



The Real Sociedad squad celebrate their fourth goal against Real Madrid at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian on April 13. PHOTO: AFP

Primera Liga

Sociedad upset Real order

Football

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid came unstuck against title rivals Real Sociedad on Sunday, the European champions coming out the losers in six goal thriller.

The 4-2 win over Manchester United's midweek maulers reignited Sociedad's championship challenge, the result lifting the San Sebastian side into third - just three points off the Spanish capital giants.

Deportivo La Coruna share the same points as Sociedad but lie second thanks to superior goal difference after their comprehensive 4-2 win over struggling Barcelona at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

Real coach Vicente Del Bosque unleashed the same team that had been the undoing of United at the Bernabeu but back on domestic duty some of the magic was missing.

Darko Kovacevic caught Real cold in the third minute when scoring after a feed from Spanish international Agustin Aranzaba, the Serb striker doubling up quarter of an hour later.

Then there followed five minutes of madness.

Turk Kahveci Nihat outfoxed Real's defence to put the home side further ahead in the 32nd minute, but instantly Ronaldo pulled one back, slotting the ball between the legs of keeper Sander Westerveld after a superb pass from Zinedine Zidane.

Sociedad's Xabi Alonso then produced a 25 metre piledriver to effectively wrap up the game, Javier Portillo's 80th

minute goal for Real coming too late to save the day.

In other games Sunday Celta Vigo pushed their case for a berth in Europe next season with a 1-0 victory over Real Betis which pushed them into fourth, Malaga won the mid-table battle with Valladolid by the same margin, while the ties between Atletico Madrid and Espanyol, and Real Mallorca and Racing Santander both ended 3-3.

Barcelona had gone into the game against Deportivo on Saturday on a high following their 1-1 draw away to Juventus in the Champions League on Wednesday and they took the lead after just two minutes when Javier Saviola lobbed Juanmi in the visitors' goal.

But classy Deportivo were back on level terms through Argentinian Lionel Scaloni after 23 minutes only for Barca to go back ahead seven minutes later through the Brazilian Motta.

With the home crowd sensing victory, it was up to the Spanish League's top scorer Dutchman Roy Makaay to spoil it for them.

A deft header brought the scores level four minutes into the second half and then he put Deportivo ahead when he sprung the Barcelona offside trap and set off on a 40 metre run that ended in a goal.

Former Espanyol star Sergio rounded the scoring off after 75 minutes and although both Luis Enrique and Patrick Kluivert went close after that there was no way back for the home side.

In the evening's other game, Seville defeated Villarreal 3-1 with two late goals from substitute Niko Machlas, his first two since being bought during the last transfer window.

TOP SCORERS

Leading scorers in the Spanish league after the weekend's matches:

22 - Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
17 - Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad)
16 - Nihat Kahveci (Real Sociedad)
15 - Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
13 - Patrick Kluivert (Barcelona)
12 - Walter Pandiani (Real Mallorca)
11 - Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)
10 - Luis Figo (Real Madrid), Joseba Etxeberria (Athletic Bilbao), Fernando Fernandez (Real Betis), Javi Guerrero (Racing Santander), Raul Tamudo (Espanyol), Ismael Urzaiz (Athletic Bilbao)
9 - Diego Tristan (Deportivo La Coruna), Raul Molina (Recreativo Huelva)
8 - Julio Alvarez (Rayo Vallecano), Kiki Musampa (Malaga), John Carew (Valencia), Edu (Celta Vigo), Ruben Navarro (Alaves), Zinedine Zidane (Real Madrid), Santiago Ezquerro (Athletic Bilbao)

TOP SIX

Spanish league table on Sunday. Played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points:
Real 29 17 9 3 66 31 60
Deportivo 29 17 6 6 49 32 57
Sociedad 29 16 9 4 52 38 57
Valencia 29 14 8 7 43 23 50
Celta 29 14 6 9 34 24 48
Sevilla 29 11 9 9 27 22 42

Bundesliga

A goal in the Sand!

Football

AFP, Berlin

Schalke 04's Danish international Ebbe Sand ended a frustrating goal famine stretching to 776 minutes of play to help his club keep alive their hunt for a place in Europe next season on Sunday.

