



Zinedine Zidane

## Ronaldo leaving Real beyond imagination

Madrid

**R**Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said on Wednesday he cannot foresee Cristiano Ronaldo leaving the club, despite various reports in the Spanish media saying he is in the middle of a stand-off with president Florentino Perez over a pay dispute.

Ronaldo, 32, signed his last deal with Real in November 2016 until June 2021, but is reported to be demanding another new contract to bring his salary in line with Lionel Messi and Neymar, the top two earners in world soccer.

"I can't imagine Real Madrid without Cristiano, this is his club and the one where he needs to be," Zidane told a news conference. (Reuters)

## Ex-McLaren boss returning to F1



Martin Whitmarsh

London

**F**Former McLaren team boss Martin Whitmarsh is returning to Formula One in a temporary role advising the sport's governing body on cost control measures.

A spokesman for the International Automobile Federation (FIA) said on Tuesday that the Briton had been invited to help them "in defining financial regulations for fair and sustainable competition." (Reuters)



Kelechi Iheanacho scores against Fleetwood

# Leicester advance to FA Cup fourth round

London

**L**Leicester made history as English football's first beneficiaries of the Video Assistant Referee system after the replay technology was used to award their second goal in a 2-0 FA Cup win over Fleetwood on Tuesday.

When Leicester striker Kelechi Iheanacho ran onto a Riyad Mahrez pass to slot home in the 77th minute of the third round replay, his strike was initially ruled out for offside.

But after a short delay while the attack was being analysed by the VAR assistant Mike Jones, the decision was changed - replays showed

Iheanacho was just onside - and referee Jon Moss awarded a goal.

The VAR system was first used in England earlier this month for Brighton's FA Cup third round tie against Crystal Palace and the League Cup semi-final first leg between Chelsea and Arsenal.

However, this was the first time it had actually been needed to reverse a decision.

"I didn't know if I was onside or offside but I agree totally now that I was onside," Iheanacho said.

"I was concentrating on the goal, I didn't think if I was onside or offside but Riyad

told me that I was onside.

"We just waited to see what the decision was."

Leicester striker Jamie Vardy added: "This man got the goals and has shown that VAR does work."

Former Manchester City youngster Iheanacho had already put Leicester ahead in the 43rd minute at the King Power Stadium, running onto Islam Slimani's pass and firing home.

Leicester's reward for a comfortable win against their third tier opponents is a trip to Peterborough, also of League One, in the fourth round.

VAR, which has already been used in other

competitions around the world, can be called on to rule over goals, straight red cards, penalty decisions and cases of mistaken identity.

### Hammers avoid horror show

Elsewhere, Cardiff set up a fourth round clash with Premier League leaders Manchester City as the Championship side won 4-1 in their replay at fourth tier Mansfield.

With City boss Pep Guardiola watching from the Field Mill stands, Bruno Manga put Cardiff ahead in the 34th minute.

Danny Rose equalised for

Mansfield 60 seconds later.

But Neil Warnock's side dominated in the second half and Junior Hoiliet put them ahead in the 66th minute.

Anthony Pilkington made it three after 71 minutes and Hoiliet's second in the 89th minute ensured City will visit south Wales on January 28.

West Ham needed a goal late in extra-time from Reece Burke to clinch a 1-0 win over third tier Shrewsbury at the London Stadium.

Hammers boss David Moyes suffered one of the worst defeats of his career at the hands of Shrewsbury when he was in charge of Everton. (AFP)

# Hamilton misses sponsor event but back on social media

London

**F**Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton pulled out of his first sponsor engagement of the year on Tuesday but reappeared on social media after wiping his accounts clean over the Christmas break.

A Mercedes spokesman said the 33-year-old Briton, who won his fourth title last year, had been feeling unwell and was unable to travel to the event in Switzerland

hosted by watch company IWC.

The team sponsor had been notified of his absence already on Monday, he added. Mercedes' other driver Valtteri Bottas attended.

Hamilton later posted a picture on his Instagram account, which is followed by 5.7 million people, of himself standing on a snowy peak with a snowboard.

"2018. A chance to revisit every goal, every challenge, every dream. A chance to be driven, hard

working, positive, and everything you want to be, all over again," he told his followers.

"I will never stop, I have no finish line. Join me this year in reaching beyond your wildest dreams."

It was the only post on what had become a blank slate after he drew condemnation for comments made over Christmas about his young nephew wearing a pink dress.

"Boys don't wear princess dresses," the Briton had said,

in a video on Instagram that he apologised for and took down the next day. Hamilton, or his media team, then proceeded to remove reams of content and photographs from his feeds, giving no explanation for his actions.

The Briton has the biggest following of any F1 driver on social media, boasting also 5.26 million on Twitter, who have been kept up to speed in the past about his celebrity lifestyle. (Reuters)



Lewis Hamilton