



PHOTO: AFP

AC Milan wing-back Cafu celebrates after scoring against Parma during their serie A match at the Tardini Stadium in Parma on Sunday. Milan won 3-2.

Ballack to decide soon

AFP, Cologne

Bayern Munich midfielder Michael Ballack has said he would name the club he will join next season just before the World Cup.

The 29-year-old Ballack, out of contract with Bayern at the end of the season, has reportedly been negotiating with Chelsea for some time but manager Jose Mourinho wants a decision before the World Cup begins on June 9.

Ballack, talking in Cologne on Saturday following their 1-1 draw at Kaiserslautern which earned Bayern their 20th German league title, said: "I will talk about my next club just before the World Cup."

Spurs in food poisoning

REUTERS, London

Tottenham Hotspur's crucial Premier League match at West Ham United on Sunday is in doubt after several of their players were hit by food poisoning, the club confirmed.

According to Sky Sports, Premier League officials were on their way to Tottenham's hotel to evaluate the situation.

Tottenham need a victory to guarantee finishing fourth in the Premier League and claim the final Champions League qualification spot, providing Arsenal do not beat Barcelona in the Champions League final later this month.

'Right persons needed at right places'

SPORTS REPORTER

Leading sportsmen and organisers of the country yesterday called for changes in tradition when they urged the necessity of placing 'the right person at the right place' in different sports governing bodies.

Former national football captain Kazi Salahuddin, Badal Roy, Jewel Rana and current skipper Anif Khan Joy, ex-cricketer captains Gazi Ashraf Lipu, Minhajul Abedin Nannu, Akram Khan and Naimur Rahman Durjoy were among the speakers who stated their frustration about sports being run by non-technical persons at a track-suit distribution programme organised by Awami League's (AL) youth and sports sub-committee at Sudha Sadan, the residence of AL chief Sheikh Hasina, yesterday.

Sajib Wajed Joy, grandson of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and son of Sheikh Hasina, handed over the apparels to 22 under-14 footballers picked for higher training from the Sheikh Russel Under-14 football tournament held last year under the auspices of AL youth and sports sub-committee.

The speakers also urged to free sports from politics for a better future. Sajib also believed that sports and politics should not be mixed.

AL youth and sports secretary Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul, sports sub-committee chairman rear admiral (ret'd) Nurul Islam, tournament committee officials and head coach of the programme and former national booter Golam Sarwar Tipu were also present.

Barca not resting

AFP, Madrid

Spanish champions Barcelona continued their celebrations with a 2-0 win over local rivals Espanyol on Saturday before the real party started.

More than 87,000 fans stayed behind after the game to be praised by Barca coach Frank Rijkaard as captain Carles Puyol officially received the trophy for the club's 18th Primera Liga triumph.

"We appreciate the support, it's fundamental for any team," said Barca's Dutch mentor in perfect Catalan.

Puyol added: "Now we hope to be celebrating winning the Champions League very soon." Barcelona face Arsenal in the final on May 17.

One notable absentee from saluting the crowd via the microphone was the Spanish first division's leading scorer, Samuel Eto'o.

Twelve months ago, Eto'o belatedly apologized against bitter rivals Real Madrid, which went down well with Barca's supporters at the time but eventually earned him a fine and a stiff rebuke from Spain's football authorities.

The 34-year-old Swede was unable to mark his farewell with a goal, however, missing two good

chances in the first half.

Valencia regain second spot, at least overnight, from Real Madrid on the basis of their head-to-head results despite being held 1-1 by Atletico Madrid.

Atletico goalkeeper Leo Franco brought down David Villa in the box just 12 minutes into the game and the Spanish international striker had no problems getting his 24th goal of the season from the penalty.

However, Atletico took just eight minutes to equalise after Maxi Rodriguez found the net at the second attempt after a free-kick from Gabi Fernandez, the Argentine international's first shot being parried by goalkeeper Santiago Canizares.

Sevilla warmed up for the UEFA Cup final against English Premier side Middlesbrough on Wednesday with a 2-0 win over relegated Malaga.

Playing with only a handful of first-choice players, Brazilian striker Renato got Sevilla's opening goal after 17 minutes with a thundering shot from 25 yards.

