on the run.

Worcestershire: First innings
C G Greenidge c Lampitt b Benjamin 27
P A Neale lbw Benjamin 0
P D Newport c Richards b Benjamin 0
B C Lara b Newport 4
T S Curtis c Richards b Botham 0
C L Hooper not out 22
P A J DeFreitas c Richardson b Curtis 7
G A Cardwell not out 0
Extras (b 1, lb 1, nb 4) 6
Total (6 wkts) 176
J D A Allen, C A Walsh and B P Patterson to bat.
FALL OF WICKETS: 19, 27, 27, 50, 62, 62.
BOWLING: Benjamin 14-2-40-3; Lampitt 8-1-34-0; Botham 14-4-40-2; Curtis 14-3-35-1; Richards 2-1-1-0; Simmons 2-1-1-0; Hampshire and K E Palmer 1-0-4-0.
Umpires: J H Hampshire and K E Palmer.

## Richardson tees off with host

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Steven Richardson, the reigning Masters champion and Ryder Cup veteran, shot a 66 yesterday in Scottish Golf Correspondent writes). The Ryder Cup veteran was with the tournament host, Nicklaus, and Mark Hutchison, the 1988 US PGA champion.

The Lee-on-Solent, Hampshire player struck off late on Tuesday without his clubs, which went on to Houston before being returned later in the day in time for Richardson to prepare for his American debut in a tournament that includes 11 of the leading 20 players on the Sony World Rankings, most notably the defending champion, Greg Norman.

King Coach, page 38