

FORMULA ONE Alonso wins dramatic Aussie GP

REUTERS, Melbourne

Renault's Fernando Alonso won an incident-packed Australian Grand Prix on Sunday to take a 14-point lead in the Formula One standings after three races.

The 24-year-old world champion claimed his second victory of the season when he established an early lead then held off McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen to win by less than two seconds on a dramatic afternoon at Albert Park.

Germany's seven-times world champion Michael Schumacher was among a handful of drivers involved in high-speed crashes that interrupted the race.

Schumacher's teammate Felipe Massa also wrecked his Ferrari when he slammed into a wall while Juan Pablo Montoya, Christian Klion, Jarno Trulli, Nico Rosberg and Vitantonio Liuzzi were also involved in accidents.

Ralf Schumacher steered his Toyota to third place ahead of fellow German Nick Heidfeld's BMW Sauber and Alonso's Italian teammate Giancarlo Fisichella.

Alonso has 28 points to 14 for Fisichella and Raikkonen. Schumacher and Button are level on 11. Renault lead the constructors' standings with 42 to McLaren's 23.



A young Ronaldinho fan, who invaded the pitch, being taken away by a securityman during the Primera Liga clash between Barcelona and Real Madrid at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

PRIMERA LIGA

'El clasico' ends all square

AFP, Barcelona

Real Madrid overcame the sending off of Roberto Carlos to frustrate bitter rivals Barcelona and secure a share of the spoils in the Spanish League's most famous grudge match Saturday.

A superb goal from Brazilian striker Ronaldo earned a 1-1 draw for Real after the Catalans' went ahead from a coolly taken Ronaldinho penalty after 22 minutes at the Nou Camp, following Carlos' reckless foul on Mark Van Bommel.

The result did nothing to loosen Barcelona's vice-like grip on the championship standings, with Frank Rijkaard's men maintaining their 11-point lead over second-placed Real with seven games remaining.

Barcelona dominated almost from the very first minute, quickly settling into their passing game and not giving Real any chance to get into the match.

Van Bommel had two clear-cut scoring opportunities in the first five minutes. The Dutch international forced Iker Casillas into a double save with a low shot on three minutes and then chipped wide after

being put one-on-one with the Real keeper via a delightful Ronaldinho pass.

Barcelona went close again on 13 minutes with a low drive from Deco that Casillas scrambled clear.

But the pressure told on 20 minutes. Carlos lunged in on Van Bommel inside the area, and though the contact was minimal, referee Luis Medina Cantalejo pointed to the spot.

Carlos then compounded his blunder by getting booked for trying to disrupt Ronaldinho's concentration. The play didn't work however, and Ronaldinho calmly sent Casillas the wrong way with the spot-kick.

Within minutes Real's challenge threatened to disintegrate into total disarray when Carlos tested Cantalejo's patience for the second time — and was promptly given his marching orders by the man in black.

Yet though Barcelona continued to control play, the Nou Camp was stunned into silence on 37 minutes when Real equalised through Ronaldo.

Ronaldinho gave away possession with a loose pass deep in Real territory, and Julio Baptista surged onto the ball and clipped a searching ball behind the Barcelona

defence for Ronaldo.

The Brazilian striker's first touch took him towards the Barca goal and he conjured an exquisite finish over the advancing Victor Valdes to make it 1-1. To make matters worse, Barcelona's Thiago Motta pulled up with a hamstring injury chasing Ronaldo and was stretched from the field to play no further part.

Barcelona clearly wanted to make the extra man count and removed Van Bommel for Ludovic Giuly, to leave them with four men in attack.

But with Real defending in numbers and with uncharacteristic resilience, Barcelona's attacking threat was kept at bay.

Swedish international Henrik Larsson had the Catalans' best chance after being put into acres of space by Ronaldinho but was denied by a fantastic save by Casillas. Larsson could have taken all three points in injury time but headed wide with the goal begging.