Sand's second half goal sandwiched between two efforts from Jorg Brohme earned Schalke a 3-0 win over bottom side Energie Cottbus to lift them up a place into sixth.

Sunday's second game was a middle of the table clash resulting in a 1-0 win for VfL Wolfsburg over Hanover 96 with Spaniard Diego Klimowicz the man Wolfsburg had to thank with a 55th minute goal.

On Saturday Bayern Munich suffered a first home loss in almost two years putting celebrations for an 18th Bundesliga title on hold after Werder Bremen shocked them 1-0 at the Olympic stadium, Frenchman Johan Micoud scoring the goal.

French international playmaker Micoud drove home after 13 minutes to keep Bayern on their toes after Stuttgart romped home 3-0 at home to Bayer Leverkusen to trim the deficit between the leading pair to 11 points.

Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld had to do without eight regulars amid a mushrooming injury crisis.

Bayern's third league reverse of the season leaves them on 63 points from 28 matches with six to play while Stuttgart are on 52 and reigning champions Borussia Dortmund have 48 after they were held 1-1 at Hamburg, who started the day in fourth spot and who are

gunning for a Champions League place.

Argentine Bernardo Romeo headed former European champions Hamburg ahead after 65 minutes but Jan Koller equalised three minutes later for Dortmund.

The draw allowed Hertha Berlin to leapfrog Hamburg into fourth after Hungarian forward Pal Dardai netted the only goal in a 1-0 success in the capital against VfL Bochum.

Multinational Stuttgart, coached by Felix Magath, thanked an early opener from Greek forward Ioannis Amanatidis and further goals from Belarus star Aliaksandr Hleb and Romanian loan Viorel Ganea for their romp over a Leverkusen side who are in the drop zone after Borussia Monchengladbach moved above them by beating Nuremberg 2-0.

Monchengladbach's three points, courtesy of goals from Czech Ivo Ulch and former Chelsea man Mikael Forsell, means they go above Leverkusen and Bochum.

Elsewhere, Kaiserslautern, who looked set for the drop in the first half of the season, beat Hansa Rostock 1-0 with Jose Manuel Dominguez netting 19 minutes from time to put his side into the top half of the table.

TOP SIX

German football league table after Saturday's and Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points)
Bayern 28 19 6 3 59 19 63
Stuttgart 28 15 7 6 46 31 52
Dortmund 28 13 9 6 43 23 48
Hertha 28 13 6 9 42 31 45
Hamburg 28 12 8 8 34 33 44
Schalke 28 10 13 5 39 30 43

Premiership preview

As big as it gets

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal are set to have all their big guns firing as they seek to stop Manchester United's title surge in its tracks at Highbury on Wednesday.

Skipper Patrick Vieira and fellow Frenchman Robert Pires are both in line to start the biggest match of the domestic season, despite recent injury problems.

Gunners boss Arsene Wenger is also expected to send first choice Thierry Henry and Dennis Bergkamp into the fray after leaving them out of the starting line-up that overcame Sheffield United in the FA Cup semi-final on Sunday.

Vieira limped out of the match before the hour mark and was initially rated only a 50-50 chance to play because of a knee injury he has been carrying for some time.

But Vieira, the player Arsenal find hardest to replace, has since described the decision to come off as a precautionary measure designed to ensure he was fit for a clash which could determine whether the club retain their league title.

"I wanted to come off because I was worried about doing more damage," he admitted.

Pires had been struggling with a sprained ankle but resumed training last week and, after sitting out the weekend Cup battle, will be ready to inject a note of freshness into an Arsenal side that has looked stale in recent weeks.

With Pires fit, Wenger could opt to switch Freddie Ljungberg to the right of midfield in what would be an extremely attacking line-up.

The Arsenal boss is mindful of the fact that neither Bergkamp or Henry have produced a goal in their last four games.

Bergkamp has managed only six all season and admits Arsenal have not

been hitting all the right notes of late. But he insisted the mood in the camp was one of confidence.

"The win on Sunday gives us confidence for a big week ahead," he said. "We know how difficult this game will be but we are used to difficult games, of course."



ROY KEANE

Arsenal seem to have temporarily lost the ability to overwhelm teams with the fluency of their passing. But Bergkamp insists that capacity to mesmerise the opposition can be regained.

