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FAN POLL

Who was United's man of the match in the Champions League final?

- Peter Schmeichel
- Ryan Giggs
- David Beckham
- Teddy Sheringham
- Ole Gunnar Solskjaer
- Other

FROM THE EDITOR PERFECTION!

Try and write a better script if you can. Matt Busby's 90th birthday, Peter Schmeichel's final match for United, the first European Cup final since 1968. One-nil down with literally seconds to play. Two goals in a minute. United win in real Roy of the Rovers style. An absolutely wonderful occasion, ending with the perfect result for United. We've won the Premiership, the FA Cup and now the Big One, the European Cup. Treble trophy triumph. Top that if you can! You can't!

FEATURES ON TOP OF THE WORLD



What a game! What a result! Manchester United rounded off their incredible trophy treble with a stunning win over Bayern Munich in the Nou Camp. The Premiership, FA Cup and European Cup are all ours. History is ours. Will anyone ever be able to match this unbelievable feat? Hats off to the team, the coaching staff, and of course, the fans. You've all played your part in the best season ever. Enjoy!

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Who was United's man of the match in the Champions League final?

- Peter Schmeichel
- Ryan Giggs
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- Teddy Sheringham
- Ole Gunnar Solskjaer
- Other

MATCH

26-May-1999



UEFA Champions League

Full Time

Bayern Munich	1	2	Manchester Utd.
---------------	---	---	-----------------

- | | | |
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CROWN CLINCHED IN FANTASTIC FINISH

Look up the word "occasion" in any dictionary - English, German or Spanish, and you should see a picture of the Nou Camp stadium, taken in the minutes before kick off in the 1999 European Champions League final.

To say it's big is to damn it with feint praise. The European Cup final. On what would have been Sir Matt Busby's 90th birthday. Peter Schmeichel's last game with the club. At the Nou Camp, Barcelona. It couldn't be bigger if it tried.



A fantastic stadium, an incredible atmosphere, and the biggest game in club football to look forward to. If you could bottle this feeling, you'd make a fortune.

But back down to earth. When the team sheets were passed around, the name of Jesper Blomqvist was on everyone's lips. Many column inches have been filled recently speculating how Alex Ferguson would fill the midfield gap left by the suspended Roy Keane. In the end, he did the unexpected, which, ironically, we should have expected.

David Beckham recovered from the knock he picked up in training, and moved into centre midfield while Blomqvist patrolled the left flank, moving Giggs to the right. Despite his

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match winning performance on Saturday, there was no place for Teddy Sheringham in the starting eleven, the resurgent England man having to be content with a place on the bench alongside David May, who many expected to fill in at centre-back. With Ronny Johnsen not being deployed in midfield, he was not needed.

The Bayern team came as no surprise, largely because Ottmar Hitzfeld named it 48 hours ahead of the match. A supreme show of confidence, or an act of gross stupidity. Only time would tell.

A spectacular, colourful opening ceremony got the evening underway, with dancing girls, inflatable statues and loud music getting proceedings off to a lively start. I wouldn't like to think what Sir Matt would have thought about it all, but it certainly heightened the party atmosphere within the ground.

Montserrat Cabelle, the opera singer, made probably not the most graceful entrance of her career, on the back of a truck, to serenade the crowd with a rendition of "Barcelona." Then the football, never in danger of being overshadowed, started. The roar that greeted the teams was something to behold. This is what we were here for.

The first event of the match was a free-kick awarded to Bayern after Jancker was felled on the edge of the area by Johnsen. The Bayern fans called for a penalty, but the Italian referee was sure it was outside the box.

It did not matter to Mario Basler. Just outside the box, he struck a sweet shot that curled past Peter Schmeichel on his left hand side and into the net. 1-0 to Bayern after just five minutes. But we've been here before. Don't panic.

That is what Schmeichel seemed to do just two minutes later. A misunderstanding with Johnsen almost let Jeremies in, but the Dane got himself out of trouble with a hasty clearance.