In other Spanish matches Saturday, Real Zaragoza succumbed to a 1-0 home defeat to Villarreal while Real Sociedad romped past bottom club Malaga 3-0.

Premier Div volleyball begins today

BNEWS, Dhaka

The UCBL Dhaka Metropolis Premier Division Volleyball League begins at the volleyball court today.

Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman will inaugurate the league as the chief guest. UCBL Managing Director Hamidul Huq will be present on the occasion.

In all 10 teams will take part in the league. The teams are: Bangladesh Rifles, Titas Club, Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Bangladesh Power Development Board, Wari Club, Sonali Bank, Dilqusha Sporting Club, Fire Service and East End Club.

BDR will face the East End Club in the inaugural match.

Kuznetsova clinches Miami title

AFP, Miami

Former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova cruised past fourth seeded Russian countrywoman Maria Sharapova 6-4, 6-3 to win the 6.9 million-dollar WTA and ATP Miami hardcourt title on Saturday.

Kuznetsova capped the one hour, 30 minute match with her fourth ace to post her biggest victory since capturing the women's singles crown at the 2004 US Open.

"I have been working so hard, and I deserve to be here," Kuznetsova said. "I knew I broke her, and I broke her again. I just wanted to stay every ball in the match and give my best and see what I can have out there."

The 20-year-old Kuznetsova was in complete control and said her game plan against Sharapova was to be aggressive and change the pace.

Sanath's one

FROM PAGE 12
The last time Pakistan fielded an unaltered line-up in Tests, Waqar Younis was captain, the 2003 World Cup was three months away, Inzamam and Saqlain didn't have beards, neither did Mohammad Yousuf who was Yousuf Youhana and Taufeeq Umar and Saleem Elahi were opening in Tests. Yes, that long ago — November, 2002 and 30 Tests to be precise when Pakistan beat Zimbabwe by 10 wickets with the same XI that had beaten them by 119 runs the previous week.

There have been unseasonal rains in the days running up to the Test and it is thought they might disrupt play at some point. They did the last time the two teams clashed here, in July 2000, when heavy rains restricted the match to a half-complete innings from Sri Lanka. 467 for 5 they made then, including an opening stand of 335 and Sanath Teran Jayasuriya made 188 of them. One more time Sanath.

TEAMS
SRI LANKA (probable): Sanath Jayasuriya, Upul Tharanga, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Tilan Samaraweera, Tillekeratne Dilshan, Farveez Maharoof, Sajeeva Weerakoon, Nuwam Kilasekara, Lasith Malinga, Muttiah Muralitharan.

PAKISTAN (possible): Shoaib Malik, Imran Farhat, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Inzamamul Haq (captain), Faisal Iqbal, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul, Mohammad Asif, Danish Kaneria.

Clark brings Aussies

FROM PAGE 12
AUSTRALIA: First innings (over-120)
Langer retired hurt 0
Hayden c Gibbs b Ntini 3
Ponting c De Villiers b Ntini 34
Marty c Nel b Ntini 21
Hussey lbw b Boje 73
Symonds lbw b Ntini 4
Gilchrist c Rudolph b Nel 12
Warne c Pollock b Ntini 36
Lee c Boje b Ntini 64
Kasprovic c Gibbs b Pollock 2
Clark not out 0
Extras: (b-5, lb-14, w-2) 21
Total: (All out in 62.5 overs) 270
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-68, 3-73, 4-89, 5-106, 6-174, 7-242, 8-260, 9-270.

Bowler O M R W
Ntini 18.5 2 100 6
Nel 15 2 42 1
Pollock 15 2 56 1
Kallis lbw b Clark 20
Dippenaar c Hayden b Clark 27
Kallis lbw b Clark 20
Prince c Symonds b Warne 9
Pollock not out 29
Rudolph c Gilchrist b Clark 0
Boucher not out 6
Extras: (b-4, lb-3, nb-4, w-1) 12
Total: (For 6 wickets in 46 overs) 160
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-55, 3-100, 4-120, 5-130, 6-140.

