

Anderlecht players celebrate their winning the Belgian league for the 28th time on Friday after defeating Zulte-Waregem 3-0.

FORMULA ONE

Alonso on pole

REUTERS, Nuerburgring

Renault's world champion Fernando Alonso edged out Michael Schumacher to take his first pole position of the season at the European Grand Prix on Saturday.

The 24-year-old Spaniard will start alongside Ferrari's seven times champion, his closest rival in the Formula One championship and the man he dethroned last year.

Felipe Massa was third fastest for Ferrari and, as at Imola two weeks ago, forms an all-Brazilian second row with Honda's Rubens

Finland's Kimi Raikkonen was fifth fastest for Mercedes-powered McLaren and Honda's Jenson Button sixth, ending a run of seven starts from the front two rows.

Alonso's Italian teammate Giancarlo Fisichella failed to qualify in the top 10 for the second race in a row and stalked angrily down the pitlane to remonstrate with BMW Sauber's Jacques Villeneuve, who

Ralf Schumacher will start his home race in 10th place because Australian Mark Webber, who qualified in that position and just ahead of him, collected a 10-place penalty for an unscheduled engine change.

Another accolade for Henry

Arsenal captain Thierry Henry has been named player of the year by English Premiership sponsors.

Henry is the leading scorer in English football's top flight with 24 goals and has scored two or more goals on eight occasions in the league this season.

'Henry has graced Arsenal's last season at Highbury in magnificent style," said Matt Appleby of the

The France striker surpassed Cliff Bastin's club goal-scoring record in October before going on to become the first Arsenal player to score 200 goals for the club, in February's 2-0 away win at Birmingham

The Premiership is sponsored by Barclays Bank

Coach woos former Zim

BBC ONLINE, undated

Zimbabwe's coach Kevin Curran will visit England to persuade players who have turned their back on their homeland to reconsider their choice.

All-rounder Sean Ervine, former captain Tatenda Taibu and spinner Ray Price are among those playing

Curran told BBC World Service: "There are about 10 of them over there. If we were to get back about half of them it would make a lot of

Zimbabwe have opted out of Test cricket for 12 months after a torrid period.

Curran, a former international allrounder, said: "It's been a difficult

"For cricket to go backwards is a lot of senior players which was unfortunate and it's something I'm

trying to rectify.' Zimbabwe will attempt to play 50 PREMIERSHIP

Gunners aim fitting farewell

Football

Arsenal will say goodbye to their home of 93 years when they play Wigan at Highbury on Sunday.

But they will have plenty more than just sentiment to play for on

Arsenal are just a point behind north London rivals Tottenham, who face FA Cup finalists West Ham, in the race for fourth place and the final direct spot for English clubs into next season's Champions League.

But even if results do not go their way on Sunday, for Arsenal fans the delicious prospect of victory in the May 17 final at the Stade de France remains, which as well as yielding a first European Cup would also deny Tottenham a place in next season's competition even if Spurs finish fourth.

Wenger, who in the past has talked of part of his soul being at Highbury, did his best to sound coolly detached in the run-up to Sunday's match

"I am not concerned about distractions. You could see last night against Manchester City that when it was 1-1 the team found the resources (to win 3-1 thanks to two late goals from Jose Antonio Reyes

"We will not miss out on Sunday because of the party. We will do the job first and party after," the

Frenchman added.

confident we will finish the job on

"What is good in a club is that every year down to the last day of the season there is something at stake. That is a real luxury."

Sunday -- then it is down to

In the meantime, Wenger is looking for a favour from West Ham. The east London side's manager, Alan Pardew, has repeatedly said he would not voluntarily field a weakened team. But injuries are starting to leave

the Hammers boss with few "When you are a good manager

you never let a game go and you give that feeling to your players, and the players will use that day," said Wenger, who fell out with Pardew after he questioned Arsenal's right to call themselves a British club given their reliance on foreign stars.

'You can never be seen in front of the team to say 'listen, today is not important'. "But if you have a cup final it is

better to play well in the game before, because you never recover completely after losing the game "If they go into the FA Cup final

next Saturday having lost against Tottenham, they will not win the cup final, I tell you."

and Wigan could hardly be greater. While there is barely a fan alive who can remember a time when the Gunners, a club where several outside the top division, this is Wigan's first campaign among the

They head into the match in a hugely creditable 10th place and proud manager Paul Jewell said: This season is already a success because we are going to finish higher than 17th.

