



HEROES OF THE NIGHT: Real Madrid's French superstar Zinedine Zidane (L) celebrates his winning goal against Albacete with England captain David Beckham at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid on November 23.

Primera Liga Real made to sweat

Football

AFP, Madrid

David Beckham was on target as Real Madrid made hard work of overcoming struggling Albacete 2-1 on Sunday but the narrow victory was enough to send them back to the top of the Spanish first division.

The reigning champions have 26 points from their 12 games, the same number of points and goal difference as second-placed Deportivo La Coruna but are ahead having scored more goals.

Deportivo left the door open to Real after they could only draw 0-0 at Real Betis on Saturday.

Beckham put Real in front after 37 minutes with a long-range strike, the inch-perfect looping right foot shot from a pass by Zinedine Zidane flying past Albacete goalkeeper Carlos Roa and into the net from 25 metres.

It was the England captain's third goal of the season and provided a modicum of revenge over Roa following the Argentine's exploits on the last occasion they came face-to-face.

At the 1998 World Cup, Roa was Argentina's goalkeeper in their infamous last 16 match which the South Americans won on penalties.

Roa was the hero of the game with a series of stunning saves while Beckham ended as the villain after getting sent off.

But Albacete wasted no time in getting an equaliser with Libero Parri firing home a Carlos Aranda cross inside a minute.

Real dominated the second half and Zidane gave Real three crucial points, and ensured morale was restored after their 4-1 thrashing at Sevilla two weeks ago, when he headed home the winner nine minutes from time.

In the end Real were worthy winners but there will be debate over whether coach Carlos Queiroz was right to leave Ronaldo on the bench.

Queiroz started with Javier Portillo as the main target man and the World Player of the Year, and the Spanish first division's leading scorer, only came onto the field after 65 minutes.

Mista Ferrer got both goals for

"This match starts a month when we have a lot of travelling to do. With all the travelling and national team commitments, and the stress, a lot of stress of the games here and in Brazil, this was a game when I could afford to give some other players a chance," said Queiroz, justifying his decision to rest the Brazilian World Cup winner.

The Portuguese coach admitted that it was far from one of Real's better performances.

"We haven't had much time to prepare for this game, only a few players have trained together this week. At least we were a bit more determined in the second half."

Albacete coach Cesar Ferrando was

TOP SCORERS

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

- 9 - Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
- 8 - Mista Ferrer (Valencia)
- 7 - Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)
- 6 - Samuel Eto'o (Mallorca), Ariza Makakula (Valladolid), Walter Pandiani (Deportivo La Coruna)
- 5 - Sonny Anderson (Villarreal), Savo Milosevic (Celta Vigo), Raul Gonzalez (Real Madrid), Ricardo Oliveira (Valencia), Rodolfo Bodipo (Racing Santander), Dario Silva (Sevilla), Salva Ballesta (Malaga)
- 4 - Assuncao (Real Betis), Yossi Benayoun (Racing Santander), Joseba Etxeberria (Athletic Bilbao), Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad), Libero Parri (Albacete), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Tiko Martinez (Athletic Bilbao), Ismael Urzaiz (Athletic Bilbao)

well aware that his team was second best, although not by much.

"We were a little bit short on quality, but we came close. You are always going to find yourself in this predicament when you face a team of this level," said Ferrando.

Championship contenders Valencia could not capitalise on Deportivo's slip up and were held to a 2-2 draw by struggling Murcia late on Sunday.

The 2001-02 champions slip a place to third, two points behind the leading pair.

Mista Ferrer got both goals for

Queiroz blasted for resting Ronaldo

AFP, Madrid

Carlos Queiroz's tinkering at Real Madrid has been branded as barmy by the Spanish press after he left Brazil World Cup superstar Ronaldo on the bench for a hard-fought 2-1 win over struggling Albacete.

David Beckham, with a stunning long-range strike, and Zinedine Zidane saved Queiroz who put Ronaldo on the bench to save him for Wednesday's Champions League clash at Marseille.