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings
De Villiers b Clark 4
Gibbs c Marty b Warne 53
Dippenaar c Hayden b Clark 20
Kallis lbw b Clark 27
Prince c Symonds b Warne 9
Pollock not out 29
Rudolph c Gilchrist b Clark 0
Boucher not out 6
Extras: (b-4, lb-3, nb-4, w-1) 12
Total: (For 6 wickets in 46 overs) 160
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-55, 3-100, 4-120, 5-130, 6-140.

Bowler O M R W
Ntini 18.5 2 100 6
Nel 15 2 42 1
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Kallis lbw b Clark 20
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Total: (For 6 wickets in 46 overs) 160
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-55, 3-100, 4-120, 5-130, 6-140.

Lee 11 2 38 0
Clark 15 4 49 4
Kasprovic 2 0 12 0
Symonds 3 0 7 0
Ponting 2 1 7 0
Warne 13 4 40 2
To bat: N Boje, A Nel, M Ntini.
Umpires: S Bucknor (WIS), A Hill (NZL).

Bangladesh eye

FROM PAGE 12
"We have had a very good opening game and I have watched Cambodia play Bangladesh. They lack experience but Cambodia are a very fighting side. Still I am confident to win and make sure we play in the last eight," said Sabbah.

In Chittagong, SAFF champions India would also be looking to seal their quarterfinal berth when they meet the Philippines in a Group A match at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Chinese Taipei face Afghanistan in the day's other match.

India's Uzbek coach Islam Akhmedov believes that the match will be decisive for his team as the pressure will be off in the final match against group favourites Chinese Taipei on April 5.

"Everything will be clear on Monday. We want the players to play more confidently against Philippines so that they don't have any pressure in the final game," he said.

Tajikistan maul

FROM PAGE 12
Stadium in Chittagong. Jayasuriya leaped high in the air to nod home a right-side cross to separate the two sides after a goalless first half.

The Lankans started strongly with striker Ediribandana Channa dodging past three defenders in the sixth minute only to be Brunei goalkeeper Mohamed Noor Azman Ilham save his shot.

Four minutes later, Brunei forward Bujang Hardi skirted two defenders and Lankan custodian Thilakratne Sugath but defender Ruwan Thilaka cleared the threat from the goaline.

Channa missed a golden chance in the first half injury time when his lob was diverted by the palm of a diving Ilham.

NEPAL-BHUTAN
Nepal reached top of Group B with Pradeep Mararajan scoring both the goals in their 2-0 win over South Asian neighbours Bhutan.

The lights went out just before first half for 15 minutes at the MA Aziz Stadium and Nepal came back strongly with Maharaj placing a corner into the net in the 52nd minute before making it 2-0 when he lobbed the rival goalkeeper from 20 yards in the 70th minute.

'Henry the best'

INTERNET, undated

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger admitted Thierry Henry would be almost irreplaceable after the striker destroyed Aston Villa.

Henry scored two superb goals in a 5-0 win and tormented the visitors until he was substituted midway through the second half as Wenger began to prepare for Wednesday's Champions League quarterfinal second leg against Juventus.

"If you asked me to buy a better player, I would have a big problem," admitted Wenger. "He is the best."

He added: "When you have the best, why would you want to replace him? We do not know whether Thierry will stay or not."

"All I can say is that I want him to stay. The rest belongs to him, but I remain 100% confident that we will keep him."

Capello expresses England interest

AFP, Rome

Juventus coach Fabio Capello admitted Saturday that he would be honoured to be offered the job of England coach.

Capello has been linked as a possible replacement for Sven-Goran Eriksson, who will leave after England's World Cup campaign.