"It can still be there again because we have the players to do it," said Bergkamp. "It is just a matter of the chances in games."

Manchester United will travel south in buoyant mood after knocking a total of ten goals past Liverpool and Newcastle in their last two league outings.

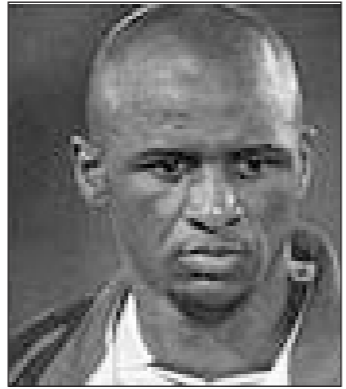
Having capitalised on Arsenal's preoccupation with FA Cup duty to move three points clear at the top, United undoubtedly have the momentum behind them.

But they also have their own injury concerns as the season's exertions take their toll.

United boss Alex Ferguson is hopeful skipper Roy Keane will be fit to cross

swords with Vieira in midfield after limping out of Saturday's 6-2 win over Newcastle with a dead leg.

But keeper Fabien Barthez is doubtful with an injured toe, David Beckham, Ryan Giggs and Wes Brown all have hamstring strains and John O'Shea looks likely to miss out because of a knee



PATRICK VIEIRA

injury he incurred against Newcastle. Argentinian midfielder Juan Veron is nearing a full recovery from his knee ligaments injury but Ferguson is unlikely to risk rushing back a player he will want fit for next week's Champions League quarter-final second leg against Real Madrid, for which Paul Scholes is suspended.

Keane's influence may be on the wane after a succession of serious injuries. But Vieira still relishes coming up against one of the fiercest competitors in the business.

"You always want to play against the best and he is one of the best midfield players.

"He has had some bad injuries and maybe it has taken time for him to come back to his best, but I still think he's one of the best midfielders out there.

FIXTURE
Wednesday: Arsenal v Manchester United (1830 GMT)

Kluivert still thinks of Italy

Football

AFP, Rome

Barcelona's star Dutch striker Patrick Kluivert is refusing to rule out a return to Italy where he spent one disastrous season with AC Milan.

"I would like to show the Italians the real Kluivert," the Holland international told sport weekly Contro Campo.

"The player I was at Milan does not exist anymore. I've matured.

"I know that Juventus are interested in me and that is pleasing. I never say never."

Bought by Milan from Ajax in 1997 as a replacement for the legendary Marco Van Basten, Kluivert had a tough act to follow.

In 27 league appearances he scored just six goals and became a scapegoat for Milan's unforgiving supporters.

After the 1998 World Cup in France, Kluivert left Milan to join Barcelona, where he won the league title in his first season at the Nou Camp.

Following his move to Spain, Kluivert complained about being played out of position in Milan.

"I had a tough time at Milan because I was accustomed to playing with three strikers and they had only two," he said.

"I was also expected to play on the wing and I really prefer to play in the centre. I wasn't comfortable with the atmosphere at Milan and that was reflected on the pitch."

Kluivert is hoping to win the Champions League with Barcelona this season. The Spaniards, who are unbeaten in the competition, held Juventus to a 1-1 draw in their quarter-final, first-leg tie last week.

The return match in Spain takes place on April 22.

Carlos' appeal rejected

Football

AFP, Zurich

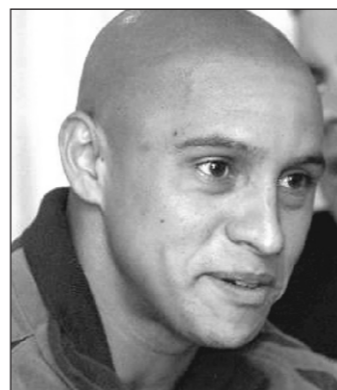
Football's governing body FIFA on Tuesday rejected an appeal from Brazilian wing-back Roberto Carlos against a provisional ban stopping him playing for his country.

The Real Madrid player was suspended from national team matches after he was accused of attacking the referee during Brazil's friendly in Portugal at the end of March.

The ban is effective until the next meeting of FIFA's disciplinary committee here on May 9.

