



Primera Liga Deadly Ronaldo

Football

AFP, Madrid

Two goals from Ronaldo on Saturday helped give Real Madrid a 3-0 victory over Athletic Bilbao and put them on top of the Spanish First Division after Deportivo La Coruna could only draw 0-0 at struggling Murcia.

The reigning champions' World Player of the Year returned to form after three barren and lacklustre matches, firing home a left-foot half-volley on 33 minutes to open the scoring against the Basques visitors.

His second goal, ten minutes after the break, may go down as one of his best in a Real shirt.

Picking up the ball around 30 metres in front of the Athletic goal, he danced past a succession of men in red-and-white striped shirts before unleashing a left-foot thunderbolt just inside the area.

Ronaldo nearly got his hat trick shortly afterwards but instead became the service provider for Real's third goal, going around two Athletic defenders before laying the ball across the face of the goal to give Luis Figo an easy tap-in.

The brace takes Ronaldo's tally to eight goals from ten league games this season.

In addition to Ronaldo's return to form, Real will be heartened ahead of Tuesday's Champions League match at Partizan Belgrade about the fitness of David Beckham.

The England captain had missed

Real's two previous matches with a hamstring strain but showed no ill effects on Saturday.

A sad postscript to the match was that an Athletic supporter remains in a critical but stable condition in Madrid's Gregorio Maranon hospital after being hit on the head by a bottle and rendered unconscious earlier in the day.

Spanish radio station Cadena Ser said that the 25-year-old fan had been attacked by supporters of the Spanish second division club Rayo Vallecano in a bar in the Madrid suburbs near the Rayo ground, before Rayo played another Basque club Eibar.

Real have 23 points from 10 games to lead Deportivo by one point.

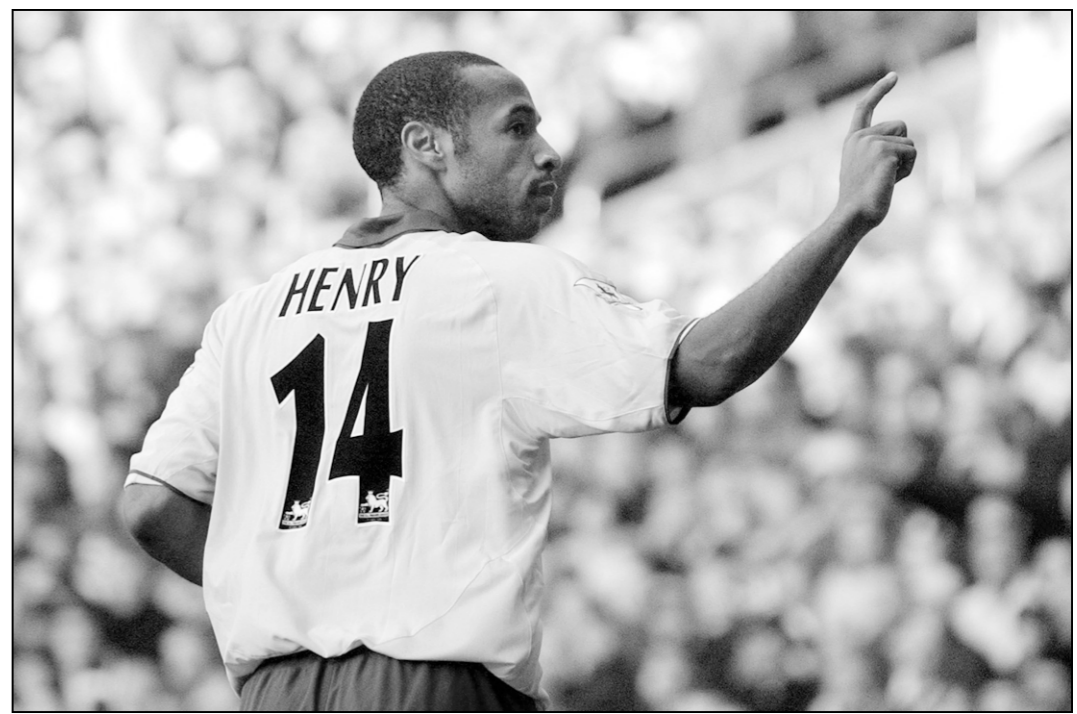
Valencia started the weekend in third place with 20 points and play at struggling Real Mallorca later on Sunday, but need to win by five clear goals in order to grab back the league leadership they held earlier

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TOP SIX

Spanish football league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Madrid	10	7	2	1	23	9	23
Deportivo	10	7	1	2	19	8	22
Valencia	9	6	2	1	16	5	20
Osasuna	9	5	2	2	12	7	17
Barcelona	9	4	3	2	11	7	15
Santander	10	4	2	4	13	11	14



Arsenal's Thierry Henry celebrates after scoring Arsenal's third goal against Leeds at Elland Road on November 1.

Premiership Arsenal blow Leeds away

Football

REUTERS, London

Arsenal hammered Leeds United 4-1 on Saturday to stay top of the English Premier League but there was no let-up in the pressure as champions Manchester United and title rivals Chelsea both clocked up victories.

