

Tavano eyes Italy return

INTERNET, undated

Francesco Tavano is pining for a Serie A return after admitting that his Spanish adventure is turning into a nightmare.

The striker joined Valencia in a 7-million-pound deal from Empoli, but he has struggled to settle and has now asked his agent to help him solve the situation.

"I feel I have wasted all that I had achieved up until now," said Tavano, who was one of Serie A's top marksmen last term.

"I feel I am not considered here - even when I was feeling well and training hard I was never called up."

"Stefano Fiore was right, there is a prejudice against Italian players. I feel totally useless."

"I have asked my agent to come to Spain to discuss this problem, I can no longer stand this situation."

Valencia are still unbeaten in Primera Liga after they earned a draw with Barcelona at the Nou Camp on Sunday, but Coach Quique Sanchez Flores has not handed any playing time to Tavano.

The Spanish side will now face Roma on Wednesday in the Champions League tie at the Mestalla Stadium, with both teams eyeing the top spot in Group D.



Manchester United teammates Patrice Evra (L) and Wayne Rooney joke during a training session at the Carrington ground in Manchester on Monday.

Length key in Becks contract

INTERNET, undated

David Beckham's negotiations over a contract extension with Real Madrid will initially centre around the length of the deal, according to the Spanish club.

While Real look at the prospect of bringing in fresh blood after a long-term injury to right-back Cicinho, they are also in contract discussions over new deals for midfielders Beckham and Guti.

Beckham's current deal ends next summer and sporting director Predrag Mijatovic said on TVE television show El Rondo: "The renewal of Beckham's contract is the decision of the club, he is very keen to stay here."

"The number of years for which his contract will be renewed is what we must first talk about with his representative."

"We are all delighted with Beckham and he wants to stay, those are the two fundamental things."

"With respect to Guti, he has two years left. He wants to stay and we value that possibility. All they have to have is a little patience."

Cahill saves Everton's blushes

AFP, Newcastle



goal maintained Everton's unbeaten start to the Premiership season.

Cahill's first-half header cancelled out Shola Ameobi's controversial opener as the Merseyside club rose to fourth in the table, one of only three top flight sides without a defeat so far, thanks to a fully merited point in an entertaining 1-1 draw. The Everton manager said: "You just need to look at Tim's goals this season, he's got four now and that's a great return. He's one of the best at getting in the box."

"We can play him in the middle of the park, or in between the strikers and midfield, or we can play him up top. We're playing him slightly further forward than a central midfielder player."

"He's as good as anyone in the business at getting into the box and scoring goals. He's robust and wholehearted and does a good job for us."

Cahill headed home a Mikel Arteta cross, stealing in to beat compatriot Craig Moore, shortly before the break to haul the visitors level after replays showed Ameobi to be clearly offside as he fired home from Emre's 15th-minute free-kick.

Moyes added: "I've not seen an offside like it. I really am trying not to mention referees and linesmen this season because I make mistakes and so do my players."

"We push up for offside, Ameobi's the last man, the ball goes directly to him and he scores so you can't even say there was a mix up. What do I do? Do I just stand back and say that's fine? I'm passionate about winning for Everton and we got a bad decision."

Both sides ended a tetchy contest with 10 men. Everton full-back Tony Hibbert earned a second caution for a foul on Newcastle substitute Antoine Sibierski 90 seconds after Titus Bramble had departed in similar circumstances for upending Leon Osman 15 minutes from time.

"Both sendings-off were correct," said Newcastle manager Glenn Roeder.

"Both were poor decisions to tackle, and both mistimed. Titus wouldn't have made that challenge in the first minute but he's gone right through the back of the lad and it's very hard to make a case for him."

With Bramble joining Celestine Babayaro in serving a ban, Newcastle are facing a shortage of numbers for Sunday's Premiership trip to Manchester United.

Roeder now faces an anxious wait to discover the extent of Ameobi's ankle injury, the forward being forced off just 10 minutes after claiming his fourth goal of the season.

"It's too early to say on Shola," the Newcastle manager said. "He turned to run, put his right foot down and felt something quite sharp in his ankle go. Until we have it scanned on Monday we won't know, we hope it's not too serious."