Jewell's aim at the start of the season was nothing more than escaping relegation, hence finish-As if Sunday was not already

emotional enough, the game could

mark Dutch master Dennis

Bergkamp's last appearance in an Arsenal shirt. The striker, 37 next week, is to retire at the end of the season after more than a decade of sublime play since joining from Inter Milan in a

7.5 million pounds deal. However, Wenger said it was a possibility" that the famously nonflying Dutchman could, after taking the Eurostar train, feature against Barcelona.

But of Bergkamp's role on Sunday, the Arsenal manager admitted: "It will be very emotional. because he is part of that history at

"Nobody will ever forget Dennis Bergkamp -- and everybody who will play in this position for years to come will be compared to Dennis

"As much as Thierry Henry is a top target striker, Dennis Bergkamp as a provider was unique.'

expects

REUTERS, Cobham, England

rumours of big-money signings at Stamford Bridge

"I'm never concerned because always go from my own qualities. have a lot of confidence in myself and I'm not afraid for my place,"

Robben has helped Chelsea to their second Premier League title in a row but his form has been erratic at times this season, leading to newspaper speculation that he could be allowed to move to compatriot Martin Jol's Tottenham Hotspur.

"Of course you know at Chelsea that you can't play every game because it's a world class squad and maybe with extra world class players coming in it's going to be even harder."

about a move away from Stamford Bridge and said he is already thinking ahead to next season.

"I have three years left on my contract," he said. "I'm more satisseason and I want to do more.

next year -- because I think and I'm sure that I can do more than I did this time. I'm very confident and really looking forward to next season and hope to win prizes again."

Chelsea, crowned champions last Saturday, complete their campaign with a match at Newcastle on Sunday and Robben insists he is still learning and improving in English football

in every training session and every game. I think people forget sometimes I'm only 22 still. I'm still quite young and I'm still learning and developing. I know I can develop myself much more and that's what I'm working for.'

Anderlecht **Belgian title**

REUTERS, Brussels

clinch

Anderlecht claimed their 28th Belgian first division title in style on Friday with a 3-0 home win against Zulte Waregem on the final day of the season.

Anderlecht finished top on 70 points from 34 games to qualify for the Champions League. Liege had 65 with last year's champions Club Bruges ending the season in third on 64 with Ghent a further point

Anderlecht coach Frank Vercauteren already has one eye on next season after claiming the league title in his first full season in "Our focus has to be on the

Champions League next season and making a presence in Europe," Vercauteren told Reuters. "We will lose a number of play-

ers, some key players, probably four or five, so pre-season must be good for us and get the new players in quickly.' Anderlecht go straight into the

Champions League group stage with the runners-up entering the third qualifying round. Bruges qualify for the UEFA Cup where they could be joined by cup finalists Waregem if they beat Excelsior Mouscron next week-

Fine for Barca's Henry fan

Spain's sporting anti-violence commission on Friday handed a fine of 60,100 euros to the fan who presented Arsenal striker Thierry Henry with a personalised Barcelona shirt at Villarreal's El Madrigal stadium last month.

The fan raced onto the pitch during the goalless draw that saw Arsenal reach the Champions Legaue final in Paris where they will face Barca, mooted suitors of the France international striker, on May

Sevilla were meanwhile fined 15,000 euros and Barcelona 5,000 euros for security lapses involving fans managing to bring firecrackers to recent games.

Venables to aid McClaren

Steve McLaren, who takes over the England manager's job after the World Cup, is expected to ask for help from, among others, former boss Terry Venables, the Daily Mail reported on Saturday.

Venables, who left the England job after reaching the Euro 96 semifinals, is a free agent and would be keen to join the England set-up, according to the paper.

Meanwhile former England captain Stuart Pearce has passed on his best wishes to McClaren. Pearce was believed to be one

of the early contenders to replace Sven-Goran Friksson and is still on the Football Association's list of candidates to assist McClaren. who will take up his post on August The Manchester City boss

confirmed McClaren had not yet been in touch but, while insisting all along his preference was for the right man to do the job rather than an Englishman, he believes the appointment of the Middlesbrough chief is a good one.

