

Serie A Milan stay ahead

Football AFP, Milan

League leaders AC Milan showed their fighting spirit by coming from behind to edge Piacenza 2-1 at the San Siro on Sunday to keep their place at the top of the table in Italy.

"It wasn't pretty but we raised our performance in the second-half despite going a goal down," he said. "We needed to dig deep as Piacenza were dangerous on the counter-attack and worked very hard to close us down, that's why our football wasn't spectacular."

Lazio had trouble shaking off a stubborn Udinese side, but held on to take three precious points thanks to Stefano Fiore's winner in first-half stoppage-time.

"They are a great team and one defeat does not mean they are out of it. There's still lots to play for," he said.

TOP SCORERS

Table listing leading scorers in the Italian football league after the weekend's matches.

TOP SIX

Table showing Italian football league table after Sunday's matches.

Gambler Owen?

AFP, London

England striker Michael Owen will not face a Football Association probe following newspaper allegations on Sunday that he bet heavily on matches involving Premiership clubs.

Britain's Sunday Mirror tabloid accused Liverpool forward Owen of setting up accounts in the name of his father Terry and betting more than two million pounds (3.2 million dollars) on both football and horse racing.

"I can't believe some of the hurtful allegations that have been thrown at me, especially as they are so inaccurate."

"My girlfriend Louise and I are expecting our first baby soon and this and our new home - complete with stables - will keep me more than occupied in the future," the 23-year-old said.

"Michael's gambling losses probably total around 30-40,000 pounds (48-64,000 dollars) over the last couple of years."

Primera Liga Madrid honours shared

Football AFP, Milan

Demetrio Albertini's first league goal for Atletico Madrid, a free kick two minutes into injury time, earned a 2-2 draw at local rivals Real Madrid on Sunday.

The outcome of the thrilling game, in which Real's six-game winning streak came to an end and both sides ended the night with 10 men, meant that Real lost ground on league leaders Real Sociedad.

TOP SCORERS

Table listing leading scorers in the Spanish league after the weekend's matches.

Garcia Calvo was at fault for Real's second strike as well, giving away the penalty which Figo converted two minutes before the break by ploughing into Roberto Carlos.

The Spanish international defender's miserable day was completed when he was sent off after 62 minutes for picking up his second yellow card.

Figo should have completed his hat-trick nine minutes before the whistle.

However his weak second penalty, after Roberto Carlos had been tripped by Carlos Aguilera, was blocked by Burgos.

Spanish First Division with 32 points, trailing third placed Valencia only on goal difference.

Recreativo had perhaps been anticipating their first win in seven games following Raul Molina's 56th strike on the counter-attack.

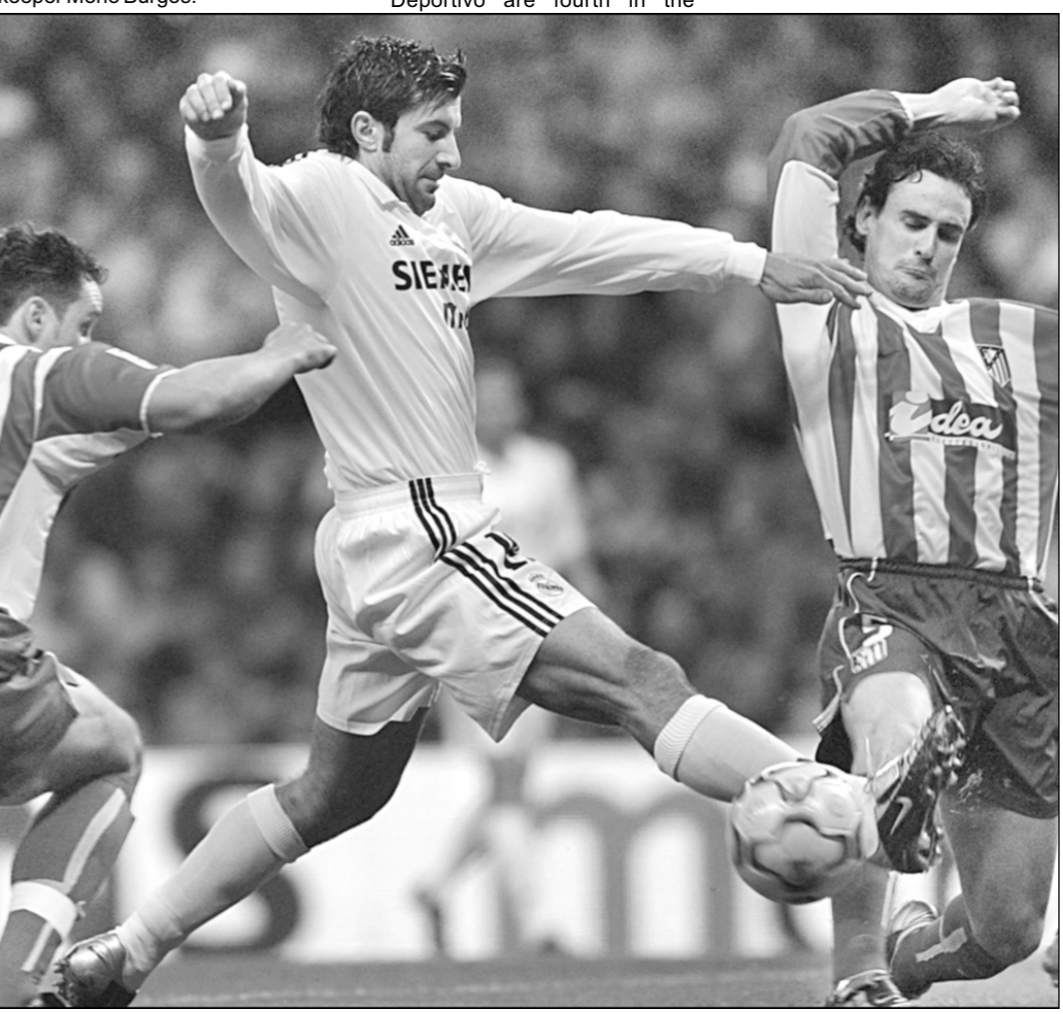
Recreativo Huelva remain firmly stuck to the bottom of the Spanish First Division with just 11 points to their name, despite drawing 1-1 at Real Mallorca.