Team	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Chelsea	6	5	0	1	11	3	15
Portsmouth	5	4	1	0	9	0	13
Man United	6	4	1	1	12	4	13
Everton	6	3	3	0	11	5	12
Aston Villa	6	3	3	0	8	3	12
Liverpool	6	3	1	2	8	6	10

Rui Costa out of United clash

REUTERS, Copenhagen

Benfica playmaker Rui Costa will not play in Wednesday's Champions League match against Danish champions FC Copenhagen due to a thigh injury, the Portuguese team said.

The 34-year old did not travel with the team for the first match of the group stage of the competition, remaining in Lisbon for treatment.

"There is a small edema on the back of his right thigh," a Benfica spokesman said. "Out of an abundance of caution, he did not travel to Denmark."

Rui Costa returned this season to the club that launched his career after 12 years in Italy.

Former European champions Benfica reached the group stage after beating Austria Vienna 4-1 on aggregate, while FC Copenhagen shocked Ajax Amsterdam 3-2.

Rodriguez realistic

REUTERS, Madrid

Argentina forward Maxi Rodriguez refused to be carried away by Atletico Madrid's dramatic late win over Sevilla in the Primera Liga.

The UEFA Cup holders came into Sunday's game on the back of a 12-match winning run in all competitions that started in April and were on their way to their 13th after Brazilian Renato put them ahead just before the break.

But red cards for centre-backs Javi Navarro and Julien Escudé in the second half swung the game Atletico's way and Maxi struck twice in the last six minutes to earn them a barely merited win.

"The most important thing was the points but I am delighted to have scored because it gives me confidence," Maxi said.

"We didn't play very well in the first half and managed to win more through passion than through good football."

The victory puts Atletico fifth in the table with nine points from a possible 12, level with Sevilla who have a superior goal difference, and one adrift of the leading trio of Barcelona, Real Madrid and Valencia.

With the city derby against Real Madrid looming next Sunday, Maxi remained cautious about his side's chances in the Bernabeu.

"Everyone knows how important this game is but we must remain prudent, and hope that this time it is our turn," he said.

Atletico have not beaten arch-rivals Real since a 3-1 win in the Bernabeu in October 1999.

Cottbus hold Nuremberg

AFP, Berlin



Jawhar Mnari put Nuremberg ahead after ten minutes but Steffen Baumgart equalised for Cottbus seven minutes from time.

Bayern Munich had moved ominously to the top of the Bundesliga table with Dutch international Marc van Bommel scoring for the second game in succession to clinch a 2-1 win over Alemannia Aachen on Saturday.

The three points lift Bayern to the summit for the first time this season with tens points from five games with the reigning champions ahead of Schalke 04 on goals scored.

Schalke defeated VfL Wolfsburg 2-0 courtesy of goals from German international Kevin Kuranyi and Brazilian Lincoln.

FC Nuremberg could have knocked Bayern off their perch on Sunday but dropped from second to fourth position with nine points following their draw.

Last season's second and third placed teams, Werder Bremen and SV Hamburg, shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw that is no good for either side.

Bremen lose further ground on Bayern, now three points ahead, while Hamburg are still left searching for their first win of the new campaign after four draws and one defeat.

Bayern, who lost 2-1 to Arminia

Bielefeld last weekend, are also struggling to get going, but continue to grind out results without playing well.

"We only played well after going 1-0 down and we did not do anything more than we needed to," admitted Bayern manager Felix Magath.

Bayern travel to Italy to face Inter Milan in the Champions League on Wednesday and goal hero van Bommel called for an improved display.

"We were too static and were fortunate not to be punished near the end," said van Bommel.

"The Champions League is a different level altogether and we are certainly not where we want to be and can do much more."

Aachen took a surprise 38th minute lead at the Allianz Arena through Sascha Dum with his free-kick taking a cruel deflection off Brazilian defender Lucio to wrongfoot Oliver Kahn.

Bayern hit back though after just 60 seconds with Peruvian international Claudio Pizarro, who said earlier this week that he may leave at the end of the season, heading in a corner from the right.