Asked by SKY television whether he had seen a article in the Gazzetta dello Sport saying the English FA were considering an approach for him, Capello replied: "In which paper was this. Today I didn't read anything, but if it's true I'd be honoured because I believe that the English football federation is one of the most important in the world."

"But for the moment, nobody has come to me."

As a club coach, Capello has won six Italian league titles, four with AC Milan, one with Roma and one with Juventus.

He led AC Milan to Champions League success in 1994 and three years later he won the Spanish league title with Real Madrid in his one and only season there.

Ancelotti concedes title

REUTERS, Milan

Carlo Ancelotti said his AC Milan side are now focused on the Champions League and finishing second in Serie A after Saturday's 1-0 defeat at Lecce left them nine points behind leaders Juventus with six matches to play.

"I never thought that we could catch Juventus and now we need to keep an eye on those who are behind us and close to us and try to keep a distance between them and second place," said the Milan coach.

The runners-up spot in Serie A brings an automatic place in next season's Champions League while the teams finishing third and fourth have to qualify for the group stage.

"It's a bit like that for us at the moment," said Ancelotti. "We aren't putting the chances away."

"I don't think it's about motivation. We were motivated for this game and I don't think it's a psychological issue either," he said.

"We are just in a moment when things aren't going for us. On Tuesday we will be fired up for the return game with Lyon and the team will be quite different," he added.

Senior Hossain passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Mosaddeque Hossain, father of Bangladesh Under-19 cricketer Mehrab Hossain Jr., passed away in the early hours of yesterday.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar expressed his deep shock at the death and conveyed sympathy to bereaved family members.

Eavesdropping

FROM PAGE 12
found out that they were basically doing the whole lot, then we were a bit disappointed."

Broad, who met with local broadcaster SABC in order to rectify the situation ahead of the ongoing third Test at the Wanderers, said that he would closely watch the situation for the remainder of the match. Hussey, however, maintained that Australia were surprised that their comments were being heard on air. "It is difficult, because you do get emotional on the field and there are going to be things said and done. Some things certainly aren't appropriate for young listeners," he added.

Tony Greig raised the issue earlier this week at a corporate lunch. "Let's face it, these stump mikes, we have to seriously turn them down," he said. "I was just hoping that they had turned down on air because that's the sort of thing that can lose your licence to air."

PREMIERSHIP

United close in on leaders

Football

REUTERS, London

Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy hit a second-half winner for Manchester United at Bolton Wanderers on Saturday to cut Chelsea's lead to seven points after the champions were held 0-0 at Birmingham.

Van Nistelrooy, starting from the bench again despite netting the winner against West Ham in midweek, converted Louis Saha's cross on 79 minutes to seal a 2-1 win at the Reebok Stadium and breathe new life into the title race.

Saha had cancelled out Kevin Davies' opener for Bolton.

"It's our best result of the season, maybe," United manager Alex Ferguson told Sky Sports after his side inflicted a first home defeat on Bolton in 22 games in all competitions.

"It was (a performance) of determination and grit because the pitch was not very good ... we kept on plugging away until we got the winner."

Chelsea were frustrated by relegation-threatened Birmingham City, the Londoners held at St Andrews in a lunchtime kickoff.

With six games to play, Chelsea have 79 points from 32 games with United on 72. Third-placed Liverpool (67) eased to a 2-0 win at strugglers West Bromwich Albion, Robbie Fowler and Djibril Cisse scoring first-half goals at the Hawthorns.

Thierry Henry scored twice in Arsenal's 5-0 demolition of Aston Villa, who are being dragged into the relegation dogfight, while Tottenham Hotspur had defender Michael Dawson sent off in a 3-1 defeat at Newcastle United.

Spurs remain in the fourth Champions League place on 55 points and bitter rivals Arsenal moved into fifth, two behind after running Villa ragged at Highbury.

At the bottom, Portsmouth's third successive win, 3-1 over Fulham at Craven Cottage, gave the south coast side hope of escaping the drop. Bottom side Sunderland drew 2-2 at Everton.