"A draw would have been a fair result," acknowledged Betis coach Victor Fernandez.

Joaquin Sanchez got the late decider for Betis two minutes into injury time, heading home an Assuncao free kick.

TOP SIX

Table showing Spanish football league table after Sunday's matches.



Real Madrid superstar Luis Figo (L) battles with Atletico Madrid's Garcia Calvo (R) in Madrid on January 19.

Premiership Henry too hot to handle

Football AFP, London

Thierry Henry's hat-trick saw champions Arsenal re-establish a five point lead at the top of the Premiership with a 3-1 victory over West Ham which returned the visitors to the bottom of the table here at Highbury on Sunday.

The Gunners' French boss was delighted with the second goal. "Thierry can be great in the air," Wenger added.

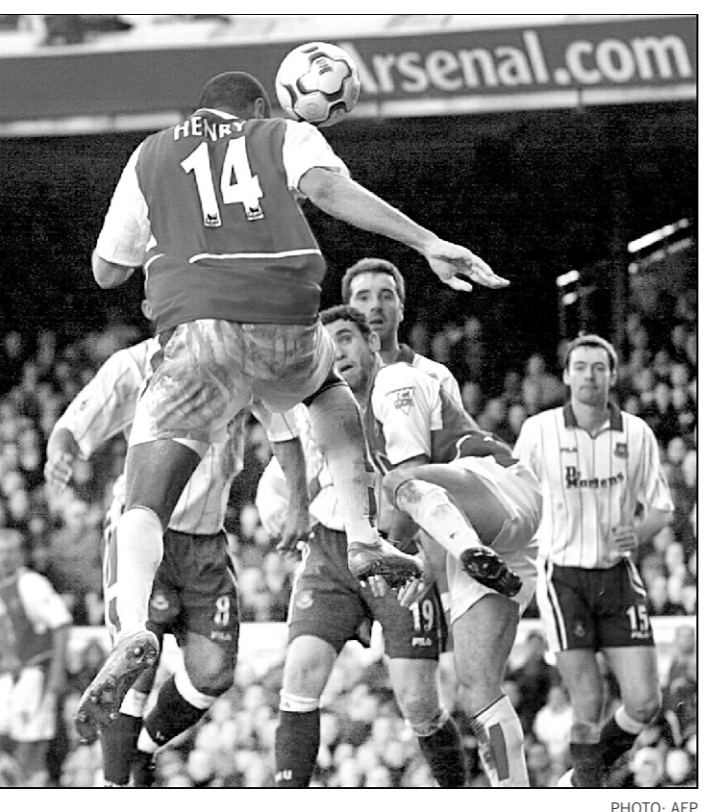
Roeder praised his side's resilience but could not hide his anger with the decisions that led to Henry's first two goals.

TOP SCORERS

Table listing leading scorers in the English Premiership after Sunday's matches.

TOP SIX

Table showing English Premiership table after Sunday's matches.



Thierry Henry (L) jumps to head in his second goal against West Ham at Highbury on January 19.

TOP SCORERS

Table listing leading scorers in the English Premiership after Sunday's matches.

a poor decision. Bergkamp has clearly put his hand in Lee Bowyer's face."

Arsenal took the lead in the 14th minute although Lomas appeared to make minimal contact with Pires as the France winger went down in the penalty area.

But England keeper David James, who was to prevent an even worse scoreline for the Hammers, got down well to save before again reacting smartly to push away Bergkamp's low strike in the 32nd minute after Henry had once again caused havoc.

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However, despite being in total command, Arsenal then gifted their visitors an equaliser five minutes before half-time.

Brazilian World Cup winner Edu, playing in place of injured Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira, sold England number one keeper David Seaman hopelessly short with an under-hit backpass.

Defoe nipped in and his first-time shot gave Seaman no chance. After the break, Arsenal continued to press forward.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

CROSSWORD 1 Antitoxin 2 Twhiches 12 Kind of cocktail 13 Asian capital city 14 Hush-money offerer 15 Wrong drink 16 Fight (Pref.) 17 Little demons 19 Brewery vat 20 Siamese 22 Prior night 24 Pii stop fluid 27 Dermatologist's case 29 Somewhere out there 32 Current 35 Honey drink 36 Incensed 37 "Cootie" piece 38 What they say about you 40 Spinny steed

Cryptic crossword puzzle grid and clues. Includes sections for CRYPTOQUIP and SOLUTION TIME: 27 mins.