Queiroz started with Javier Portillo as the main target man and the World Player of the Year, and the Spanish first division's leading scorer, only came onto the field after 65 minutes.

"This match starts a month when we have a lot of travelling to do. With all the travelling and national team commitments, and the stress, a lot of stress of the games here and in Brazil, this was a game when I could afford to give some other players a chance," said Queiroz, justifying his decision to rest the Brazilian World Cup winner who had played two qualifying matches for his country over the last week.

The Portuguese coach admitted that it was far from one of Real's better performances and only looked like the winning game after Ronaldo came on in the second half.

"We haven't had much time to prepare for this game, only a few players have trained together this week. At least we were a bit more determined in the second half," said Queiroz.

But the demanding Spanish press weren't convinced with the explanations.

"The problem is when someone starts believing he has been chosen on merit rather than the fact he looks good in a suit," the AS sports daily blasted.

"I think Queiroz should start to rotate himself," said radio Cadena Ser which pointed out that the Marseille match would have no bearing on Real's Champions League progress.

"He doesn't have the shoulders for Real. They're too big for him," added AS.

But the Real players came to the backing of their coach.

"He was the one who coached Manchester United while (Alex) Ferguson stayed in his office," said Brazil World Cup defender Roberto Carlos.

"You can only judge Queiroz at the end of the season," added club captain Raul.

Police hunt for Hughes

AFP, London



LEE HUGHES

Police investigating a fatal road crash on Sunday are looking for West Bromwich Albion player Lee Hughes.

A male rear seat passenger in a Renault Megane died after it was in collision with a silver Mercedes coupe in Coventry.

The man's wife was taken to hospital with a broken leg, the male driver suffered a broken pelvis and another male passenger suffered bruising.

Three men who were in the Mercedes have been questioned.

The 27-year-old Hughes is alleged to have left the scene, and has been urged to contact his nearest police station.

Media reports Monday said police forced their way into his 750,000 pound home on Sunday in a hunt for the player.

"We can confirm we visited a house in Meriden, Warwickshire, to look for the owner of the Mercedes. Officers gained entry but there was nobody there," a police spokesman said.

Top of the Division One table West Brom drew 0-0 with Reading on Saturday when Hughes was a second-half substitute.

What to watch

FROM PAGE 13

Live at 1.30 am (Wednesday)

Third ODI

West Indies v Zimbabwe

Live at 1.25 pm

Sportslive

Live at 8 pm

NOVEMBER 27

UEFA Champions League

Chelsea v Sparta Praha

Live at 1.30 am (Thursday)

Gunners' test by Inter fire



AFP, Paris

Arsene Wenger will be walking on familiar shaky ground when he leads Arsenal to the San Siro for a must-win clash against on-form Inter Milan in their Group B Champions League clash on Tuesday.

Despite their scintillating form in the Premiership, Arsenal are facing another early exit from Europe's premier competition if they fail to claim all three points against the on-form Italians on Tuesday.

Still unbeaten in their domestic trials, Arsenal's 13th consecutive victory on Saturday represented the best league start of any team since the Premiership was launched in 1992-93.

But while Wenger's team look set to challenge for another domestic title, they regularly limp off Europe's biggest club stage.

A daunting task lies ahead, especially as Inter - who humiliated Arsenal 3-0 at Highbury in September - will book their place in the last 16 if they win.

Inter's 6-0 rout of Reggina on Saturday - with all goals coming from different players - is proof of their strength in depth.

"I am starting to see the right spirit," said Zaccheroni after his third win since replacing the sacked Hector Cuper last month.

Super-striker Christian Vieri could snuff out Arsenal's troubled Champions League campaign and Zaccheroni wants him to do it with a smile on his face.

On Saturday, Vieri was among the scorers after the coach used a little mental coaxing to spur on the unhappy striker.

"I encouraged him at half-time," said Zaccheroni. "I told him he would be substituted, not even if he asked. That reassured him and he played a great second half."

