

Premiership

# Leeds prove a point

Football

AFP, London

Leeds have breathed new life into their own battle for survival and left the three-way Premiership title race tighter than ever by holding Chelsea to a 1-1 draw at Elland Road.

Arsenal should have taken advantage of Leeds' admirable battling spirit and moved to the top by beating Leicester. But Craig Hignett's stoppage time equaliser put paid to that.

The Gunners had looked poised for victory after Gilberto Silva headed them ahead on the hour mark. But after being reduced to ten men when Ashley Cole was sent off for a two-footed tackle on Ben Thatcher, they conceded a late equaliser after failing to clear a long ball into the box, much to the irritation of their manager Arsene Wenger.

"We have lost two points today," Wenger said. "We know they hit you with long balls and you know that in the last seconds of the game you will have to face that."

"Having looked again at the position at the back, we deserved to be punished."

With both Chelsea and Arsenal dropping points, Manchester United were able to close the gap between the top three to just two points by sweeping Aston Villa aside 4-0 at Old Trafford.

After last weekend's win at Charlton, Leeds looked set for an even bigger shock after Jermaine

Pennant had given them an 18th minute lead with a memorable first goal for the club.

Pennant, who joined Leeds on loan from Arsenal this summer, robbed Claude Makelele, evaded Wayne Bridge's lunge and went round William Gallas before lobbing the ball over Carlo Cudicini to send the Elland Road crowd into raptures.

Damien Duff's equaliser prevented a famous victory but the point was at least enough to get Leeds off the bottom of the table and give their fans further reason to believe they can stave off the nightmare of relegation.

"We had to work hard for that point," Gray said. "We realised before the game that it was going to be difficult, but we stuck to our task very well."

"All the boys worked hard at their game and I hope it gives a psychological lift that we are now off the bottom."

United took Villa apart with Ruud van Nistelrooy grabbing a first half double and Diego Forlan adding two spectacular late strikes.

There was further cause for celebration among United fans with Paul Scholes coming on as a second half substitute for his first appearance since undergoing surgery on his groin on October 28.

"It was a great day for us in terms of Paul Scholes," United boss Sir Alex Ferguson said.

"He gets half an hour of play and he'll play on Tuesday now so that is him on the way back."

Ferguson played down the significance of van Nistelrooy disappearing up the tunnel before

the end of the match, saying the Dutchman had earned his chance of an early bath with Tuesday's Champions League clash with Stuttgart looming.

"We wanted Diego to be part of it because he has played a big part in recent games and Ruud had done his job."

"We've got a big game on Tuesday night and then the derby with City next Saturday. It was just a matter of spreading the load."

Earlier in the day, Alan Shearer rescued a point for Newcastle with a 63rd-minute penalty after Danny Murphy had given Liverpool a 6th-minute lead.

It was Shearer's 13th Premiership goal of the season but the Magpies skipper was quick to crush fresh speculation about a potential return to the England team for next year's Euro 2004 finals.

"I'm available to play golf and sit by my swimming pool during the summer, that's about it," Shearer said.

The point was enough to move Liverpool up into fifth place.

Robbie Keane sent Wolves back to the bottom of the table with a hat-trick in a 5-2 win for Spurs at White Hart Lane.

Keane's strike partner Fredi Kanoute made it two goals in two games since his comeback from injury while another Frenchman Stephane Dalmat added the fifth on the final whistle. Paul Ince and Alex Rae scored for Wolves.

Fulham scored twice in the space of a minute to secure an unlikely 2-1 win over Bolton at Loftus Road.

Kevin Davies had given the visitors a deserved lead eight minutes after the break but they were made to rue a string of wasted chances as Sean Davis and Facundo Sava scored in quick succession to keep the Cottagers in fourth place.

Blackburn extended their pull away from the relegation zone with a 4-0 win at Birmingham, who seem to be losing their way after a bright start to the season.

Barry Ferguson, with his first goal in the Premiership, and Australian wingback Lucas Neill put Blackburn in control with two goals in as many minutes mid-way through the second half.

Birmingham's misery was then compounded by the sending-off of French striker Christophe Dugarry and Blackburn added further strikes from Tugay and youngster Paul Gallagher.

In the day's other game, Portsmouth held out for a goalless draw at Middlesbrough despite having Steve Stone sent off. It was Boro's sixth consecutive clean sheet, equalling a club record.

TOP SIX

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

Chelsea	15	11	3	1	29	10	36
Arsenal	15	10	5	0	29	11	35
Man Utd	15	11	1	3	29	9	34
Fulham	15	7	4	4	26	19	25
Liverpool	15	6	4	5	22	16	22
Charlton	14	6	4	4	20	17	22



Real Madrid superstar Ronaldo takes on Barcelona's Puyol (R), Luis Garcia (L) and Mota (C) at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on December 6.

Primera Liga

# Brazilians spark Real party

Football

AP, Madrid

Brazilian superstars Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo scored a goal each Saturday as Spanish league leader Real Madrid edged archrival FC Barcelona 2-1 to win its first league match at the Camp Nou stadium in 20 years.