Bayern chances were coming thick and fast, and Basler put in a great ball to Zickler in the ninth minute. A well-timed interception took the ball to safety. Nervous times.

United's first real chance came in the 14th minute, when Jaap Stam rose well to head the ball on to Cole. The striker lost the ball at his feet, but fortuitously regained it, and got off a shot that looped off a defender's boot. The whole stadium watched as the ball, almost in slow motion, passed just wide of Kahn's post.

Effenberg did well in the 16th minute to create a chance for Jeremies, but the German international did not get a proper shot off, and Schmeichel saved comfortably.

Kahn had to be at his best in the 20th minute, when Andy Cole motored into the area, and got up well at the near post. He met Beckham's corner with his head, close in on Kahn, but the goalkeeper did well to punch clear.

United began to put some of the pressure back on the Germans in the following six minutes, culminating in a good move involving Butt and Giggs. Butt received the ball on the edge of the area, shimmied, trying to make a yard of space for himself, but his touch was too strong, and gifted the Bayern defence the ball.

Zickler had a shot from distance after Beckham has been dispossed by Jeremies a minute later, but his shot went wide of a diving Schmeichel.

United just needed a change in luck. They were making all the right moves, but the final ball was more often than not cut out, or a weak shot came at the end of a good move. That was well illustrated when Giggs broke with pace down the right, delivered a good ball to Yorke, only for his shot to take a deflection, which took all the sting out of it.

United were on the back foot again in the 36th minute, when Basler made a darting run towards the area. Butt tackled well, but the rebound fell to Zickler. He tried hard to get a shot in, but was tackled before he could do so.

Beckham struck a good free kick from 30 yards with five minutes to play, but Kahn just watched as it curled wide of his right-hand post.

Giggs almost broke through in the 42nd minute, but the throughball was just too weighty, and Kahn claimed at the winger's feet. That summed up United's frustrating half perfectly.

Panic almost set into the United defence in the dying moments of the half, as all three Bayern strikers converged on goal. Johnsen kept calm to bring the ball clear.

No changes were made at half-time. Maybe the change of ends would suit United, attacking towards their own fans.

Bayern started as they had finished - pressurising. Matthaus played a sweet ball through to Jancker, and Schmeichel got down well to put the German's opportunistic toe-poke out for a corner.

A comedy of errors ensued in the 50th minute, when Butt stooped to head back Irwin's throw-in. The defender's resultant back-pass to Schmeichel put the keeper in trouble, and his clearance was blocked by an onrushing striker. Fortunately, it rebounded to safety. Still no improvement from the first half.

Giggs pounced on a loose ball in the 53rd minute, and crossed for Yorke. Linke got his head in first, however, and nullified the threat.

Blomqvist had United's best chance of the match so far, when Giggs again broke free on the right. His pinpoint cross only needed the slightest touch to be diverted into the goal, but the Swede got under the ball, sent it flying high over the bar, and was left holding his head in his hands, prone in the Bayern six

yard box.

Effenberg was booked in the 59th minute for a tackle from behind on Giggs.

Mario Basler attempted a Beckham-like shot from just inside United's half in the 63rd minute, seeing Schmeichel off his line. The shot was just too strong, however, and sailed over Schmeichel's bar.

24 minutes to go, and Teddy Sheringham was introduced in place of Jesper Blomqvist. His arrival was greeted by the crowd similar to that of a prodigal son. Yorke dropped off the two strikers, in search of space, and more importantly, the ball.

Gary Neville's throw-in in the 68th minute saw Yorke touch it on to Cole, whose attempted bicycle kick did not come off, sending the ball away from goal.

Mehmet Scholl came on for Bayern in the 70th minute, replacing Alexander Zickler.

In the next minute, Effenberg struck a great shot from way outside the area, but the rocket flew just wide of Schmeichel's left hand post.