Before the match, Zaccheroni tried to address the puzzling question of why Vieri has seemingly lost his taste for scoring.

"I like players to smile and look happy after they score a goal," Zaccheroni said.

"If Vieri celebrated his next goal extravagantly, by taking his shirt off or making a similar gesture, I'm convinced that it would help us."

But Vieri has been booed by Inter fans after an inconsistent season and after knocking in the sixth goal against

Reggina, he ignored Zaccheroni's advice and sarcastically applauded the spectators.

That aside, the new coach has undoubtedly changed the atmosphere at the club after the authoritarian regime of Cuper.

Inter wing-back Francesco Coco said: "Since Zaccheroni arrived he has brought liveliness, enthusiasm and an added motivation."

"It is always like that when the manager changes, but Zaccheroni has a winning mentality that he is trying to pass on to us."

"We believe we can get back to the higher echelons of the league in a short time, because we don't feel inferior to anyone."

Wenger vowed his side will be ready.

"When I look back every game has been difficult and the team have shown remarkable strength and been focused in every match," he said.

"There is a kind of strength about

"If we were to make it through the group stages it would be as big as anything we have achieved as a team - and I include getting to the UEFA Cup final."

"This is the platform that you want to be judged on."

Bayern are set to be without Sebastian Deisler, Mehmet Scholl and Alexander Zickler, while Ze Roberto returned from Brazil duty with a bad back.

Like Arsenal, defeat for Bayern would prove disastrous - as general manager Uli Hoeness admits.

"Crashing out of the competition so early on again would be fatal," said Hoeness. "Glasgow will be a heated encounter and we need at least a point."

Goalkeeper and captain Oliver Kahn added: "We know it is a vital game for us. A good horse jumps highest when it needs to. We are Bayern and we're going to Glasgow looking to win."



PHOTO: INTER MILAN

REHEARSING FOR REPEAT ACT? Inter Milan striker Christian Vieri (C) is the toast of his teammates after scoring against Reggina on Saturday.

FIXTURES

Champions League fixtures on Tuesday (all kick-off times 19:45 GMT):

Group A

At Brussels
Anderlecht v Lyon
At Glasgow
Celtic v Bayern Munich

Group B

At Milan
Inter Milan v Arsenal
At Moscow
Lokomotiv Moscow v Dynamo Kiev

Group C

At La Coruna
Deportivo La Coruna v AEK Athens
At Monaco
Monaco v PSV Eindhoven

Group D

At Istanbul
Galatasaray v Juventus - postponed
At Athens
Olympiakos v Real Sociedad

this team when they are in trouble and I am very proud of them."

In Group A German champions Bayern Munich face Celtic in Glasgow knowing that anything less than a point could spell disaster.

Ottmar Hitzfeld's side laboured to a 1-0 win at the weekend over 1860 Munich and face an on-form Celtic side who are keen to get a win under their belt to secure their first appearance in the knockout phase.

Like Inter, Celtic are knocking in the goals for fun in the league - and a 5-1 rout of Dundee United on Saturday, thanks to a Chris Sutton hat-trick and a double from Henrik Larsson, solved Martin O'Neill's dilemma of who to play up front against the German champions.

Celtic's UEFA Cup final appearance last season has proven their European pedigree but midfielder Neil Lennon believes the Glasgow giants can outdo that achievement.

In other matches Group A leaders Lyon travel to bottom team Anderlecht knowing that a win will see them through to the next phase.

Lokomotiv Moscow will be hoping for home advantage to help them relaunch their bid to stay in the competition when they host Dynamo Kiev, who are second in Group B.

In Group C, Monaco seek to build on their Champions League record 8-3 drubbing of Deportivo La Coruna when they host PSV Eindhoven. A victory would secure Monaco's appearance in the knockout phase.

Deportivo La Coruna, who sit second behind the on-form French league leaders, are favourites to get back in contention with full points at home against AEK Athens.