Van Bommel, a recent signing from Barcelona, then scored for the second game in succession with a low 55th minute shot creeping into the corner.

Aachen had a goal controversially ruled out for offside and the hosts held on for three points.

Hamburg have forgotten what taking three points feels like and were not satisfied with a point in the north German derby with Bremen.

"We saw a real team on the pitch today and we created a lot of chances but unfortunately we did not get our reward," explained

Hamburg chief Thomas Doll.

Hamburg handed a debut to Argentina captain Juan Pablo Sorin, a three-million-euro signing from Villarreal, and the hosts started the stronger against a Bremen team denied their star striker Miroslav Klose through injury.

Serbia and Montenegro international Danijel Ljuboja had a great chance to break the deadlock for Hamburg on 22 minutes but could not get the ball out of his feet and hit a tame shot at Tim Wiese in the Bremen goal.

Bremen took the lead on 58 minutes with German international Tim Borowski scoring his first goal of the season, drilling a shot through the goalkeeper's legs.

Defender Bastian Reinhardt equalised with 68 minutes gone but Hamburg had Iranian international Mehdi Mahdavia sent off shortly afterwards for a crude challenge on Brazilian Diego.

"If you go in front you want more from the match but overall I am happy with the result," said Bremen coach Thomas Schaaf.

Meanwhile in Sunday's other game VfL Bochum moved off the bottom of the table with a 2-1 win over Arminia Bielefeld.

Substitute Ivo Ilicic scored a 73rd minute winner for promoted Bochum and VfL Wolfsburg now prop up the 18-strong Bundesliga.

TOP SIX

Team	P	W	D	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Bayern	5	3	1	1	7	4	10
Schalke	5	3	1	1	6	3	10
Hertha	5	2	3	0	8	2	9
Nuremberg	5	2	3	0	6	2	9
M'gladbach	5	3	0	2	6	5	9
Cottbus	5	2	2	1	6	5	8

Top six a pipe dream for O'Neill

INTERNET, undated



despite their six-game unbeaten start.

O'Neill has transformed the fortunes of Villa since replacing David O'Leary last month and 12 points from the opening six games - their best start since 1998 - have lifted the midlands club into fifth spot after the weekend games.

But the former Celtic boss has his feet firmly on the ground and points to the size of his current squad as one reason why it will be difficult to remain among the front-runners for

the next eight months.

O'Neill, whose side visit champions Chelsea on Saturday, said: "Do I think it is possible we can finish in top six? Not at all. There are moments in games where we are absolutely fine and there are moments in the game where we are a bit uncomfortable."

"First of all I'd be concerned at the size of the squad we have. Sometimes I look at the names on the back of the match programmes and see other clubs with a more extensive list of players."

"It doesn't matter. We have what we have. The major players need to stay fit up until January at least."

"That is why it is so encouraging for Gavin McCann to come through from being injured against Scunthorpe on Wednesday night to play against Charlton on Saturday

because you sometimes fear the worst."

"It was a lovely afternoon on Saturday, things are going great at the moment but we are a long way short of that [finishing in the top six]."

O'Neill added: "The players have done very well indeed but we are going to hit a period where we can't get a result and that's going to happen and perhaps then that will be the real test for us but at the moment I'm very pleased."

"I can't do anything about the expectations but eventually we will find our level. We know that ourselves. There are a couple of hammerings around the corner. We have to take it and deal with it when it comes."

"But we are enjoying it at the moment and the players have been excellent. You can still be excellent in defeat. It depends how you get beaten."

Dario Silva in intensive care

Football

REUTERS, Montevideo

Former Uruguay striker Dario Silva was in intensive care and in danger of having his lower right leg amputated after a car crash on Sunday, a hospital official said.

Silva suffered an exposed fracture of the leg after the accident on Montevideo's main seafront avenue on Sunday morning.

"It's the condition of the leg which worries us," Mario Cancela, head of the intensive unit at the private hospital where Silva is being treated, told reporters.

"It's a very complex injury and a real risk."

Silva, who played for English Premier League Portsmouth last year, is currently without a contract.