Thierry Henry scored twice and Robert Pires and Gilberto grabbed one apiece at Elland Road as Arsenal accelerated into a 3-0 lead by halftime after a series of counter-attacks to keep Leeds second from bottom.

"They were very, very good and we didn't handle them on the break, in particular," Reid said of Arsene Wenger's side.

"They've got world class players and... ultimately we paid the penalty."

Thanking the club's supporters, he

Hotspur suffered their first defeat under caretaker boss David Pleat, losing 1-0 at home to Bolton Wanderers.

Saturday's defeat rounded off a miserable week for Leeds after they announced record losses for a Premier League club of nearly 50 million pounds and debts of 78 million pounds.

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TOP SIX

English Premiership table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Arsenal	11	8	3	0	23	9	27
Chelsea	11	8	2	1	21	9	26
Man Utd	11	8	1	2	21	6	25
Birmingham	10	5	4	1	9	5	19
Man City	11	5	3	3	22	12	18
Fulham	10	5	3	2	20	13	18

Abramovich the richest

REUTERS/AFP, London

The Russian businessman who bought Premier League football club Chelsea earlier this year has been named as Britain's highest paid person.

Roman Abramovich, who has relocated to the UK, topped the annual Sunday Times Pay List with earnings of 564 million pounds in 2003.

England skipper David Beckham delivered a knockout blow to Britain's world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis by taking over as the country's richest sportsman this year.

For the first time, the Real Madrid star has become the nation's biggest

so huge that fellow England international Michael Owen, the closest player to him in the list, is a relative pauper raking in 7.5 million pounds.

Splitting them in the list is former Chelsea owner Ken Bates who took 17.5 million pounds to the bank.

The massive individual earnings come at a time when some leading clubs are making worrying losses with Leeds in dire trouble at a reported 49.5 million pounds loss.

"I don't think players have been affected at all (by the game's economic downturn)," soccer agent Pini Zahavi, who brokered Roman Chelsea take-

over, told the Sunday Times.

"Of course, there won't be crazy wages like there were before even at big clubs like Real Madrid. They won't go mad anymore.

"But that's in the future because players at top clubs are still getting top money. They have not been asked to give up their wages, they have deals, which have years to run.

"It will take another two or three years for the effects to be really felt."

Chelsea, who have spent 111 million pounds since he took over, told the Sunday Times.

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"Most of the players involved with England have played in the Champions League or in Europe with their clubs.

"They have got that experience and that has made me hungry for similar experiences with Everton. I think we can qualify for Europe if we play as well as we can."

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Ferguson in hot water

AFP, London

Alex Ferguson could be disciplined by the Football Association for the second time this season following his controversial claim that the ruling body struck a deal with Arsenal over the handling of the Rio Ferdinand affair.

The Manchester United boss claimed that his bitter rivals Arsenal cut a 'deal' with the FA to reduce the punishments for five of their players following the 0-0 draw at Old Trafford on September 21.

He also claimed last week that England defender Ferdinand had been "hung out to dry" by the FA and had been found guilty before even being charged after missing a drug test five weeks ago.

"We are looking very closely at the comments made by Alex Ferguson and taking them very seriously," FA spokesman Adrian Bevington told the Sunday Telegraph.

"I want to emphasise that we do not involve ourselves with any deals with any club. Furthermore, the suggestions that we hung Rio Ferdinand out to dry is also something that we refute very strongly."

"We are not going to get involved in a knee-jerk reaction but, quite clearly, we need to look very closely at his comments. We will go through our normal disciplinary procedures."

Relations between the fiery Scotsman and the FA are already at an all-time low after United reacted with fury to the decision to drop Ferdinand from the England squad to face Turkey.

Serie A Honours even in Milan

Football

AFP, Rome

A spectacular volley from Marco Di Vaio six minutes from time rescued a point for Juventus as the Italian title-holders snatched a 1-1 draw away to championship rivals AC Milan on Saturday.

Milan, who defeated Juve on penalties to win last season's Champions League final, took a 65th minute lead through giant Danish striker Jon Dahl Tomasson, only for Di Vaio to equalise for the visitors with a breathtaking strike.

A draw meant that both teams remain unbeaten at the top of the table on 20 points after eight matches played.

Man-of-the-match Di Vaio made no excuses for his wild celebrations after his sweetly-struck effort bulged the net.

"It's only natural to behave that way after scoring like that," he said. "For me, this goal will live long in the memory. We deserved to equalise and we are very happy."

Juve coach Marcello Lippi said his side's overall performance was worthy of a point.

"It would have been a joke if we had lost the game and fortunately we were able to put the picture straight," he said.

"I'm content because we played with great character and created plenty of opportunities to score."

TOP SIX

Standings in the Italian championship after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

AC Milan	8	6	2	0	16	4	20
Juventus	8	6	2	0	19	8	20
Lazio	8	5	1	2	15	10	16
AS Roma	7	4	3	0	14	3	15
Parma	7	4	2	1	13	7	14
Chievo	7	3	2	2	10	7	11

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti lamented his side's inability to hold on to their advantage.