Juventus' Group D match against Galatasaray has been postponed until December 2 in the wake of last week's bombings in Istanbul.

Serie A Black day in Rome

Football

AFP, Rome

Roma crushed Bologna 4-0 on Sunday to keep up the pressure on champions Juventus but Serie A was left hanging its head in shame after four players were sent off in a bloody battle between Lazio and Perugia at Rome's Olympic Stadium.

Roma were tight at the back and flowing up front and it was no surprise when skipper Francesco Totti volleyed in the opener from Vincenzo Montella's corner after just 16 minutes.

Bologna, managed by former Roma coach Carlo Mazzone, were 2-0 down on 33 minutes when Antonio Cassano dribbled through to set up Montella for a simple tap-in.

Christian Panucci made it 3-0 five minutes later with Cassano wrapping up the points four minutes into the second half.

"Our first half performance was truly wonderful, full of first touches and intelligent play," said Roma coach Fabio Capello.

Roma have 24 points and are two behind Juventus who defeated Modena 2-0 on Saturday.

European champions AC Milan are third, also with 24 points but behind on goal difference, thanks to a 2-0 win at Chievo.

Andrei Shevchenko celebrated his 100th goal for Milan when he headed in a Gennaro Gattuso cross on the stroke

of half-time. The Ukrainian striker also hit the second in the 50th minute when he converted a through ball from Rui Costa.

Inter Milan are fourth after their 6-0 demolition of Reggina on Saturday.

Lazio moved into fifth place with a 3-1 home win against Perugia but the match will be remembered for four red cards - three of them for Perugia - as well

as an ugly touchline brawl.

Dejan Stankovic gave Lazio the lead in first half injury time before Fabio Grosso levelled just after the hour mark.

But their hopes of a fightback were hit when Suleymane Diamoutene was sent off for a late challenge on Giuseppe Favalli.

The match was heading for a 1-1 draw until the encounter exploded in the dying moments.

Perugia's Giovanni Ignoffo and

TOP SCORERS

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

10 - Andrei Shevchenko (AC Milan)

- 7 - Adriano (Parma), Marco Di Vaio (Juventus), David Trezeguet (Juventus), Fabrizio Miccoli (Juventus), Dino Fava (Udinese)
- 5 - Andrea Caracciolo (Brescia), Chevanton (Lecce), Enrico Chiesa (Siena), Christian Vieri (Inter Milan), Vincenzo Montella (AS Roma), S. Inzaghi (Lazio), Fabio Bazzani (Sampdoria)

Sergio Conceicao of Lazio were sent off and that led to a touchline brawl involving players and officials.

When peace resumed, Bernardo Corradi hit a spectacular drive to make it 2-1 before Ze Maria brought down Stankovic who had to be stretched off.

The Brazilian amazingly was not sent off but Perugia's Marco Di Loreto was as he became the fourth man to be red-carded for kicking Liverani before Simone Inzaghi hit the third goal in the third minute of injury time.

Perugia president Luciano Gaucci said the sending off of three of his players represented a conspiracy to have his team relegated to Serie B.

"We have had enough of referees who are blatantly pushed to favour certain teams. This referee was either startlingly incompetent or intentionally damaging to our side."

On Saturday, David Trezeguet and Pavel Nedved's goals gave Juventus a 2-0 win at Modena as the defending champions registered their eighth win in ten games.