Jancker and Effenberg combined well with 72 minutes on the clock, and Schmeichel had to pull off a world class, fingertip save to deny the midfielder.

Basler made another great run with 12 minutes to go, and set up Scholl on the edge of the area. His little chip beat Schmeichel all ends up, and came back off the post. United breathed again.

Lothar Matthaus was replaced by Thorsten Fink with 10 minutes to go.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer came on for Andy Cole a minute later. United forced a couple of good opportunities, but the Bayern defence held firm.

Schmeichel saved well again in the last eight minutes, turning away Babbel's shot for a corner. From the corner, Jancker's athletic overhead shot rebounded off Schmeichel's crossbar to safety. Twice had the woodwork come to United's rescue. That tells its own story.

Sheringham almost performed the heroics again after being put in by Solskjaer, but his shot was weak and presented Kahn with no problems. A minute later, Yorke missed the ball completely after Beckham's little touch in the area.

One minute to play, and Sheringham came to United's rescue. Beckham's corner fell to Butt on the edge of the area, he shot and Teddy deflected the ball into the net. Unbelievable. 1-1.

Better was still to come. Another Beckham corner. Another Sheringham touch. This time Solskjaer hooked it in. Two goals

in a minute. Liverpool revisited. Absolutely incredible! 2-1 to United. Bayern were finished.

We hardly had two chances all match, then two late, late strikes won us the European Cup and the treble. What a team. What a night. One word - fantastic!!

Report by an ecstatic Webmaster
Nou Camp, Barcelona.



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LATEST RESULTS

	26-MAY-1999 BAYERN MUNICH	2-1
	22-MAY-1999 NEWCASTLE U	2-0
	16-MAY-1999 SPURS	2-1
	12-MAY-1999 BLACKBURN R	0-0

NEXT MATCHES

FIXTURES

1998-1999

DATE	COMP.	OPPOSITION	RESULT
Sun 09/08 13:00	CS	Arsenal	NL 0-3
Wed 12/08 19:45	CL	LKS LODZ	HW 2-0
Sat 15/08 15:00	PREM	LEICESTER C	HD 2-2
Sat 22/08 15:00	PREM	West Ham	AD 0-0
Wed 26/08 20:05	CL	LKS Lodz	AD 0-0
Wed 09/09 20:00	PREM	CHARLTON A	HW 4-1
Sat 12/09 15:00	PREM	COVENTRY C	HW 2-0
Wed 16/09 19:45	CL	BARCELONA	HD 3-3
Sun 20/09 16:00	PREM	Arsenal	AL 0-3
Thu 24/09 20:00	PREM	LIVERPOOL	HW 2-0
Wed 30/09 19:45	CL	Bayern Munich	AD 2-2
Sat 03/10 15:00	PREM	Southampton	AW 3-0
Sat 17/10 15:00	PREM	WIMBLEDON	HW 5-1
Wed 21/10 19:45	CL	Brondby	AW 6-2
Sat 24/10 15:00	PREM	Derby C	AD 1-1
Wed 28/10 20:00	WC	BURY	HW 2-0
Sat 31/10 15:00	PREM	Everton	AW 4-1
Wed 04/11 19:45	CL	BRONDBY	HW 5-0
Sun 08/11 15:00	PREM	NEWCASTLE U	HD 0-0
Wed 11/11 20:00	WC	NOTTM FOREST	HW 2-1
Sat 14/11 15:00	PREM	BLACKBURN R	HW 3-2
Sat 21/11 15:00	PREM	Sheffield W	AL 1-3