Roberto Carlos struck the first in the 37th minute, while the league's top scorer Ronaldo added the second in the 73rd to take his season's goal tally to 12. Dutch striker Patrick Kluyvert scored Barcelona's consolation goal in the 82nd.

"It was a very important win. We hadn't won here for a long time and it means we're further ahead in the league," Madrid captain Raul Gonzalez said.

Madrid's victory marked a happy return to the Camp Nou for David Beckham, who gained a Champions League winners medal there for Manchester United against Bayern Munich in 1999.

"The memories came flooding back," Beckham said. "But I'm with a different team now. Coming here as a Madrid player and beating Barcelona was just as sweet."

The Catalan club's defeat leaves it without a victory in its last four matches and seals a dismal week, following its 5-1 loss at Malaga on Wednesday.

In other 15th-round games, defender Joan Capdevila scored the lone goal as Deportivo de La Coruna edged Malaga 1-0 to move into second place in the Spanish league.

Elsewhere, Real Betis crushed Real Sociedad 4-0 while Osasuna beat Celta de Vigo 3-2.

Madrid leads the standings with 33 points, three ahead of

Deportivo. Valencia, which was hosting Athletic de Bilbao on Sunday, is next with 28, followed by Osasuna with 26.

Sunday's other games were: Albacete vs Racing de Santander; Mallorca vs Valladolid; Murcia vs Villarreal; Sevilla vs Zaragoza; and Atletico de Madrid vs Espanyol.

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard, whose side has not won since Brazilian forward Ronaldinho was sidelined last month, began the game with a defensive lineup in a bid to stifle Madrid's attacking flair.

Although this created a gray first-half, the tactic worked until the 37th minute when Madrid scored through a move created by Beckham's sweeping crossfield pass to Zinedine Zidane. The French star passed to Roberto Carlos and the Brazilian's low shot from just inside the penalty area took a deflection off Barcelona's Dutch defender Michael Reiziger to elude goalkeeper Victor Valdes.

Rijkaard reacted at halftime by bringing on wingers Marc Overmars and Ricardo Quaresma, and his team responded with an improved display.

But Madrid spurned a golden chance to double its lead in the 54th minute when striker Raul shot over from close range after a cross by Beckham, who had burst through the Barcelona defense.

Barcelona finally started to create opportunities after an hour, with Overmars denied by an acrobatic save by Iker Casillas in the 62nd minute and Madrid's goalkeeper parrying Kluyvert's shot three minutes later.

Ronaldo, who had promised a goal before the match, extended the lead when he fired home, again with the aid of a deflection -- off Dutch midfielder Philip Cocu this time -- from Roberto Carlos' pass across goal.

Ronaldo, who spent the 1996-97 season with Barcelona and scored 34 league goals, was making his first appearance for Madrid at the Camp Nou stadium.

Kluyvert gave Barcelona vain hope with eight minutes remaining when he powered his header past Iker Casillas from Quaresma's corner to reduce the deficit.

There was no repetition of the crowd trouble which marred Barcelona's last home encounter with Madrid a year ago. On that occasion, Madrid's Luis Figo was targeted by missiles from the crowd, leading to a 13-minute suspension of the game.

This time, the Catalan club protected the areas near the goalposts with netting and Figo, who has been despised by Barcelona supporters since he left the club for Madrid in 2000, emerged unscathed even though he was whistled with every touch of the ball.

Madrid coach Carlos Queiroz, who like Rijkaard was appearing in his first match between the two archrivals, praised Barcelona's supporters.

"The crowd was fantastic. To feel such passion for their team and for football is fantastic," Queiroz said.

Deportivo gained its first victory in four games but gave a lackluster display against a Malaga team which was boosted by its 5-1 trouncing of Barcelona.

Capdevila headed the game-winning goal in the 59th minute from a cross by Spanish international Albert Luque, the right back's first of the season.

Deportivo visits PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League on Wednesday, needing to avoid a two-goal defeat to advance to the last 16 of the competition.

Spanish international Joaquin

Sanchez scored twice to earn Betis its first victory in seven games and inflict a humiliating loss on Real Sociedad.

Midfielder Jesus "Capi" Capitan and defender Juanito Gutierrez also netted to leave 17th-place Sociedad winless in seven league matches. At the same stage last season, Sociedad led the league.

Sociedad midfielder Mikel Aramburu was ejected for his second yellow card of the game mid-way through the second half.

The heavy loss was a crushing blow to Sociedad's morale ahead of its Champions League home game against Galatasaray on Wednesday. The Basque side needs a draw to reach the last 16.

Celta, another Spanish Champions League representative, also continued to struggle in the league with a 3-2 defeat against Osasuna. Celta, which has made its worst start to a season for seven years, is 16th with 15 points.

Osasuna's John Aloisi scored twice, the Australian striker's first goals of the season, with Ivorian striker Ibrahim Bakayoko adding the third. Former Spanish international Jose Ignacio Saenz and Catanha netted for Celta.