Fernando Sales added Sevilla's second less than a minute before the final whistle.

Klinsmann decided not to go with public opinion and Scholl, the first player of Turkish descent to represent Germany, must now consider his future.

"I do not know whether I will play another season," Scholl added. "I will just go on holiday in the summer and decide after that."

Moggis in hot water

AFP, Rome

A Naples prosecutor is stepping up its investigation into alleged conspiracy to commit sporting fraud by GEA, the company of football agents owned by Alessandro Moggi, son of Juventus general director Luciano.

An inquiry into the dealings of GEA began two years ago, but the probe has intensified following the opening of another investigation by the Italian football federation into allegations Luciano Moggi hand-picked referees for his team's matches last season.

The transcripts may not be sufficient to suggest corruption or match-fixing by Moggi, but they could result in league-imposed sanctions on Juventus.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

The GEA case concerns alleged illegal betting on football matches in Italy. The inquiry was opened in June 2004 after Franco Dal Cin, director of Italian lower league club Venezia, claimed GEA 'controlled' a number of top referees and were using them to influence the outcome of results.

GEA are also being accused of abusing their dominant market position and creating unfair competition.

Luciano Moggi, who could be called to give evidence in the GEA case, is already in hot water.

Earlier this week The Gazzetta dello Sport and the Corriere della Sera published transcripts of telephone conversations between

Moggi and Pierluigi Pairetto, a former member of the federation's refereeing commission.

In these conversations, Moggi asks for officials of his choice to be assigned to his team's matches.

Moggi is also accused of having asked Pairetto to select a specific referee for a Champions League encounter in 2004 against Djurgardens of Sweden. At the time, Pairetto was also vice-president of the UEFA refereeing commission.

The transcripts may not be sufficient to suggest corruption or match-fixing by Moggi, but they could result in league-imposed sanctions on Juventus.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Too stoned to celebrate!

REUTERS, Bonn

Bayern Munich coach Felix Magath admitted on Sunday that he was unable to make it to his team's championship victory celebration on a Rhine River pleasure boat on Saturday night because he drank too much on the bus ride there.

"I celebrated before we got there and wasn't able to make it on the ship," Magath told German television network WDR on Sunday before a training match in the western city of Bonn. "I had more than one too many."

Magath, an avid drinker of green tea, had not had any alcohol at all in the last six months, according to Bayern commercial manager Uli Hoeneß. He told German television Magath had three glasses of champagne and beer on the bus to Cologne.

"Because Felix has not had a drop of alcohol for more than half a year, he did not feel capable of celebrating any more after the bus ride to Cologne," Hoeneß said, referring to Bayern's two-hour bus ride from Kaiserslautern on Saturday after they clinched the championship with a 1-1 draw.

"The three glasses of champagne and the beer had a devastating effect," Hoeneß said, adding Magath had not eaten anything either before the celebrations. "He had quite a bit to drink."

Scholl sets record

AFP, Kaiserslautern

Former German international Mehmet Scholl made history on Saturday when he won the Bundesliga title with Bayern Munich for a record eighth time.

A 1-1 draw with Kaiserslautern coupled with SV Hamburg's 4-2 loss against Hertha Berlin saw Bayern retain the championship and the 36-year-old Scholl picked up an eighth winners' medal.

Scholl, capped 36 times by his country, surpassed the record seven titles he shared with West Germany's 1990 World Cup winner Klaus Augenthaler to establish a new benchmark.

"I remember them all but perhaps the first one was the most memorable," said Scholl.

"Winning eight is fantastic and I do not think anyone can question that we are the best team in the land."

Scholl is Bayern's longest-serving player after joining from SC Karlsruhe in 1992 and has won eight German championships (1994, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006), five German cups and the Champions League in 2001.

This season he has largely been used as a supersub and his impact prompted calls for Germany manager Jurgen Klinsmann to include him in the squad for next month's World Cup finals.

Klinsmann decided not to go with public opinion and Scholl, the first player of Turkish descent to represent Germany, must now consider his future.

"I do not know whether I will play another season," Scholl added. "I will just go on holiday in the summer and decide after that."