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Wed 25/11 19:45	CL	Barcelona	AD 3-3 
Sun 29/11 14:00	PREM	LEEDS U	HW 3-2 
Wed 02/12 20:00	WC	Spurs	AL 1-3 
Sat 05/12 15:00	PREM	Aston Villa	AD 1-1 
Wed 09/12 19:45	CL	BAYERN MUNICH	HD 1-1 
Sat 12/12 15:00	PREM	Spurs	AD 2-2 
Wed 16/12 20:00	PREM	CHELSEA	HD 1-1 
Sat 19/12 15:00	PREM	MIDDLESBROUGH	HL 2-3 
Sat 26/12 15:00	PREM	NOTTM FOREST	HW 3-0 
Tue 29/12 20:00	PREM	Chelsea	AD 0-0 
Sun 03/01 16:00	FAC	MIDDLESBROUGH	HW 3-1 
Sun 10/01 16:00	PREM	WEST HAM	HW 4-1 
Sat 16/01 15:00	PREM	Leicester C	AW 6-2 
Sun 24/01 12:00	FAC	LIVERPOOL	HW 2-1 
Sun 31/01 16:00	PREM	Charlton A	AW 1-0 
Wed 03/02 20:00	PREM	DERBY C	HW 1-0 
Sat 06/02 15:00	PREM	Nottm Forest	AW 8-1 
Sun 14/02 14:00	FAC	FULHAM	HW 1-0 
Wed 17/02 20:00	PREM	ARSENAL	HD 1-1 
Sat 20/02 15:00	PREM	Coventry C	AW 1-0 
Sat 27/02 15:00	PREM	SOUTHAMPTON	HW 2-1 
Wed 03/03 19:45	CL	INTER MILAN	HW 2-0 
Sun 07/03 14:00	FAC	CHELSEA	HD 0-0 
Wed 10/03 19:45	FAC	Chelsea	AW 2-0 
Sat 13/03 15:00	PREM	Newcastle U	AW 2-1 
Wed 17/03 19:45	CL	Inter Milan	AD 1-1 
Sun 21/03 15:00	PREM	EVERTON	HW 3-1 
Sat 03/04 15:00	PREM	Wimbledon	AD 1-1 
Wed 07/04 19:45	CL	JUVENTUS	HD 1-1 
Sun 11/04 12:30	FAC	Arsenal	ND 0-0 

Wed 14/04 19:45	FAC	Arsenal	NW 2-1	
Sat 17/04 15:00	PREM	SHEFFIELD W	HW 3-0	
Wed 21/04 19:45	CL	Juventus	AW 3-2	
Sun 25/04 11:30	PREM	Leeds U	AD 1-1	
Sat 01/05 15:00	PREM	ASTON VILLA	HW 2-1	
Wed 05/05 20:00	PREM	Liverpool	AD 2-2	
Sun 09/05 16:00	PREM	Middlesbrough	AW 1-0	
Wed 12/05 20:00	PREM	Blackburn R	AD 0-0	
Sun 16/05 16:00	PREM	SPURS	HW 2-1	
Sat 22/05 15:00	FAC	Newcastle U	NW 2-0	
Wed 26/05 19:45	CL	Bayern Munich	NW 2-1	

KEY






- CL  UEFA Champions League
- CS  FA Charity Shield
- FAC  FA Cup
- PREM  FA Premier League
- WC  Worthington (League) Cup

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- David Beckham
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LATEST

KING OF EUROPE

Thursday, May 27, 1999 11:47

Everyone in football went through the gamut of emotions in the final minutes of the European Cup Final in Barcelona. But surely nobody could have felt the strain quite as much as the two managers.

One minute, Alex Ferguson was writing a gracious defeat speech, while Ottmar Hitzfeld was reciting his German victory lines. The next, they could have swapped their scripts. That's how quickly a triumph was snatched from the jaws of defeat by magnificent Manchester United.



"After ninety minutes, I kept saying to myself that I should keep my dignity and accept defeat, but football's a funny game," said an elated Ferguson. "It was a fantastic finish - almost unbelievable.

"I really thought we were beaten with two minutes left, especially as Bayern had chances to score further goals. But we showed the values of keeping going and never giving up. We threw everything into the final stages. That's football - the game is never over until the final whistle."