The appeal rejection means that Roberto Carlos will be unavailable for

Brazil's friendly against Mexico in Guadalajara on April 30.



ROBERTO CARLOS

FA Cup

An all-Premiership final

Football

AFP, Manchester

Southampton will face Arsenal in next month's FA Cup final after beating First Division Watford 2-1 at Villa Park here on Sunday.

Brett Ormerod's first-half header and an own goal 10 minutes from time by Watford defender Paul Robinson sent the south coast club on their way to a first FA Cup final since they won the trophy for the only time in their history back in 1976.

Earlier, Freddie Ljungberg's controversial goal saw Arsenal beat Sheffield United 1-0 in the other semi-final at Old Trafford their hopes of a 'double Double' alive.

But it needed a brilliant save from England goalkeeper David Seaman, in his 1,000th professional match, to deny First Division United an equaliser six minutes from time and ensure the London giants third successive Cup final.

United substitute Paul Peschisoldo's header inside the box was all but in the goal when out-of-position Seaman readjusted and clawed the ball away from danger after it had passed him.

Reigning Premiership champions and FA Cup holders Arsenal scored the decisive goal in the 34th minute but only after England centre-back Sol Campbell appeared to foul United striker Wayne Allison from behind.

And there was further controversy when later in the move referee Graham Poll collided with Michael Tonge as the United midfielder went to intercept before the ball eventually fell to Sweden midfielder Ljungberg.

After the Allison and Tonge incidents, the Gunners enjoyed even more good fortune in the lead-up to their goal, fully justifying their 'lucky Arsenal' tag.

The ball came to Arsenal striker Francis Jeffers on the left and his pull back found Sylvain Witford. His shot came back off the post.

However, the France forward followed up his own strike and as the ball was cleared off the line by United captain Robert Page, it fell kindly to Ljungberg who blasted his shot into the roof of the net.

It was the second time in recent seasons that Arsenal had scored a controversial goal against United in a Cup tie.

Back in 1999 Arsenal won a fifth round tie at Highbury 2-1 when, after Nwankwo Kanu refused to return the ball after United had put it out so an injured player could receive treatment, Marc Overmars scored.

Such was the furor surrounding the goal that Arsenal immediately offered to replay the tie and they won the second match 2-1.

It was a harsh way for promotion chasers United - who reached the semi-finals of the League Cup earlier this season - to concede after they had harried and hassled Arsenal out of their stride.

And then came Seaman's brilliant stop which Manchester City keeper Peter Schmeichel told the BBC was "one of the best saves I've ever seen in my life".

But the bad news for Arsenal was that captain Patrick Vieira limped off in the 56th minute with what appeared to be a recurrence of his knee injury.

That left the France midfielder doubtful for Wednesday's potential Premiership decider against Sir Alex Ferguson's side.

At Villa Park, it was a fairytale goal for Ormerod who, after being released by Blackburn, drifted out of league football before returning at Blackpool where he suffered a broken leg.

Southampton, who have already

beaten Arsenal this season, had to endure a nervous climax.

Two minutes from time, Watford striker Marcus Gayle's superb header from a corner went into the top corner.

But Southampton, managed by former Manchester United and Scotland midfielder Gordon Strachan, clung on to secure their place in the Millennium Stadium showpiece on May 17 and next season's UEFA Cup.

Watford, whose only FA Cup final appearance saw them beaten by Everton back in 1984, pushed Southampton all the way but just fell short.

Earlier Ormerod notched his seventh goal of the season when full-back Chris Marsden's cross his 43rd minute header proved too powerful for Watford keeper Alec Chamberlain who got hands to the ball but could not keep it out.

Southampton, recalled Paul Jones to their side after Finnish keeper Antti Niemi failed late fitness test on his knee injury.

Wales international Jones had to be alert early on to turn away Heidar Helgusson's deflected free header.

Premiership top scorer James Beattie put a header from Wayne Bridge's left-wing cross just over the crossbar at the other end, before Fabrice Fernandes's run with a wicked shot which again flew inches too high in the 16th minute.

And 10 minutes from time Ormerod's powerful run and cross ended with Robinson, under pressure from Beattie, turning the ball into his own net.