Celta, which visits AC Milan on Tuesday, still has a chance to progress to the next phase of the Champions League.

TOP SIX

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

Real	15	10	3	2	31	16	33
Deportivo	15	9	3	3	23	11	30
Valencia	14	8	4	2	27	11	28
Osasuna	15	7	5	3	18	12	26
Atletico	14	7	1	6	17	18	22
Bilbao	14	6	3	5	18	16	21



Damien Duff (C) scoring Chelsea's goal against Leeds at Elland Road on December 6.

# Parreira smells a rat



AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said there were signs that manoeuvres had been taking place within the sport to prevent Brazil winning their sixth World Cup,

media reported here on Saturday.

He said the decision of world football's governing body FIFA to allow European clubs the right to refuse to release players for 2004 Olympic qualifiers was clearly aimed at harming Brazil's 2006 World Cup hopes.

"In 1966, European footballers did everything they could to prevent Brazil winning their third world title. Now the situation is being repeated by officials," Parreira said.

"When authorizing European clubs not to release players for Olympic qualifiers, FIFA clearly harmed Brazil and is working in the interests of European clubs."

"I understand that the clubs pay players' wages and they feel hard done by. But all clubs must under-

stand that players can be summoned whenever necessary."

In Brazil, unlike in many European countries, the Olympic qualifiers are an important part of the build-up to the World Cup with a number of those under-23 squad members involved in the senior side.

"When a club buys Kaka, for example, it must realise that he play for the Brazil national side," Parreira added.

AC Milan had refused to release Kaka for the Olympic qualifiers which angered Parreira.

Daily newspaper Lance however questioned Parreira's stance. "Is it right a club pays a player's weight in gold and then must release him for all internationals?"

The column added: "Perhaps Parreira is looking for excuses for possible repetitions of bad performances by Brazil."

Serie A

# Juve lose track

Football

AFP, Milan

Title-holders Juventus lost more ground in the Italian title race after crashing to their second consecutive league defeat here on Saturday.

First-half goals from Italy internationals Bernardo Corradi and Stefano Fiore gave Lazio a deserved 2-0 win over the reigning Serie A champions, just hours after AC Milan had taken sole possession of top spot with a fortuitous 1-0 victory at Empoli.

Milan lead the table with 30 points from their 12 matches played but they can be caught by Roma, who play their game in hand away to Chievo on Sunday.

Juventus, beaten 3-1 at home to Inter last week and by Galatasaray in the Champions League on Tuesday, remain in third place, four points behind Milan.

Lazio's surprise victory at the Olympic stadium kickstarted their own challenge, moving them up to fourth place which they share with Inter Milan.

Juve fell behind in the 21st minute when the visitors were caught napping by a quickly-taken throw-in by Jaap Stam near the right-wing corner flag. The Dutchman fed Fiore whose

cross from the byline found Corradi and his twisting diving header gave Gianluigi Buffon no chance.

Roles were reversed for Lazio's second goal in first-half stoppage time with Corradi returning the favour. Giuseppe Favalli's long ball down the right found Corradi and he cut inside Nicola Legrottaglie before crossing into the box for Fiore. The former Udinese midfielder controlled the ball with his left and struck a sweet right-foot shot which flew into the net beyond Buffon.

Milan may not have been at their best but they rode their luck to claim the outright leadership with a hard-fought victory.

A right-footed screamer from second-half substitute Kaka nine minutes from time ensured Milan took all three points from a fixture that was far from a cakewalk for the European champions.

Milan rarely threatened in attack and they were lucky to go in at half-time on level terms after Empoli had a goal controversially ruled out for offside.

Promising Italy international Antonio Di Natale, one of Italy's most sought-after young strikers, drilled a right foot shot past Milan's Brazilian goalkeeper Dida only to see his effort wiped out.

Tommaso Rocchi was stand-

ing in an offside position when Di Natale struck but did not appear to be interfering with play. Referee Salvatore Racalbuto however saw things differently and rather than give the benefit of the doubt to the home side, he awarded a free-kick to the visitors and Milan were left off the hook.

Kaka replaced Andrea Pirlo in the 74th minute and the talented Brazilian midfielder did not take long to make his mark.

The summer signing from Sao Paulo picked up the ball 30 metres from goal and unleashed an unstoppable shot which flew into the net, giving veteran goalkeeper Luca Bucci no chance.

Empoli's defeat, their eighth of the season, leaves them second from bottom, two points ahead of Ancona, who play away at Bologna on Sunday. 5

TOP SIX

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

Milan	12	9	3	0	21	4	30
Roma	11	8	3	0	25	4	27
Juventus	12	8	2	2	26	14	26
Inter	11	6	4	1	20	6	22
Lazio	12	7	1	4	20	16	22
Parma	11	6	3	2	19	11	21



AC Milan's Brazilian international Kaka makes a move against Empoli at Empoli on December 6.