Bayern Munich coach Hitzfeld now has the unenviable task of trying to lift his players' spirits for a domestic Cup Final next month. The German Champions were understandably shattered by what happened in injury time when so many of them had been thinking about the medals they were about to collect.

"Losing like this is tragic. But I think we'll get over it, we can't change anything," said Hitzfeld philosophically.

"I congratulate Manchester United for winning the trophy. They never gave up and they deserved to win the Champions League. I feel very sorry for my team, but the players can still go home with their heads held high because of what they have achieved this season."

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Sympathy was also extended to the Bayern players by the United manager.

"I feel extremely sorry for Bayern. They have a great coach, and I've experienced myself what happened to them tonight. I can understand how they must feel."

The last word on a great night for the Manchester United coaching staff had to be for the man who laid the foundations for the modern era, and who first brought home the European Cup in 1968.

"As today is Sir Matt's birthday," said Fergie, "maybe he was doing a lot of kicking up there for us."


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DAVID MEEK'S TUNNEL VISION

WHAT A KNIGHT!!

Arise Sir Fergie...

England will very shortly salute Manchester United's Grand Slam of trophies, which reached a peak in the dramatic last-minute European victory snatched from Bayern Munich in Barcelona, with the ultimate honour for their manager.



Alex Ferguson is sure now to be knighted in the Queen's birthday honours, if not next month, then in Her Majesty's New Year list to mark the next millennium.

This is the only logical step for the country to take to acknowledge Alex Ferguson's domination of English football for the last five years climaxing this season with the treble of League Championship, FA Cup and now the European Champions League trophy.

Alex Ferguson has taken Manchester United to the pinnacle to join the legendary Sir Matt Busby and ranks among the great football managers of all time.

Early in the season Ferguson dismissed the dream of a treble as unrealistic but under his guidance his team gathered momentum to clinch the League from Arsenal by a point, crush Newcastle United at Wembley in the FA Cup and now prove themselves super-human by snatching victory from the jaws of defeat against Bayern to claim the club championship of Europe.

"It's the greatest day of my life," said the delighted manager after the match, still flushed not just by the triumph of victory but the drama which saw his team turn the game upside down in the time added on for victory to emerge with a 2-1 win after trailing from just the fifth minute to a goal scored by Mario Basler.

The clock was already showing 90 minutes when Sheringham nipped the ball in and then Solskjaer lashed home the winner three minutes into injury time.

Basler, who had been substituted by the Germans just a minute

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from the end of normal time, was feted as he left the field by his coach and his team-mates on the bench as the scoring hero who looked to have won the match for Bayern.

But then like the rest of the Bayern team he watched helplessly in utter amazement as United stepped up the pressure for their super subs to sink the Germans.

It was a victory for United's never-say-die spirit and their refusal to accept a defeat which was staring them in the face.

It is arguably the most sensational finish at this level in the history of English football and it was impossible not to feel a twinge of sympathy for the Germans after looking to have the game won.

As goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel said after playing his final game for United before seeking pastures new: "Of course you have to feel a little sorry for Bayern in that situation – but that's the beauty and cruelty of football."

Ferguson was not in the mood to feel so sympathetic.

"We were the team trying to attack all the time. Nobody can deny that our team plays with a spirit to attack and will to win. We were prepared to take risks and in football when you are prepared to be like that, you deserve to succeed.

"We rode our luck in one spell when they hit the post and the bar but towards the end they were tired out. I am so proud of my players and my heritage.

"This is the greatest moment of my life," he declared.

Fortune favours the bold, and it favoured United after they made a dreadful start with a mix-up that let Basler in to score with a free kick which he guided around the defensive wall.

Even allowing for the shock and distress of conceding such an early goal, United weren't playing particularly well. Beckham certainly justified his midfield role, at times carrying the team's attacking responsibility single handed, and looking every inch an inspiration.

