



Almost all of those nationalities were on display the following day when a strong team turned out to play in the match.

Cristiano Ronaldo was undoubtedly the fans favourite, drawing cheers and whistles of admiration with every touch. He dazzled in the early minutes with fancy footwork but failed to test Al Hilal goalkeeper Mohamed Al-Deayea with a long-range strike.

Yasser Al-Qahtani gave the home side a 1-0 lead but it did not last long and United turned defence into attack with trademark speed on 25 minutes.

Seconds after Ferdinand had put his body on the line to block another Al Hilal shot, Ronaldo was riding a challenge in the centre circle before releasing Carlos Tevez through the middle. Tevez, one on one with Al-Deayea, made the finish look easy as he slotted the ball under the onrushing goalkeeper with his left foot.

Ronaldo then headed Nani's corner in before the break to turn the game on its head.

Testimonial matches are rarely played at the highest intensity and this was no exception. Few tackles were felt at full force, with Ronaldo allowed to display his full repertoire of tricks and flicks.

When Al-Jaber went down softly under Rio Ferdinand's challenge the referee surprisingly signalled for a penalty. Ferguson was spotted by TV cameras laughing at the award, but Al-Jaber was able to keep a straight face long enough to beat substitute keeper Tomasz Kuszczak to make it 2-2.

Sir Alex made four changes at half-time, the most unpopular of which was Ronaldo's withdrawal. The trade-off, however, was the introduction of Wayne Rooney, another favourite among the Saudi Arabian fans. Owen Hargreaves, Ji-sung Park and Nemanja Vidic were also granted time on the pitch, with Ferdinand, Patrice Evra and Carlos Tevez rested.

There was more penalty drama early in the second half when John O'Shea was adjudged to have brought down Al Jaber, although replays showed only the slightest of touches. Al Jaber, presented with a chance to score his second from the spot, passed on the opportunity, graciously allowing teammate Mohamed Al Shalhoub to take the kick. Although the ball went into the net the kick had to be retaken and Al Shalhoub went wide.

Al-Jaber came off in the 56th minute to a rapturous ovation and hugs all round.

Al Hilal took the lead courtesy of Bader Al-Kharashi. A looping header across goal seemed to pose little

