Terry set for Bulgaria trip

AFP, London

Chelsea captain John Terry is set to travel to to Bulgaria on Monday, although suffering from back problems, for their Champions League match with Levski Sofia.

The 25-year-old central defender did not play against Fulham on Saturday and was a doubt for the

The Blues skipper suffered muscle spasms after training on Friday and the problem worsened overnight. He was barely able to move on Saturday morning and was forced to sit-out the 2-0 win at Craven Cottage.

Terry had treatment from an osteopath on Sunday as his teammates trained and insists the problems has eased, with the muscle feeling much looser.

Khalid Boulahrouz, who missed the game at Craven Cottage because of an eye infection, will also be in the travelling party for Wednesday's Group Amatch.

Boulahrouz trained on Sunday. He is expected to be fit and is favourite to partner Ricardo Carvalho at the back if Terry is ruled

Levski limbered up for their first home game in the Champions League group stage with a 3-0 league win at Smolian on Friday. The Bulgarian champions are seven points clear at the top of the table

Freak injury derails player

REUTERS, Beijing

Shenyang Ginde player Liu Jianye will miss the rest of the domestic Chinese Super League season after suffering a split scrotum during a club match, local media reported on

The 19-year-old midfielder's injury, sustained after Xiamen Lanshi defender Meng Yao kicked him after 15 minutes of Sunday's game, was the latest in a series to plague the northeastern China club, the Beijing News said.

Liu's injury would require an operation and at least 10 stitches, the newspaper said.

Last month, Ginde paid 1.3 million vuan (\$164.000) in compensation to former player and Guinea international. Ousmane Bangoura. who lost the sight of his right eye after his eyeball was ruptured by an opponent's studs in a club match against Qingdao Luneng in July.

Ginde, lying third from bottom of the Chinese Super League with three games left in the 2006 season, also lost defenders Wang Jiaduo to a broken nose and Wang Qiang to a broken cheekbone earlier in the year.

"Ginde has had four serious injuries this season and countless light injuries," Ginde's Dutch coach, Martin Koopman, told a news conference after the game.

"The whole club is like a hospital. Our players have suffered too

Crespo's triple delight

INTERNET, undated

Hernan Crespo had three reasons to be happy after his goals helped Inter overcome Chievo to seal top spot in Serie A The Nerazzurri jumped ahead of

almost throwing away a 4-0 lead against the Verona-based side. "It's always nice to receive com-

Palermo and Messina, despite

pliments, it's the best thing," said Crespo after the match.

"At the moment things are going well for me and most of all for Inter. "I'm three times happy today for

the victory, the two goals and the first place in the table. "A lot of things have been said recently, but in the end we are top of

the table and we should be proud." Crespo was partnered by Adriano from the start, as Zlatan Ibrahimovic travelled to Sweden

after his first son Maximilian was born on Friday. "Adriano set me up with a wonderful assist and did some of the

things he usually does." added Crespo. "This is important for him and all of us. "President Massimo Moratti

jumped to his feet after my goal? I'm pleased, I'm proud to make such an extraordinary person happy even if just for five seconds! Inter next test comes in Wednesday's Champions League

tie with Bayern Munich, after the poor start against Sporting Lisbon two weeks ago.

"It will be a hard match, but also exciting to see," enthused the on loan Chelsea ace.

"I would really like to score a goal for Inter in the Champions League, but for now let's enjoy this victory the top spot in the table

"A lot has been said about us these days. They said we weren't playing well and too many words were spoken, now we have to stay calm and keep our feet on the ground.

GLAD YOU ARE BACK: Real Madrid's midfield anchor Mahamadou Diarra (R) hugs teammate Ronaldo in training on Monday after the mercurial striker returned to training on the eve of their Champions League clash against Dynamo Kiev.

Inter clinch 7-goal thriller

AFP, Milan



nter Milan coach Roberto Mancini admitted his tinkering allowed Chievo to score three times in the last 20 minutes

and almost snatch a point in his side's 4-3 win on Sunday that took them top of Serie A. Hernan Crespo scored twice

and Deian Stankovic and Walter Samuel chipped in with a goal apiece as Inter stormed into a 4-0 lead at the San Siro. But visitors Chievo refused to

give up the fight and a converted penalty by Sergio Pellissier was followed by further goals from Simone Tiribocchi and Matteo Briahi.

Mancini's heart was in his mouth in the final six minutes as Chievo went in search of an equaliser, but Inter held on for their third win in four matches

"Instead of continuing to play our game when we were 4-0 up, we gave Chievo hope," groaned

"But it's not the players' fault, it's mine. I made too many substitutions and created a few problems." Mancini then tried to justify his tinkering.

"When your team plays five games in two weeks, you have to make changes, otherwise there's no time for the players to recover."

Despite their defensive frailties, Mancini's unpredictable side sit proudly at the top of the table on 10 points, one a head of Roma and

Roma bounced back from their 1-0 home defeat to Inter on Wednesday with a trouble-free 4-0 win at Parma, while Palermo lost 100 percent record after going down 2-0 at Empoli.

Palermo, who had won their first three matches, might have come away with a different result had they not missed a first-half penalty when the score was goalless.

Lazio, given an 11-point penalty for their involvement in the Italian match-fixing scandal, edged Atalanta 1-0 at the Olympic stadium, while Reggina, who started on minus 15 points, drew 1-1 at home to Torino.

Ascoli drew 1-1 against Sampdoria while Siena against Cagliari ended goalless.

Fiorentina, handicapped by a 19-point deduction for their matchfixing crimes, lost 1-0 at Udinese where Vinvenzo laquinta scored the winner five minutes before half

Crespo, who scored the only goal in Wednesday's precious win

TOP SIX

TEAM	Р	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Inter Milan	4	3	1	0	9	6	10
Roma	4	3	0	1	9	2	9
Palermo	4	3	0	1	11	9	9
Messina	4	2	2	0	6	3	8
Empoli	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
Udinese	4	2	1	1	6	4	7

at title rivals Roma, gave Inter the lead against Chievo

The Argentine broke the offside trap with a perfectly-timed run before firing a left-footed shot across Lorenzo Squzzi from a tight Samuel's header doubled

Inter's advantage before Stankovic's swerving right-footed thunderbolt found the top corner. Crespo underlined Inter's

apparent superiority with his second goal, another strike from a tight angle but this time with his right foot, after racing onto Adriano's chipped pass.

The hosts' concentration then dipped alarmingly and Chievo capitalised with three quickfire goals in 11 minutes.

Vincenzo Montella gave Roma an early lead with a cool finish at Parma, and Simone Perrotta made it 2-0 on the stroke of half-time after good work from Daniele De Rossi. Nineteen year-old Aleandro

Rosi's first Serie A goal made it 3-0 and Alberto Aquilani completed the rout in stoppage time. On Saturday AC Milan dropped their first points of the season after they were held to a goalless draw

at Livorno, while newly-promoted Catania drew 2-2 with Sicilian rivals Messina

Milan started out with minus eight points for match-fixing.

Portuguese challenge for English giants

AFP, Paris



Portuguese clubs Benfica and Porto will try to put a dent in Manchester United and Arsenal's hopes of reaching the second round of the

Champions League on Tuesday. The Premiership giants will bid to regain some face for England after the country's World Cup exit to Portugal, and United have the added advantage of seeking revenge for the 2-1 defeat at Benfica's Stadium of Light last season that saw them finish dumped out of European football's top club tournament.

United at least have their 3-2 Old Trafford victory over Celtic in the bank from their first European fixture earlier this month, and boss Alex Ferguson vowed to avenge last season's humbling at the hands of Benfica

"It will be a bloody different result the next time, believe me about that." the Scot said.

United's very recent form is poor however. They only have one point from their last two Premiership matches -- a morale-sapping home defeat to Arsenal and a 1-1 draw at Reading following a late equaliser by Cristiano Ronaldo on Saturday. But United's 19-million pound

close-season signing Michael Carrick said the team would not be

"After the start we had against Celtic we want to keep that going, he told MUTV. "We have got to move on to Tuesday now and pick up three points there and get the ball rolling again."

Benfica have only conceded one goal in four outings in the Portuguese league this season but crucially only managed a 1-1 draw against CSKA Moscow, who play the fourth group team Hamburg on

Arsenal, who lost in last season's final to Barcelona, host Portuguese champions Porto with coach Arsene Wenger convinced his side has the potential to emulate legendary European Cup-winning teams such as Real Madrid (nine times), AC Milan (6), Liverpool (4), and Ajax and Bayern Munich (3). "I want to win the Champions

League but it's step by step," said Wenger, "I think we are more respected in Europe because of eight or nine consecutive seasons in the Champions League.

"The next step is to win not once but two or three times to go into the history of Furonean football "I am convinced that if we beat

Porto we are close to qualifying. But when you look at the Portuguese teams they do not lose easily in England.

"If you look for English teams who have beaten Porto or Benfica you do not find many. So we have a big challenge and do what nobody has done recently in England -beat them.

In other ties, Real Madrid entertain Dynamo Kiev desperate to rebound from a humbling 2-0 loss to on-fire French champions Lyon. Three points is crucial for Real

but almost as important to coach Fabio Capello is the way they will try

'We improved a lot against Betis

TUESDAY'S FIXTURES

(All GMT times) Group E

Real Madrid (ESP) v Dynamo Kiev (UKR) (18h45) Steaua Bucharest (ROM) v Lyon (FRA)

Group F Benfica (POR) v Manchester United (ENG) (18h45) Celtic (SCO) v FC Copenhagen (DEN)

Group G CSKA Moscow (RUS) v SV Hamburg (GER) (16h30) Arsenal (ENG) v FC Porto (POR) (18h45)

Group H AEK Athens (GRE) v Anderlecht (BEL) Lille (FRA) vAC Milan (ITA) (18h45)

(in Saturday's 1-0 league win) but we can always get better. We have to carry on being tidy and passing the ball around comfortably," said

"But my players showed good form and are working harder than ever," added the Italian coach, who guided AC Milan to the Champions League crown in 1994.

Lyon play Steaua Bucharest, who hammered Kiev 4-1 in their opening Group E fixture but whose coach Cosmin Olaroiu remained troubled by the scintillating form of

"Lyon is a football machine, so of course we're worried," Olaroiu said, dubbing the French club as "probably the best in Europe"

"I asked some French people who was Lyon's rival in the French championship and they told me there wasn't one.

Celtic have been boosted before their home tie with FC Copenhagen with a 2-0 Old Firm derby win over Rangers

"Beating Rangers helps build confidence and we can now look forward to trying to get three points against Copenhagen," said coach

Gordon Strachan FC Copenhagen are the fourth seeded team in Group F behind Benfica, Celtic and top seeded Manchester United, but Strachan

Seedorf plays down Ancelotti spat

INTERNET, undated

Milan midfielder Clarence Seedorf has played down his row with Carlo Ancelotti, insisting that it was just a heat of the moment bust-up.

The television cameras caught a heated discussion between the Rossoneri Coach and his player during Saturday's match with Livorno, just a few days after Carletto had a similar argument with

quences and I don't need to clarify the facts with Ancelotti as we know each other very well," said the Dutch "There were no insults, we were talking about football and what

"The episode had no conse-

normally happens on the pitch. "We were both heated because it was during a match, but there is

nothing else to add." Ancelotti had told Seedorf to play the ball more quickly, with the player responding that he should focus on coaching and might like to give his team a hand from the bench, causing another furious comment from the tactician.

"Unfortunately there are pitch side cameras and journalists I really think the team and Coach need more privacy," added the former Inter player.

"I want people to understand that these things happen constantly, but the Press make things seem worse than they actually are. "We are all grown-ups with the

same objective, fighting is not in our interest. Andrea Pirlo echoed his team-

mate's sentiments, insisting that there is no problem between players and Coach

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Valencia winger Vicente (R) surges past the challenge of Barcelona midfielder Xavi during their Primera Liga clash at

All square at Nou Camp

AFP, Madrid



Reigning double Spanish champions Barcelona returned to the top of Primera Liga on Sunday despite being held to a 1-1 draw at the Nou Camp by Valencia

Spanish international striker David Villa opened the scoring for Valencia after 17 minutes when he produced a delicate left foot chip after an inch-perfect cross by Portuguese winger Miguel. Andres Iniesta then levelled for

the Catalan club four minutes after the break, finishing off a well worked move involving superstars Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o before the ball arrived at 22 yearold midfielder's feet. The two sides, who are both still

this season, combined to produce a thrilling match in which the outstanding player was arguably the Valencia goalkeeper Santiago Canizares. The Spanish international

unbeaten in the Spanish league

pulled off a series of spectacular saves to deny, among others, Deco and Javier Saviola. Saviola came on six minutes before the whistle to make his Barca debut after returning to the

club following the two years he has

spent on loan to Monaco and

Sevilla. The draw means that Valencia stav in third but are overtaken by Real Madrid who are also unbeaten after a well-earned 1-0 win at Real Betis on Saturday.

Mali international midfielder Mohammed Diarra headed the only goal of that game, his first since joining the Spanish giants from Lyon in the summer, after just six minutes

Two goals in the last five min-

utes from Maxi Rodriguez gave Atletico Madrid a 2-1 win over Sevilla on Sunday and ended the UEFA Cup holders' perfect domes-Sevilla had started the season with three wins out of three in the

Spanish league, and started the

weekend as the Spanish first

division leaders, but it went horribly wrong for them in 20 minutes at the start of the second half. Defenders Julien Escude and Javi Navarro were both sent off after getting their second yellow cards and, with Sevilla only having nine men, Atletico eventually made

their advantage count. Renato put the visitors ahead six minutes before the break but Escude was sent off barely a minute after the break and then Navarro got his marching orders after 64 minutes.

Rodriguez got Atletico's equaliser five minutes from the whistle with an outstanding right foot shot from 20 yards. The Argentina international,

who scored arguably the goal of the World Cup with his strike against Mexico, then added the winner three minutes later when he connected with a Fernando Torres cross from the right wing.

P W D L GF GA PTS Barcelona 4 3 1 0 10 3 10 Real Madrid 4 3 1 0 7 Valencia 4 3 1 0 6 2 4 3 0 1 11 5 Sevilla Atl Madrid 4 3 0 1 7 Deportivo 4 2 1 1 5 4

TEAM

"At 1-1 the crowd in the Calderon got behind us and then the second goal came along,'

The win was Atletico's first in front of their home fans in the Vincente Calderon stadium since April and lifted them up to fifth while Sevilla drop to fourth. At the other end of the table,

Racing Santander got their first

goals and their first point of the

season with 2-2 draw at newly-

added Maxi

promoted Gimnastic Tarragona but they stay on the foot of the Spanish first division. Racing had to come from behind twice but a brace of goals from their 2.02m-tall Serbian striker Nicola Zigic salvaged a point, the latter

coming from a header three minutes into injury time. Villarreal had also surprisingly failed to score in their first three matches this season but they broke their duck with 3-2 win over Real

Zaragoza. Argentine playmaker Pablo Aimar put Zaragoza ahead from close range midway through the first half but Villarreal hit top gear after half time with goals from Cani Garcia, Diego Forland and a pen-

Riquelme's penalty came after Zaragoza's Gabi Milito had handled the ball in the area and was

Despite being a man down,

alty from Juan Roman Riquelme.

Zaragoza's Gerard Pique, signed during the summer from Manchester United, reduced the deficit with his first goal for his new club, two minutes into injury time. Deportivo la Coruna suffered

their first loss of the year when they went down 2-0 at Levante, with both goals coming from French international Olivier Kapo.

Inter Milan forward Hernan Crespo (L) slaps high fives with teammate Dejan Stankovic after scoring a goal against Chievo in their Serie A clash at the San Siro