Papin gets Strasbourg job

AFP, Marseille

Former French international striker Jean-Pierre Papin was on Saturday named as the new coach of Strasbourg, relegated this season to France's second division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Papin will sign at the start of next week after negotiations with the current coach Jacky Duguereperoux, said Strasbourg president Philippe Ginestet.

The 42-year-old Papin, who scored 30 goals in a 54-match international career, has recently been coaching FC Bassin Archacon in the French fifth division.

Ferguson vs Eriksson

AFP, London

Alex Ferguson has accused England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson of having a "half-baked idea" regarding Wayne Rooney's battle to be fit for the World Cup finals.

The Manchester United manager fears his star striker, currently sidelined with a broken right foot sustained after a tackle by Paulo Ferreira in last weekend's 3-0 defeat by Premiership champions

Chelsea, could be "pressured into playing before he is ready" and called for a "realistic approach" from England.

Eriksson has indicated he will name Rooney, 20, in his provisional England World Cup squad on Monday in the hopes he recovers in time to play some part in the finals, which start in Germany next month.

However Ferguson is fearful that Rooney, who has been using an oxygen chamber this week in a bid to regain full fitness, could worsen his injury by trying to come back too quickly.

"I don't want any complications



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Alex Ferguson (L) and Sven-Goran Eriksson.

Magath hails record breakers

AFP, Kaiserslautern

Bayern Munich set another German football record on Saturday after becoming the first team to win a league and cup double in successive seasons.

Bayern's 1-1 draw with Kaiserslautern on Saturday coupled with SV Hamburg's 4-2 loss against Hertha Berlin helped the club to a 20th domestic title adding to their cup triumph over Eintracht Frankfurt.

"It is great to wrap up the title with a week to go," said Bayern Munich coach Felix Magath.

"To defend the double is unique and the team has been exceptional. "We can all be very proud of our achievement and there will be some celebrations tonight for sure."

Magath arrived from VfB

Stuttgart in July 2004 and has lifted back-to-back doubles in his first two seasons.

"Full credit to Felix (Magath). He has won two league and cup doubles in a row. That is mighty impressive," said general manager Uli Hoeneß.

Bayern were far from convincing against lowly Kaiserslautern but captain Oliver Kahn saluted his team for winning a sixth title in eight seasons.

"Kaiserslautern made it difficult but we have a lot of experience in title battles and used it," said the German international goalkeeper.

"We have dominated the league this season and deserve to win the title. You need to come up with the big points at the right time and we did that."

SV Hamburg were Bayern's main challengers this season but their manager Thomas Doll admitted the best team had won.

with Wayne's broken foot -- especially with a bandwagon gathering pace to get him to the World Cup come hell or high water," Ferguson told Britain's News of the World Sunday tabloid.

"Let's get it straight right now. For the sake of the boy himself and the rest of the England team, we at United will do everything possible to get him fit in time.

"But I am not going along with this half-baked idea of him going to Germany 80 percent fit and then find him being pressured into playing before he is ready.

"That was the experience of David Beckham in the last World Cup, and it was a disaster -- because he wasn't right.

"I know Wayne is a special player. But he would be up against highly-honed opponents -- and in those circumstances, you not only need to be physically fit but match fit too.

"Wayne is young, and in the environment of a World Cup, it would be easy to persuade him to play despite not being fully fit. What is needed here is a realistic approach."

Eriksson's final 23-man World Cup squad must be sent to FIFA, the world governing body, by May 15 although replacements for injured players are permitted up until the eve of England's tournament opener against Paraguay on June 10.

"Congratulations to Bayern on their title win," Doll said. "They were the best team and deserved to finish top."

Werder Bremen coach Thomas Schaaf, who led the club to the title in 2004, also saluted Bayern's achievements.

"I offer my compliments to Bayern. They were incredibly consistent all season and that is the difference," said Schaaf.

Former Bayern star Mario Basler congratulated his ex-club -- where he won three Bundesliga titles -- but admitted he was hoping for some stronger competition in the future.

"Well done to Bayern but to be honest it is getting a bit boring now," Basler said.

Bayern have won 20 domestic titles with FC Nuremberg the next best on nine although their last triumph came way back in 1968.