It seemed as if the match was over as a contest. However, Gayle's header gave Ray Lewington's team renewed hope but with the clock against them they could not force an equaliser.

Serie A

Juventus' sigh of relief

Football

AFP, Rome

Mauro Camoranesi's dramatic equalising goal in the fifth minute of stoppage-time rescued a point for Italian league leaders Juventus, who stretched their advantage at the top of the table to six points after drawing 2-2 at Bologna on Sunday.

Juventus showed they have what it takes to retain their title by battling back from being two goals down to snatch a point from a game that appeared to be out of reach.

Julio Cruz's fierce drive and Tomas Locatelli's delicate chip had given Bologna a comfortable lead, which looked safe until the closing stages when Juventus woke from their slumber.

Gianluca Zambrotta's deflected shot four minutes from time injected life into the 26-time champions, before the Italy international provided the cross for his international team-mate Camoranesi to

head home.

Juventus have 61 points from 28 matches, six more than AC and Inter Milan, with six games left to play.

Bologna took the lead in the 16th minute with a classic counter-attack after the visitors had enjoyed the lion's share of the early possession.

Mourad Meghni flew down the right wing and slipped the ball inside for Cristian Zaccardo, who had sped forward to support of the Frenchman.

Zaccardo picked out Cruz and the lanky Argentine forward unleashed a left-foot drive that gave Juve goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon no chance.

Bologna then had a strong claim for a penalty turned down when Gianluca Pessotto sent Cruz tumbling in the penalty box, but referee Gianluca Paparesta, standing close to the action, waved play on.

Juventus finished the half strongly and came within inches of drawing level in the 43rd minute.

Pavel Nedved's intelligent cut-back found Alessandro Del Piero whose shot

beat Bologna goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca but not defender Paolo Vanoli, who was standing on the goalline to clear the danger.

Juventus began the second-half the way they finished the first, and only a post denied Del Piero from restoring parity in the 58th minute when the Italy international shot from an acute angle.

However, Bologna absorbed the pressure and regained the initiative, doubling their advantage with another counter-attack in the 74th minute.

Christian Amoroso broke swiftly and flicked the ball to substitute Locatelli, who clipped the ball from the right-hand side of the box over a helpless Buffon.

Zambrotta halved the deficit when his low shot struck Michele Paramatti's foot to deceive Pagliuca, before Camoranesi's close-range header salvaged a draw and a precious point for Juve.

Earlier Sunday Lazio held on to fourth place despite being held to a 0-0

draw at Modena as their closest rivals for fourth spot and a place in next season's Champions League slipped up.

While Lazio drew a blank in Emilia Romagna, fifth-placed Parma went down 2-1 at AS Roma and Chievo, in sixth position, lost by the same score at Empoli.

Lazio have 49 points from 28 matches, four ahead of Parma and five more than Chievo.

Atalanta and Reggina are still in danger of relegation after drawing 1-1 in Bergamo.

Piacenza revived their hopes of escaping the drop to Serie B by beating fellow strugglers Torino 3-1 away from home, and in the day's other match Brescia stretched their unbeaten run to 15 matches after drawing 0-0 at Udinese.

On Saturday AC Milan defeated local rivals Inter Milan 1-0 to leapfrog their neighbours into second place on goal difference.

In Saturday's other match Como

edged closer to relegation after being held to a 1-1 draw at home to Perugia.

TOP SIX

Italian league table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):
Juventus 28 18 7 3 53 20 61
Milan 28 16 7 5 47 21 55
Inter 28 17 4 7 56 33 55
Lazio 28 12 13 3 48 27 49
Parma 28 12 9 7 47 31 45
Chievo 28 13 5 10 38 30 44

TOP SCORERS

Leading scorers in the Italian league after the weekend's matches:

24 - Christian Vieri (Inter Milan)
15 - Filippo Inzaghi (AC Milan)
14 - Adriano (Parma), Francesco Totti (AS Roma)
13 - Adrian Mutu (Parma), Claudio Lopez (Lazio)
12 - Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus)
10 - Roberto Baggio (Brescia), Julio Cruz (Bologna)



Frederik Ljungberg (L) Arsenal's Swedish international, scoring the match-winner against Sheffield at Old Trafford on April 13. PHOTO: AFP