"I am really pleased for Steve," said Pearce. "There is some form of commonsense in the fact he has already worked with the players inside the camp. Obviously, now he has taken over, he will know the players he is selecting quite well.

"He will be very proud to do the job and I wish him well.

Antigua ground most impressive

AFP, St John's

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has given the Sir Vivian Richards World Cup stadium the highest mark of approval, local organisers said.

of next year's World Cup in March and April, was given a 'A' grade from the visiting ICC Venue Tour team. "From what we have seen here

today, a tremendous amount of work has been done since we were last here in March and I can tell you that Antigua and Barbuda will for the first time get the highest ranking," said Don Lockerbie, the ICC's World Cup Chief Operations Officer and Venue Development Director.

"We are very pleased with the work we have seen here, they are on schedule. The Chinese partners and their Antiguan counterparts are working not only fast but they are producing good quality work."

Mourinho plays down Tevez link

Football

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho has played down speculation that the club will sign Corinthians striker Carlos Tevez, the BBC reported on

Mourinho was in Brazil on Thursday watching as the Argentine played against River Plate in a match abandoned following crowd British newspaper reports

anything from 20 million pounds to 60 million pounds for the 22-year-Mourinho, however, played down the link to Tevez "People can say what

they like, but there are 22 players in

claimed Chelsea were ready to bid

this match worth watching. "I go to the game because it is South America's equivalent of the Champions League and it is a great tournament. Now the Premiership is over I can go and enjoy other football without worry."

Mourinho's presence provoked widespread media coverage in Brazil and Corinthians moved quickly to calm fears that their star player is about to leave. 'There's no point naming a price

as he's not for sale," Kia Joorabchian, the president of

London-based Media Sports Investments who have invested millions of dollars in Corinthians, told the Times.

"He's 22 years old, the best player in South America and one of the best players in the world. It's not possible. For me he is irreplace-

Tevez was a 10-million-pound signing from Boca Juniors 18 months ago, and finished top scorer in the 2004 Olympic Games football event, with eight goals in six matches as Argentina won the gold

Speaking last week, Joorabchian claimed Tevez would only be allowed to leave for a fee in excess of the current world transfer record, which stands at the 46.5 million pounds Real Madrid paid Juventus for Zinedine Zidane in "I know that after the World Cup

in Germany a lot of teams will want to buy Tevez, but it does not matter to us," said Joorabchian. "Now, we have a project. In four or five years "Tevez will leave Corinthians if a

team pays the contract's release clause, which is between 100 million and 120 million euros (69million and 83million pounds). "Maybe he won't leave

Corinthians even for that money. I think that he is very happy here."

Ronaldo to miss Zizou farewell

Real Madrid's Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldo is set to miss out on French star Zinedine Zidane's Bernabeu farewell against Villarreal on Sunday as he is still recovering from a muscle tear, the club said

Ronaldo had to go off with the leg njury after scoring his 100th goal for the Spanish giants in a home draw with Real Sociedad last month and medical staff said he was not ready to be considered again.

In recent days he has been training on his own and looked to be making progress until doctors said the injury had not scarred over sufficiently. Real, with goalkeeper Iker Casillas

set to return from the suspension which forced him to sit out Thursday's 3-2 win at Racing Santander, are looking to secure themselves second place with Barcelona having recaptured the title. Real are a point ahead of

Valencia with two games to go before the end of a third straight trophyless season.

Zidane, 33, said last month he is retiring after the World Cup finals after five seasons at Real, whom he joined for 72 million euros (92 million dollars) from Juventus in 2001.

Ronaldo's Brazilian compatriot Julio Baptista is set to be available again after suffering a twisted ankle in last Sunday's bruising 1-0 win at

under-par 133 total but the 16-

year-old Wie was the darling of

the crowd and is tied 17th on 139

the men at the Sky 72 Golf Club,

Wie was rock solid with a round

In her eighth attempt against

heading into the weekend.

Wie makes history

America's teenage sensation Michelle Wie pumps her fist after sinking a putt

By Eugene Sheffer

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during the SK Telecom Open at the Sky Golf Club in Seoul on Friday.

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American teenage golf sensation Michelle Wie made history with her first cut in a men's event on a sizzling three-under-par 69 in the second round of the SK Telecom Open on Friday

since Babe Didrikson Zaharias in 1945 to make the cut on a men's international Tour.