Ruud's United days over?

AFP, Manchester

Ruud van Nistelrooy's Manchester United future is in doubt after he drove away from Old Trafford three hours before Sunday's clash with Charlton.

The precise reasons for van Nistelrooy's disappearing act have not been made public by United but it is difficult to imagine why the 29-year-old would go to the stadium, then leave without having heard some bad news.

"We can confirm Ruud van Nistelrooy has gone home," a statement from the club said. "The club will be making no further comment as we are concentrating on today's game."

Van Nistelrooy's United career has been the subject of intense debate since Sir Alex Ferguson axed him from the United starting line-up for the Carling Cup final win over Wigan at the Millennium

Stadium in February. At the time, the Dutchman accepted the decision, acknowledging Ferguson's argument that Louis Saha, having played in most of the earlier rounds, deserved to play in Cardiff.

Van Nistelrooy did make it clear he expected to be back for the following week's Premiership game with the Latics.

Once again, however, he was on the bench, as he was for the subsequent three games, all of which United won.

While van Nistelrooy did return for the win over West Ham on March 29, he promptly was dropped for the following week's match with Bolton and was on the bench two weeks ago at Stamford Bridge when the Red Devils took on Chelsea in a match that ended their lingering title hopes.

If, as seems likely, van Nistelrooy left the ground in a fit of temper, it is inconceivable he will not be sold in the summer.

Few, if any, players have crossed Ferguson and emerged to tell the tale.

Even though he is now in his 20th year at United, Ferguson's ruthless streak remains and his authorization of Roy Keane's departure in November is proof of his willingness to take unpopular decisions if he believes it benefits the club.

Ironically, on Friday van Nistelrooy was talking about playing in Keane's testimonial against Celtic on Tuesday before heading off to join Holland's World Cup campaign.

However, even though this season he became only the eighth player in United history to score 150 goals for the club -- and did so in just 214 games -- it appears his appearance against Middlesbrough last Monday, when he missed the penalty that would have secured United's place in next season's Champions League group phase, could be his last.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

1 "___ and Circumstance"	40 Ball in a gym?	DOWN	11 Capone foe
5 Sleuth	42 Gomer Pyle, e.g.	1 Unadulterated	19 Provided
8 Dazzle	45 Vim	2 Exam format	21 Raw rock
12 Eurasian divider	49 Boxer	3 Creche Trio	24 "Amazing Race" aid
13 Eventual aces	50 Carte lead-in	4 Just a bundle of nerves?	25 Swelled head
14 Zilch	52 Cleo's water	5 Steak request	26 Army bigwigs
15 The latest fashion	53 For fear that	6 Co-star with Nicolette and Marcia	28 Romanian money
16 Mas' mates	54 Clerical address, for short	7 Stage group	29 Lacking balance
17 Makes a decision	55 Verve	8 Sound sleeper?	30 Old, in the dict.
18 Panacea	56 Glaswegian girl	9 Tennis tactics	31 Nipper's co.
20 Trunks	57 Do brickwork	10 "Do ___ others ..."	36 Score units
22 E.T.'s craft	58 1981 Beatty movie		37 A billion years
23 Agl.			38 First game of the season
24 Shea squad			41 Broadcasting
27 Beyond the obvious			42 Tenth of a cent
32 Past			43 Vicinity
33 Keanu's "Matrix" role			44 "My Name is ___"
34 Leno's employer			46 Anger
35 Arose suddenly			47 Pleased
38 Greek mountain			48 Longings
39 Greet the villain			51 Meadow

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12										
15										
18										
24	25	26								
32										
35										
42	43									
49										
53										
56										

CRYPTOQUIP
 MIYIDARF V YRVTTWYVR
 PVDYI TYGSSR GVP AS TGEA
 PSJD, XMSLVLR F LIYVETI
 WA JIDA LVRRIA EX.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A LION IS EAGER TO GET SOMETHING STARTED, ONE WOULD ASSUME IT'S ROARIN' TO GO.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals O
 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.



PHOTO: STAR

Sajib Wajed Joy (L) hands over a package of tracksuit to an under-14 footballer at Sudha Sadan, residence of Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, on Sunday.