But as a team they were underperforming. United eventually got their game together but they still didn't look like scoring. That was the signal for Ferguson to step into the action with his master plan involving the use of substitutes.

With 23 minutes to go he put Sheringham on for Blomqvist and was rewarded by Andy Cole trying a spectacular overhead kick which flew wide. United were dominating now but in their eagerness to push up in attack they were leaving their defence exposed.

It took a great save by Schmeichel to push a chip from Stefan Effenberg over the bar and every United fan gulped with relief when substitute Mehmet Scholl hit the post after a piercing midfield run by Basler.

But still no goal for the Reds so Ferguson ordered up another substitute with Solskjaer on for Cole – and even bigger gaps appeared in the United defence. Schmeichel made another fine save from Scholl, this time diving full length to push the shot round his post, and two minutes later the woodwork saved them again.

Carsten Jancker blazed against the bar, and by this time Ferguson, as he later admitted, was ready to accept defeat.

“I started to adjust to losing the game. I was reminding myself that the important thing in defeat would be to keep my dignity and accept that it was just not our year,” he explained.

His players, though, were not ready to accept defeat and in the last few minutes, especially in the injury time allowed by Italian referee Pierluigi Collina, they flung themselves forward.

They won a corner which brought Schmeichel pounding up into opposition territory to try and get on the end of Beckham’s kick. He said later he was trying to cause some confusion and that’s exactly what he did as Giggs helped the ball on for Sheringham to sweep home in a repeat of the rescue act he performed in the FA Cup Final against Newcastle after coming on as a sub.

Now the game seemed to be heading for extra time and the possibility of a golden goal decider. Coach Steve McClaren had started to talk tactics with Ferguson for the extra half-hour, but the players had other ideas.

They forced another corner which this time was helped on by Sheringham for Solskjaer to hit into the ceiling of the net.

And so to an unbelievable 2-1 victory summed up the next day by a Spanish newspaper under the headline which read, “Increible.”

That’s incredible in anyone’s language as they went on to explain that it would be “a minute which would pass into history.”

And so it will with United supporters convinced that Sir Matt Busby, who would have been celebrating his 90th birthday on the day of the match, had somehow influenced the outcome.

The man hailed as the founding father of United died five years ago but the fact that his birthday fell on the day of the European Cup Final seemed somehow quite appropriate.

Even Ferguson said: “I think Sir Matt must have been kicking for us up there tonight.”

It’s certainly not difficult to imagine Busby, the man who last won the European Cup for Manchester United in 1968, smiling down on the fellow Scot taking his club to fresh glory.

A succession of managers tried and failed to conquer Europe but now 31 years later Alex Ferguson has emerged from the shadow cast for so long by the Busby legend.

And so have his players who can now take their place in the club's history free of comparisons with the boys of '68.

Several of the stars of the team that beat Benfica to become the first English club to win the European Cup watched the game in the Nou Camp stadium as guests of United and they were as thrilled by the success as they were when they celebrated their own triumph.

As Jack Crompton, the coach of the Sixties' team said: "I'm glad Ferguson's players have done it. They have matched what we did and they can now go forward instead of comparisons constantly making them look back over their shoulders."

For United followers like me who span both games it was a fantastic feeling to see the great European feat achieved again a long 31 years later.

Winning the European Cup in 1968 had its own special emotion because Busby, Sir Bobby Charlton, Harry Gregg and Bill Foulkes had all survived the Munich air crash and they were inspired by the memory of those who had died.

They made no secret of the fact that winning in Europe was a tribute to those who had gone. They were also a team on the point of breaking up because their careers were behind them.

Ferguson's players are a much younger team with their futures ahead. The football world lies at their feet and it's a joy to see them taking Manchester United to fresh heights.

Thousands turned out to pack the streets of Manchester and welcome home their returning heroes the evening after the match. They sang and shouted themselves hoarse because, like me, they know they had experienced, be it in Barcelona or on television, one of the great sporting occasions of our time.

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