TOP SIX

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

Juventus	10	8	2	0	25	9	26
Roma	10	7	3	0	22	3	24
Milan	10	7	3	0	18	4	24
Inter	10	5	4	1	17	5	19
Lazio	10	6	1	3	18	13	19
Parma	10	5	3	2	16	18	18

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Jazz style
- 4 Sad-sounding instrument
- 8 Without Rld.
- 12 Rd.
- 13 Target
- 14 Go cold turkey
- 15 It often gets the brushoff
- 17 Radius' neighbor
- 18 Nutritionist's recommendation
- 19 Speed-trap device
- 20 Speaks unclearly
- 22 Talon
- 24 Heap
- 30 Trembled
- 31 Young fellow
- 32 Light axe
- 34 Advertise

DOWN

- 1 Michael Jackson album
- 2 Eventual
- 3 A real swinger
- 4 Shrek's ilk
- 5 Ring match
- 6 LummoX
- 7 Ernie Keebler, e.g.
- 8 Complain
- 9 "— Lang
- 10 1492
- 11 Luminary
- 12 Tragically
- 13 Social standing
- 14 Carriage
- 15 Lovers' quarrel
- 16 21
- 17 Carriage
- 18 Carriage
- 19 Social standing
- 20 Lovers' quarrel
- 21 Carriage
- 22 Carriage
- 23 "Hey! What's that?"
- 24 Hawaii-based sleuth
- 25 Black Hawk War locale
- 26 Not slack
- 27 Nervous
- 28 Counterfeit
- 29 Blow reveille
- 30 Jack and Jill's prop
- 31 Earring sites
- 32 Tend a dirty deck
- 33 Recording
- 34 Put one over on
- 35 CSI evidence
- 36 Galleys
- 37 Raw rock
- 38 Fresh

Solution time: 25 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP

Q G V K W Z Z O X Y V H T

X H J V Y O L C Y J V Y F H A A F V V U

Q C X V X A V F F V T L N Q G H

Y O V F V Z F V C K G W U C Y

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN CHAMPION ARM WRESTLERS GO AT IT FURIOUSLY, IT'S TRULY A GRIPPING PERFORMANCE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: F equals S

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

£2500 lost

FROM PAGE 13

skipper Michael Vaughan.

And McLaughlin pointed the finger at the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for agreeing to tour at such a time.

"We didn't look at any weather forecast, we just depended on the English board knowing what they were doing," he explained.

"As soon as we got out here, we spoke to the locals and they said it would be raining every day and there was no chance cricket would be played."

"We missed the first game in Dambulla, but I brought all my family over to Colombo including a five-year-old boy and a nine-year-old girl and we spent five hours in the stand waiting for a decision on whether there would be any play."

"Hundreds of people have organised their holidays. We've spent about two-and-a-half thousand coming out to watch England and it's really hard to take."

More England fans are expected to descend upon Sri Lanka for the three-Test series starting early next month, when the weather is expected to improve.

But that is little consolation to McLaughlin, who at the age of 40 is still yet to see a live international cricket match.

He added: "Next Saturday I'm back at work to earn my living and hopefully save up for the next tour."

"I've never been to a game of cricket in my life and it was a birthday present from my wife."

Kale saga

FROM PAGE 13

"Kale is innocent and he has been denied natural justice," said MCA chief Balasheeb Thorve. "The only way truth can come out is if both the selectors and Kale undergo lie-detector tests."

The Indian media has reported allegations from many junior and state-level cricketers that unidentified local selectors often demanded bribes.

Kale has scored 6,806 runs in 84 first-class games at an average of 58.67, including 24 centuries. He made 10 in his only international appearance in a limited-overs tournament in Bangladesh in April and was not considered for the recent home series against New Zealand and Australia.

Nandasena

FROM PAGE 13

big blow for the Board before the Under-19 World Cup, which will be held in eight different venues across the country in January-February next year.

"It's a big loss for us. He knew how to make sporting wickets and through his tireless effort he had already prepared some good tracks," said BCB advisor and grounds committee chairman Shafiqur Rahman last night.

Rahman said that it would take at least two days before the body of Nandasena is sent back to Sri Lanka. His 25-year old son PD Arunasantha was beside his father's deathbed. Arunasantha flew into the city after hearing about the coma.

A general dairy has been registered with the Cantonment Police Station on Monday.

Nandasena signed a six-month contract with the Board in September last year. But after assessing his good work, the Board extended it for another one year to cover the forthcoming ICC under-19