"There's some bitterness because the game was almost won, but when you play Juve you have to respect them until the very end," he said.

"For us it was a difficult match, but all things considered a draw was a fair result."

place of the injured Filippo Inzaghi.

Juventus were the first to threaten on an uneven surface, which did little for the entertainment value.

Pavel Nedved, playing just behind the two forwards, picked up the ball 40 yards from goal and ran unchallenged at the heart of the Milan defence before unleashing a low left-foot shot.

Fortunately for Milan, Dida, their

Ligue 1 Monaco move ahead

REUTERS, Paris

Monaco went three points clear at the top of the French first division with a 4-2 victory against bottom side Le Mans on Saturday.

Olympique Marseille, frustrated at missing out on the loan signing of France goalkeeper Fabien Barthez, were beaten

1-0 at Girondins Bordeaux and had two players sent off, striker Didier Drogba and Philippe Christianval in only his second league game for the side.

Champions Olympique Lyon thrashed 10-man Nice 5-0 but had three players carried off after brutal tackles.

Monaco, unbeaten in the league since August 9, have 27 points from 12 games followed by Lyon and Marseille on 24. Paris-St Germain have 20 and play RC Lens in Sunday's only game.

Le Mans, now with only four points from 12 games, led 2-1 at Monaco after 11 minutes thanks to goals from Daniel Cousin and Laurent Peyrolade the first goals scored by Le Mans strikers this season.

Unfortunately for Cousin he then put through his own net for Monaco's equaliser and there was another Le Mans own goal in the second half through Thabang Molefe.

Auxerre won 3-0 at Toulouse and Montpellier thrashed Nantes 4-1.

Marseille welcome Lyon next week for the second big head-to-head of the French league season.

Nistelrooy doesn't trust Advocaat

BBC ONLINE, undated

Ruud van Nistelrooy has revealed his relationship with Dutch international coach Dick Advocaat is so poor he no longer trusts the former Rangers manager.

Advocaat has publicly stated his preference for Barcelona forward Patrick Kluivert rather than Van Nistelrooy after the Manchester United striker threw a tantrum during the Euro 2004 qualifier with the Czech Republic when he was replaced.

Advocaat dropped him from the subsequent match with Moldova although the player has since apologised for his actions.

"Considering the fact that he substitutes me systematically, I don't feel any trust in him," Van Nistelrooy was reported as saying by French newspaper L'Equipe, in remarks repeated by Dutch newspaper Algemeen Dagblad.

Van Nistelrooy also believes he has no chance of starting in the Euro 2004 play-off matches with Scotland.

He said: "It will be Patrick Kluivert. I have no doubts at all, even though Advocaat hasn't said a word yet."

"I don't like to say it but I feel that it will go like this. I am on the bench against Scotland."

"But okay, the most important thing is that we qualify for Portugal."

Van Nistelrooy continued: "During the qualifiers I have played five matches and in those games I have been substituted four times after 60 to 70 minutes."



PHOTO: AFP Juventus striker Marco Di Vaio (R) fights for possession against Milan's Carotian defender Dario Simic at the San Siro stadium on Saturday.

Di Vaio partnered David Trezeguet in Juve's attack with Alessandro Del Piero still recovering from a calf strain, while Tomasson started for Milan in

Brazilian goalkeeper, got down quickly to palm the ball away for a corner. Juve kept up the pressure with Di Vaio shooting wide moments later,

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Bundesliga Stuttgart regain top spot

REUTERS, Berlin

Two goals from Germany striker Kevin Kuranyi helped VfB Stuttgart jump back to the top of the Bundesliga with a 4-1 victory over SC Freiburg on Saturday while champions Bayern Munich slumped to defeat.

Substitute forward Christian Tiffert and Belarus midfielder Alexander Gleb also struck for the southerners, who scored three goals within three minutes to move two points clear of leaders Bayer Leverkusen, visiting Kaiserslautern on Sunday.

Stuttgart, surprise runners-up last term, are the only team undefeated 11 games into the season.

They looked sluggish for most of the match but stepped up a gear after Freiburg had midfielder Andreas Zeyer sent off for a second bookable offence with the game level at 1-1 on 58 minutes.

"The first half was bad but it was better after the break," said Stuttgart coach Felix Magath.

"We played really great for about 15 minutes but I have to say Andreas Zeyer's red card helped us."

Bayern continued their mediocre start by crashing to a 2-0 defeat by Schalke 04 in Gelsenkirchen.

The champions, who needed a penalty shootout to move past second division Nuremberg in a German Cup tie on Tuesday, remain in fourth place but drop six points off the pace.

The match was a nightmare for the Bavarians, who were reduced to



PHOTO: AFP VfB Stuttgart's Fernando Meira (L) and SC Freiburg's Ibrahim Tanko engage in aerial duel during their German league match in Stuttgart on November 1.

PHOTO: AFP Arsenal's Thierry Henry celebrates after scoring Arsenal's third goal against Leeds at Elland Road on November 1.

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