



Arsenal striker Emanuele Adebayor (L) runs off to celebrate his winning goal against Manchester United during their Premiership clash at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Adebayor sinks United

AFP, London



Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor's late goal clinched Arsenal's first Premiership victory this season as they stunned Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Adebayor scored in the 85th minute to cap a fine display from Arsene Wenger's side, who had also missed a glorious chance to take the lead in the first half when Tomasz Kuszczak saved Gilberto Silva's penalty.

United had started the season with four successive league wins but Sir Alex Ferguson's team were below their best as that 100 percent record was ended in dramatic fashion.

Spanish midfielder Cesc Fabregas stole the ball off Cristiano Ronaldo in midfield with five minutes remaining and slipped a perfectly-weighted pass to Adebayor, who flicked his shot past Kuszczak to give Arsenal a first win at Old Trafford since 2002.

The victory was even more impressive as Arsenal, who had drawn two and lost one of their first three league matches, were without star striker Thierry Henry.

Defeat for United means they stay second, one point behind surprise leaders Portsmouth.

Kuszczak, making his United debut in place of the ill Edwin van der Sar, had conceded a penalty when Adebayor fell as he tried to dribble round the Polish goalkeeper. But Kuszczak redeemed himself as he dived to his right to keep out Gilberto's spot-kick.

Arsenal goalkeeper Jens Lehmann had produced a brave stop to deny Ronaldo in the first half and he ensured the Gunners held on after Adebayor's goal when he turned away Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's late effort.

Didier Drogba's stunning strike moved Chelsea into third place as his side beat Liverpool 1-0 despite Michael Ballack's sending-off.

Elsewhere, South Africa striker Benni McCarthy scored his third goal for Blackburn as his side

defeated Manchester City 4-2 at Ewood Park.

McCarthy has made a big impact since his 2.5 million pounds pre-season move from Portuguese club Porto. And he produced a cool close range finish to restore Blackburn's lead after half-time before Paul Gallagher added a fourth to seal a first win this season for Mark Hughes's side.

Blackburn had taken the lead through a Trevor Sinclair own goal but Joey Barton equalised for City. Pedersen put Blackburn back ahead before Andre Ooijer's own goal levelled the score again.

Nigeria striker Obafemi Martins hit his first Newcastle goal as his side clinched a 2-0 win at West Ham.

Martins was also the provider for Damien Duff who opened the scoring in the 50th minute with his first goal since signing from Chelsea.

And Martins, a 10-million-pounds buy from Inter Milan, added the second in the 75th minute to give manager Glenn Roeder a happy return to the club that sacked him in 2003.

West Ham has not won any of their three matches since the surprise signings of Argentine stars

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TOP SIX							
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Portsmouth	5	4	1	0	9	0	13
Man United	5	4	0	1	11	3	12
Chelsea	5	4	0	1	9	3	12
Everton	5	3	2	0	10	4	11
Aston Villa	5	2	3	0	6	3	9
Reading	5	3	0	2	7	6	9

Roma, Palermo on top

AFP, Rome



Roma and Palermo share top spot in Italy's Serie A after they both made it two wins in as many matches on Sunday.

Title hopefuls Roma beat Siena 3-1, while Sicilian side Palermo defeated Lazio 2-1 in Rome where David Di Michele struck twice for the visitors.

AC Milan also chalked up their

second consecutive win -- a 2-0 victory away to Parma -- to chip further away at the eight-point penalty given to them for their part in the Italian match-fixing scandal.

Messina came close to making it a three-way tie for first place, but they conceded a late equaliser in a 1-1 draw at Ascoli where Ascoli keeper Gianluca Pagliuca set a new record for goalkeeper appearances in the top division.

Making his 570th appearance, the 39-year-old former Italy international overtook the previous record of 569 held by the legendary Dino

Zoff.

Roma's passionate fans always have high expectations of their team, but coach Luciano Spalletti refused to get carried away with the club's strong start.

"We will try to do our best, but here you always have to keep your feet on the ground," he said.

"Paradoxically it can be difficult in this environment when the team is winning. But then again, it's tougher when the team is losing."