Van Nistelrooy has endured a frustrating few weeks at Old Trafford, Ferguson preferring Frenchman Saha to play alongside Wayne Rooney.

The Dutchman was again left out of the starting side but gave Ferguson food for thought with a typically clinical finish, his 150th goal for the club.

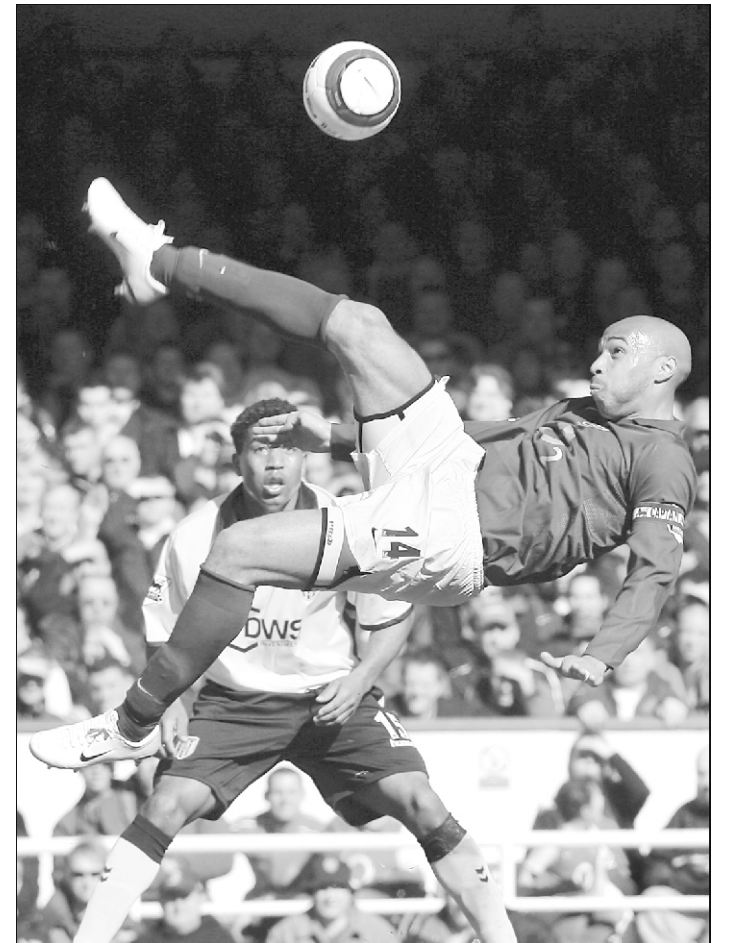
"We know when he comes on he's going to do it because he's the best finisher in the game," said Ferguson. Van Nistelrooy and Henry lead the league goalscorers' list with 21 each.

Chelsea manager Jose

Mourinho was unhappy with another unconvincing display away from home and his side have won just one from their last five on their travels.

"I am concerned, I want to win every game, I'm not happy with the performance and result," he told Sky Sports.

"It's (the title) in our hands. The important thing is we keep winning our matches at home and we will be champions again."



Arsenal striker Thierry Henry attempts a bicycle kick during their Premiership match against Aston Villa at Highbury on Saturday.

SERIE A

Top two falter

Football

REUTERS, Milan

Italian Champions League quarterfinalists Juventus and AC Milan failed to beat the bottom two clubs in Serie A on Saturday, with Milan suffering a humiliating defeat.

Milan fell 1-0 to a 54th-minute Cedric Konan goal at Lecce while leaders Juventus were held to a 0-0 draw at bottom club Treviso, who have not won in their last 16 games.

Despite the disappointing result and performance from Juventus, Fabio Capello's side extended their lead over Milan to nine points with just six games remaining.