Thailand's Prom Meesawat and Iain Steel of Malaysia lead the 600,000 dollar Asian Tour event at the halfway stage with an 11-

that included four birdies against With South Korea gripped by Wie-mania, her first appearance here since turning professional brought traffic to a near standstill at the 16th tee.

> "I cannot believe that I have made the cut. I have the flu and it's much better so that's why I will try better tomorrow," said a delighted Wie, whose parents come from Korea

> The Hawaiian teenager, who smacks her drives as long as the men, could hardly contain her excitement.

and would like to play even better now. Right now I'm feeling good but this event isn't over yet so I'll concentrate on tomorrow's round," she said.

"I'm really excited and happy

Traffic chaos ensued on the ahway which runs alongside the 16th hole as cars stopped to watch her.

"It was so fun. Seeing the police officers come and the crowd here got excited. It made me laugh," said Wie.

Wie is the fifth woman golfer to play on the Asian Tour, with Laura Davies of England and Japan's Ai Miyazato being the other high profile players who tried their luck against the men.

India's Jeev Milkha Singh, the Volvo China Open winner last month, fired a 66 to move into a share of third place with Korea's Lee Seong-ho, who posted a 67. Singh shot seven birdies against a lone bogey and is one shot

CRYPTOQUIP XAIM Z NBCM BT IZRIF KC

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FCZFBM' KC RC Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A FLOOD COMPLETELY RUINED YOUR CARPET, I IMAGINE THAT YOU

MIGHT EVENTUALLY RE-COVER. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals S

The Cryptoquip 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.

stars

difference.

time but we want to see Zimbabwe Test status continue. not what we are looking for. We lost

one-day matches, not necessarily full internationals, ahead of the World Cup next year.

"We have done what we wanted generations of the same family Rooney should focus on fitness

Dutch international goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar believes his injured Manchester United teammate Wayne Rooney should play down his ambitions of playing at the World Cup and concentrate on

getting fit instead. Rooney has been using an oxygen chamber in a bid to speed up his recovery from the broken foot he sustained last week.

A scan in four weeks time is set to

determine whether he makes Sven-

Goran Eriksson's England squad or not. As an international captain himself, van der Sar can understand Rooney's desperation to make the finals in Germany.

But the veteran goalkeeper

thinks his young Red Devils team-

mate would be better advised

focusing on being fit for the start of

next season and taking anything "The main thing for Wayne is not the World Cup, it is that he recovers

'As a player, you always hope to play in the big tournaments and in that sense, Wayne is no different from anyone else. "But at the moment, he just

needs to concentrate on getting fit,

no matter how long it takes, and take

fully," said van der Sar.

things from there.' After their draw against Middlesbrough on Monday, a win for United against Charlton on Sunday is essential if they are to be certain of finishing runners-up and claiming the second automatic spot in next season's Champions League.

Van der Sar admits the result places United in a position they did not want to be in, although he cautions against blaming the absence

"We have a lot of players other than Wayne Rooney who can come maintain sixth place.'

in and be capable of doing a job," he added. "It would have been much better if we had won on Monday but the fact is we didn't. But we are still one point ahead of Liverpool and we know what we have to do to get that

Sir Alex in Lazio?

INTERNET, undated

second spot.

Lazio have earned their UEFA Cup place and Coach Delio Rossi insists he wants to start a Sir Alex

Ferguson style era at the club.

together a competitive side that is able to compete on three fronts next season and I'd love to be the kind of figure Ferguson is for Manchester United: a mainstay who'd be on the bench for 18 vears. Rossi certainly worked quickly

with the Biancocelesti, taking a

team that only just avoided rele-

gation last term to a UEFA Cup

"I know that Lazio will put

spot in his debut term. "Achieving qualification for Europe is certainly one of the happiest chapters of my career," added the former Lecce and Atalanta boss.

letting that feat get to their heads when they face Ascoli on Sunday 'The season isn't over yet and we have to keep ourselves plugged in to give our fans another reason to celebrate and

However, he warns against

Robben Chelsea stay

Netherlands winger Arjen Robben expects to stay at Chelsea next season and refuses to worry about

Robben told reporters after training

Robben dismissed speculation

fied by last season than I was by this "That's why I'm looking forward to

"I think you always learn. I learn

The stadium, which will stage six matches in the Super Eight stages