Fiorentina, facing a mammoth task to stay up after being handed a 19-point penalty for match-fixing, lost the Tuscany derby, going down 1-0 at Livorno. Cristiano Lucarelli headed the only goal 11 minutes into the second-half.

Goals from Antonio Di Natale and Brazilian Felipe gave Udinese a convincing 2-0 home win over Torino, while the battle of the newly-promoted clubs between Catania and Atalanta ended goalless. Chievo drew 1-1 at Empoli.

Roma's win at Siena never looked in doubt after the home side had Ezio Brevi sent off in the 27th minute, and the 2001 champions made their numerical supremacy count in a one-sided second half.

Brazilian Rodrigo Taddei prodded home from close range shortly after half time and Chilean playmaker David Pizarro made it 2-0, sliding home Taddei's cross in the 70th minute.

Mario Frick pulled one back three minutes from time with a fluky effort that bounced off his body, but a stoppage-time goal from Stefano Okaka restored Roma's two-goal cushion.

The timing of Roma's win was perfect given the 1-1 draw for championship rivals Inter Milan on Saturday, coupled with the fact that

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AC Milan star Kaka is all smiles after converting a penalty kick to give them a victory over rivals Parma during their Serie A clash on Sunday.

TOP SIX							
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Roma	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Palermo	2	2	0	0	6	4	6
Atalanta	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Inter Milan	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Empoli	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Messina	2	1	1	0	2	1	4

Barcelona march on

AFP, Madrid



Spanish league rivals David Beckham and Samuel Eto'o were among the players making the headlines on Sunday -- but for distinctly opposite reasons.

Beckham, still hurting from recently learning that he is for the moment no longer part of the England team, scored Real Madrid's second goal in a 2-0 win over Real Sociedad at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Former Arsenal forward Jose Antonio Reyes opened the scoring for Real in the 69th minute, and Beckham's 90th minute goal sealed the points which kept Fabio Capello's under-fire side within touching distance of their arch rivals.

Barcelona are not top of the Spanish league, but after their 3-0 away humbling of Racing Santander they are only behind on-form Sevilla on goals difference.

Racing got off to a lively start, and were unlucky not to have taken a two-goal lead inside the first 20 minutes.

However Barcelona, the reigning European and Spanish champions, showed their class soon afterwards when Eto'o broke the deadlock with a superb strike from long range.

The Cameroonian international's swerving shot from 25 yards bounced just before it reached Racing's keeper, and slipped almost inexplicably past his grasp and into the net.

Barcelona were forced into a nervous wait throughout the second half before Frenchman Ludovic Giuly doubled their lead in the 84th minute.

That gave Barca the freedom to roam, and Brazilian showman Ronaldinho added their third goal from the penalty spot.

Andalusians in a 3-2 win against Real Betis.

It means Sevilla, Barcelona and Valencia remain the only unbeaten teams in the league after three league matches.

Real are in fourth two points adrift and just ahead of Deportivo La Coruna on goals difference after the Galicians' 2-0 win over Villarreal on Saturday.

Barcelona's win warmed the hopes of their fans and their coach Frank Rijkaard, but it ended with a tinge of regret.

Eto'o, who in the past has been the victim of racist taunts which almost led to him walking off the pitch last February during a game against Real Zaragoza, was once

TOP SIX							
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Sevilla	3	3	0	0	10	3	9
Barcelona	3	3	0	0	9	2	9
Valencia	3	3	0	0	5	1	9
Real Madrid	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Deportivo	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Zaragoza	3	2	0	1	7	3	6

again the victim.

Spanish radio Cadena Ser reported that after his goal Eto'o the striker was taunted by Santander's supporters.

Real's star-studded side meanwhile will have cause for relief after a victory which will go part way in appeasing their 2-0 domination by French champions Lyon in midweek Champions League action.

However Capello, in his second spell at the nine-times European champions, will still have cause for concern.

Real struggled to find an opening against Sociedad in the first half and walked off to jeers and whistling at the interval.