Inter Milan, made easy work of lowly Messina, winning 3-0 with all the goals coming inside the opening 26 minutes. The victory moved Inter to within two points of their city rivals.

AC Milan, who rested several of their top players including Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko and Brazilian Kaka, dominated the opening 45 minutes at Lecce but home keeper Vincenzo Scignano was in inspired form.

Scignano was out quickly to foil Alberto Gilardino in the fourth minute and 15 minutes later produced an excellent save to keep out a strike from the Milan striker who had been well-served by Rui Costa.

The Portuguese midfielder then

went close to the opener 12 minutes before the break but again the Lecce keeper came to the rescue of his side, tipping the ball over the bar.

Carlo Ancelotti's side were left to regret those unconverted chances when nine minutes after the restart Mirko Vucinic broke on a counter-attack and fed Konan who beat Dida with a clinical finish.

Juve also had plenty of chances in their first half. Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic hit the post and his strike partner David Trezeguet found the side-netting while Romanian Adrian Mutu flashed a free kick just wide.

At the other end Treviso forward Marco Borriello had a deflected free-kick smash against Gianluigi Buffon's right-hand post.

The Serie A leaders faded after the break, though, with Treviso finishing the game strongly and the draw meant Capello was relieved to hear the result from Lecce.

Unlike Ancelotti, Capello did not rotate his squad before the midweek European commitments and said the results had proved him right.

"It was an important game in the championship — if we'd have lost and Milan won then it would have been very significant. We got a point, they didn't, so it was a good for us," he told Italy's Sky Sport.

Argentine Santiago Solari put Inter on their way, lobbing Messina keeper Marco Storani from edge of box with an instinctive strike in the 15th minute before Nigerian Obafemi Martins

headed in a Kily Gonzalez cross to make it 2-0.

Solari wrapped the game up in the 26th minute, slotting home from close range after Storani had pushed out a Marco Materazzi header from a corner.

Zoro suffers another abuse

AFP, Rome

Messina's African defender Mark Zoro has urged FIFA, football's world governing body, to punish Inter Milan after their fans racially abused him for the second time this season.

The 22-year-old Ivory Coast international's every touch was met with a chorus of monkey chants from a large section of Inter fans during Saturday's Serie A match at the San Siro.

"I hope that the right steps are taken," Zoro said after Messina's 3-0 defeat. "I think these people are a disgrace to themselves, as their team also has coloured players."

In November, when Messina played at home to Inter, he was reduced to tears after being subjected to racial abuse by the visiting supporters.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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ACROSS

1 Collections of the King
5 Most of the 101 Dalmatians
9 Emulate Johnny Appleseed
12 Jog
13 Largest of the seven
14 Kyoto cummerrbund
15 Lecherous look
16 Ring out
17 Illuminated
18 Fairy tale villain
19 Wood-shaping tool
20 Skilled wordsmith
21 Wray of "King Kong"
23 Wye follower
25 Superficial coating
28 Get there
32 Saw
33 Acrylic fiber
34 Laments

DOWN

1 Stash in the hold
2 Therefore
3 Turnpike payment
4 Court figure
5 Tropical fruit
6 Second-hand
7 Arcaded gallery
8 Folk-song mule
9 Unaccompanied
10 Stage statulette
11 Emmy winner
12 Writer "Carmen on Ice"
20 Court figure
22 Regarding
24 Destroy slowly
25 Tills or Grier
26 Big botheration
27 Greek cross
29 Under the weather
30 Book-spine abbr.
31 Annapolis grad
35 Flanked in a tourney
36 Large lizard
39 Source of wealth
40 Comic-strip penguin
41 On
43 Average
45 Hum-dinger
46 Snitch
47 Exam format
49 "When Will I Loved?"

Solution time: 27 mins.

SALE GUESS PILED
TODD MIMO TINKY
COLUMBUS EDEN
ORIOLE ERODE
MINTS SPEETS
ANTI BOLLICHS
STA TIGOS OWE
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