The 33-year-old striker began his career with local side Defensor Sporting before joining more fashionable Penarol.

He moved to Europe in 1995 to play for Italy's Cagliari and has since played for Espanyol, Malaga and Sevilla in Spain as well as Portsmouth.

Silva made 49 appearances for Uruguay between 1995 and 2005, scoring 14 goals, and played at the 2002 World Cup, when Uruguay were knocked out in the first round.

His last international appearance was in the World Cup qualifying playoff at home to Australia last year.



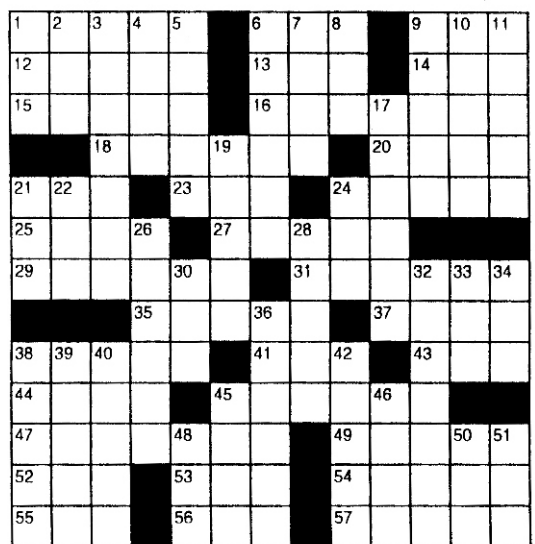
DARIO SILVA



DIVINE BLESSINGS: Steaua Bucharest owner Gigi Becali kisses a cross while a Roman orthodox priest blesses their stadium in elaborate preparations ahead of their Champions League encounter against Lyon on Tuesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Hindu prince
 - 6 Type squares
 - 9 Roadie's burden, at times
 - 12 Humiliate
 - 13 Without a— (broke)
 - 14 Standard festive
 - 16 Gandolfini role
 - 18 Foam statue
 - 20 Piccadilly format
 - 21 Chart format
 - 23 Buddhist sect
 - 24 Access
 - 25 Writer Ferber
 - 27 Go
 - 29 Dowager's pet, typically
 - 31 Mason or Matlock
 - 35 Mercenary
 - 37 Asian legume
 - 38 Aspect
 - 41 Lettuce variety
- DOWN**
- 2 Org. of 31-Across
 - 3 Comic/TV host
 - 4 In the Red?
 - 5 Avis competitor
 - 6 Ancient ascetic
 - 7 Othello was one
 - 8 Dine here and there?
 - 9 Here and there?
 - 10 Estate house
 - 11 Tediously dull
 - 17 Gets more issues
 - 19 Paris' cap
 - 21 Energy
 - 22 Altar affirmative
 - 24 Mrs. Peron
 - 26 Part of speech
 - 28 Apportion
 - 30 Say it's okay
 - 32 "Double Fantasy" woman
 - 33 Storm center
 - 34 Uncivilized
 - 36 Confront aggressively
 - 38 Tall tale
 - 39 Repeatedly
 - 40 Bivouacs
 - 42 Knap-sack part
 - 45 King of Siam's employee
 - 46 Sommelier's subject
 - 48 Cartesian conclusion
 - 50 Brewer's vat
 - 51 Crafty
- Solution time: 25 mins.**
- UNDO HUR SHED
TAOS ERA GED
ATOP ANI RAGE
MORRID MODOED
ETA ALL
ASHV CASTLING
CLO HBS NU
ENGINER ZEBU
SRO RWE
BEHIND REARST
ICES APE LIEU
BRAE USA OPEN
SUDS BTD TEINS



CRYPTOQUIP
K T H O H S V L J J N B Y N J K ' J
H C L N O I H Y K F U J C L N K H
O S N V H Q, E L K K T B J H F H S H
I H S H R Q J K U K L J V Q I E U R J.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: BEING FIRST TO DECIDE ON SOME SPARKLING ORNAMENTAL BITS, I HAD THE PICK OF THE GLITTER.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals H
The Cryptquip 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.