In a more convincing second half, Real were liberated by Reyes' goal, a direct free-kick which indirectly led to their second goal.

The former Gunner went off to the widespread approval of the applauding Bernabeu public, and was replaced by Beckham.

Beckham's goal came in injury time, his individual effort beating Asier Riesgo to put the match beyond reach of their visitors.

Ronaldo fine with bench role

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Ronaldo said on Sunday that he would be happy to sit on the bench if he is recalled by Brazil and hit back at criticism of his performances at the World Cup.

The Real Madrid striker, who kept his place in the team at the World Cup despite widespread calls for him to be dropped, added that he had always been picked on merit, not on his name.

"My future in the team will always depend on the coach," he said in an interview with Globo television.

"If I deserve to be there, I'm sure he will pick me and I will play with pride and pleasure."

"I never wanted a guaranteed place in the team, I always wanted to win my place. If I won my place at someone else's expense, it was because I played better and scored more goals, not because I did something underhand."

Asked if he would accept a place on the substitutes' bench, Ronaldo said: "Yes, I would accept it, certainly. Nobody has, nor has ever had, a guaranteed place."

"All the great players have sat on the bench and this doesn't diminish anyone."

Ronaldo, who will be 30 this month, underwent a minor operation to clean up his left knee after the World Cup and has yet to play

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I respect Benitez: Mourinho

AFP, London

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho said he respected Liverpool opposite number Rafael Benitez after shaking hands with him at the weekend to signal an end to their feud in public.

Mourinho and Benitez have been at loggerheads in recent weeks and their handshake after Chelsea's 1-0 win at Stamford Bridge on Sunday appears to have put an end to the long-running saga of public disagreements.

The match saw Michael Ballack earn his marching orders for stamping but Didier Drogba's strike meant the Premiership champions came away with the win.

Mourinho said: "I would have preferred to do it in the tunnel where we could also have shared a few words but we didn't have the chance. He wasn't happy like I wasn't happy with the previous period and now it's over."

"We don't have to be close friends. We don't have the time to be close friends and we are two different sides fighting for the same objective."

"But we have a relationship of respect. I admire his qualities as a coach and I'm happy we shook hands."

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Beckham admits England fear

Football

AFP, London

Former England captain David Beckham said Monday there was a possibility he may never play for his country again.

The high-profile Real Madrid midfielder, who had a poor World Cup earlier this summer and then decided to give up the captain's armband, added he would be trying to get back into the reckoning.

Beckham, 31, who was left out of the first England squad selected by Steve McClaren, told BBC radio: "When I've had knocks before I've always wanted to prove people wrong, and I want to do that again."

"If I never play for England again then I've played 94 times and captained England for six years and have had an amazing time playing for England. I don't want it to end, I want it to carry on. If I was a betting man I wouldn't bet on me playing again -- but who knows?"

Despite not being part of the McClaren era, Beckham insists there are grounds for optimism under the new regime.

Speaking to BBC Radio One, the Real Madrid midfielder said: "The whole change -- the new manager and set-up -- the lads have adapted well and they've got a great captain in John Terry. I've got so much respect for him, he's a young lad but he's captained Chelsea and now England."

"There are so many other great players in the team, so I think the future is good."

McClaren, who coached Beckham at Manchester United before the midfielder moved to Real Madrid, told Beckham he was a "casualty" of the changes being implemented following Sven-Goran Eriksson's reign.

Beckham described the day he left out of the squad: "It was out of the blue, I had a few phone calls before from him

asking about my fitness. I thought everything was good."

"He came on the phone and said 'you've had an amazing time as an England player and captain, I want to move forward'. He said there will be casualties on the way and that you are one of the casualties". It surprised me and I'm gutted."

"At the end of the day he has a

decision to make, when I got off the phone I was angry and disappointed but I want to play again."

Beckham added: "You need things like that to spur you on and prove people wrong. He (McClaren) came to United in 1999, we won the treble that year, he's a good coach and I've sure he'll be a good coach for England."



Real Madrid midfielder David Beckham celebrates his last minute goal against Real Sociedad during their Primera Liga clash at the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP