

# Mixed goals for big boys

AFP, Paris



Barcelona will look to continue their impressive start to their defence of their Champions League title when they face German club Werder Bremen on Wednesday.

Barcelona crushed Levski Sofia 5-0 in their first group A match and hope to beat Bremen for the third time inside the last 12 months after defeating the German team home and away - 3-1 and 2-0 - at the same stage of last season's competition.

"Now we need to crank it up. We want to win in Bremen like we did last year and that would be a great start to the Champions League defence," said Portuguese international midfielder Deco, who has won the title twice in the past three seasons.

While Barcelona already have the comfort of three points on the board, Bremen have yet to register after losing their opening fixture 2-0 to Chelsea.

The fitness of German international attacker Miroslav Klose is crucial for Bremen and coach Thomas Schaaf may take a gamble on the golden boot winner at the World Cup.

"It is possible that he could play," said Schaaf, who will be without Croat marksman Ivan Klasnic (back) and Brazilian playmaker

Diego (knee).

Inter Milan go into their tie with Bayern Munich having suffered a monumental shock over the weekend in Serie A action, letting a 4-0 lead against Chievo slip and conceding three goals in the final 13 minutes of the match.

Inter coach Roberto Mancini admitted that his side had been ahead of themselves during the 4-3 win that saw them top their domestic table.

"To let in three goals in so short a time, after 75 minutes during which Chievo found it difficult to score, shows a drop in attention span," Mancini said.

"Perhaps we thought a little too quickly about Bayern, forgetting that the game we were playing had not yet finished."

Hernan Crespo's rich vein of form of three goals in his last two matches is almost certain to see him pip Adriano, who has not scored a goal in all competitions since March 29, for a place in Inter's starting line-up.

"It will be a hard match, but a nice one to play in," Crespo said. "I would like to seal my return to Inter with a goal in the Champions League."

Bayern Munich general manager Uli Hoeness admitted that Inter were strong favourites to win the tie. "They're a class above us this season," he said.

France captain Vieira will be missing for Inter following his red card in Portugal, which earned him

a one-match ban.

The other Group A tie sees Chelsea travel to Bulgaria to take on local champions Levski Sofia buoyed by the possible return of skipper John Terry who was forced to miss Saturday's Premiership win over Fulham due to a back problem.

And Terry insisted that now is the time for Chelsea to finally come good in Europe's top club competition.

"It's getting to the state where we have to win the Champions League. We can't keep saying, 'Next year will be our time'. We've got the experience and we've got the players."

Coach Jose Mourinho won't settle for anything less than a win in the Bulgarian capital ahead of next

month's double header against Barcelona.

"I need three points against Levski," said Mourinho, whose side failed to make it the quarter-final stage of the competition last season.

Liverpool face a tricky tie against Turkish outfit Galatasaray, but manager Rafael Benitez was confident his players would be boosted by a home game after an early-season fixture list that kept them away from Anfield.

"I think in front of their own supporters the players can run a bit faster," said Benitez. "For us it is good to play at Anfield and see our supporters behind us - I think that is the best thing."

Liverpool began their Champions League campaign with a goalless draw away at PSV Eindhoven, a result that Galatasaray matched at Bordeaux, which, with a trip to France next up, means Liverpool will be under pressure if they fail to win at Anfield.

PSV travel to Bordeaux in the other Group C tie.

"It is really important to be at home after drawing away against PSV," Benitez said.

"To win against Galatasaray can make a big difference for the rest of the competition."

Wednesday's other games see Roma facing a tricky trip to chief Group D rivals Valencia, Spartak Moscow hosting Sporting Lisbon, and Ukrainian champions Shakhtar Donetsk playing Olympiakos.

## WEDNESDAY'S FIXTURES

(all times 18:45 GMT unless stated)

**Group A**  
Levski Sofia (BUL) v Chelsea (ENG)  
Werder Bremen (GER) v Barcelona (ESP)

**Group B**  
Spartak Moscow (RUS) v Sporting Lisbon (POR) (16h30)  
Inter Milan (ITA) v Bayern Munich (GER)

**Group C**  
Liverpool (ENG) v Galatasaray (TUR)  
Bordeaux (FRA) v PSV Eindhoven (NED)

**Group D**  
Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) v Olympiakos (GRE)  
Valencia (ESP) v AS Roma (ITA)



THE ICON ARRIVES: Barcelona star Ronaldinho (C) is all smiles upon his arrival at the airport in Bremen on Tuesday. Barcelona are to play Werder in the Champions League on Wednesday.

## Dario Silva's leg amputated

AFP, Montevideo

Uruguay international striker Dario Silva, who played last season with English Premiership club Portsmouth, has had his right leg amputated after being seriously hurt in a car crash here.

Silva underwent surgery on Sunday and was put in an induced coma because of the serious state of his health, said the hospital treating him.

However his mother revealed on Monday that the veteran striker - capped 49 times and scorer of 15 goals - had had to have his right leg amputated after developing a blood clot.

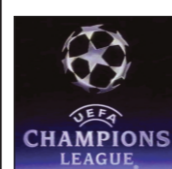
"Even though his state has improved he unfortunately had to have his right leg amputated," said Doris Pereira.

The 33-year-old, who featured for Uruguay in the 2002 World Cup finals, was driving his van in the company of former footballers Elbio Pappa and Dard Pereira when the accident occurred in the Uruguayan capital.

Silva, who previously played for Cagliari, Espanyol, Malaga and Sevilla in his 10 years in Europe, was on holidays in his homeland awaiting news of a possible transfer to a new club.

# Inter, Bayern in marquee clash

AFP, Milan



Hernan Crespo's rich vein of form is almost certain to see him pip Adriano for a place in Inter Milan's starting line-up for Wednesday's crunch Champions League tie here against Bayern Munich.

Adriano, who has not scored a goal in all competitions since March 29, was preferred to the 31-year-old striker a fortnight ago when Inter lost their opening Group B match away to Sporting Lisbon.

But with Crespo scoring three goals in his last two matches and Inter in desperate need of three points against Bayern, Adriano is sure to be the one donning the

tracksuit at the San Siro.

Four days after his crucial winning goal in the 1-0 win over Serie A title rivals Roma last Wednesday, Crespo scored twice in Sunday's 4-3 victory against Chievo which saw Inter go top of Italy's top division.

"At the moment things are going well for me and, most of all, for Inter," Crespo told Inter's website.

"I'm three times happy: for the victory, the two goals and first place in the table."

Crespo, who came on for the last 20 minutes against Sporting after teammate Patrick Vieira had been sent off, had words of encouragement for the misfiring Adriano.

"He's in form," the Argentina international said.

"He produced a wonderful assist for me and did some of the things that Adriano does best. This is important for him and for all of us."

Crespo said scoring against Bayern would complete a perfect seven days.

"It will be hard match, but a nice one to play in," he said.

"I would like to seal my return to Inter with a goal in the Champions League."

Bayern Munich general manager Uli Hoeness insisted Inter were strong favourites to win the tie.

"They're a class above us this season," he said.

Lukas Podolski, the pin-up boy of German football who has failed to score a league goal for Bayern since his summer move from FC Cologne, is expected to start on the bench.

The German international, whose stock rose dramatically after his impressive World Cup performances, was dropped for Saturday's match at Alemannia Aachen which Bayern won 2-1.

However, despite his poor form, the determined 21-year-old believes he will soon start hitting the net.

"Things are not going how I thought they would," Podolski said.

"Of course I am disappointed not to be playing. It irritates me - otherwise I would not be a real footballer."

"But my time will come and I will score my goals here. I am not gripped by fear of failing at Bayern."

France captain Vieira will be missing for Inter following his red card in Portugal, which earned him a one-match ban.

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PHOTO: INTERNET

WHO'S PLAYING TONIGHT? Liverpool players Steven Gerard and Gabriel Paletta (foreground) engage in exercise as part of a training session in their Melwood training ground in Liverpool on Tuesday.

## Mourinho stands by Shevchenko

AFP, London

Misfiring record signing Andriy Shevchenko will remain in Chelsea's first team whatever happens said their manager Jose Mourinho on Tuesday.

The 30million pounds signing from AC Milan has failed to shine this season for the two-time Premiership champions scoring once in five appearances while his strike partner Didier Drogba has been far more impressive.

However Mourinho told the Sun newspaper as he flew out for the Blues Champions League group match with Levski Sofia that there was no danger of the Ukrainian superstar losing his place in the starting line-up.

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## I am as good as ever: Raul

AFP, Madrid

Under pressure Real Madrid striker Raul protested on Monday that he was as effective as he had been 10 years ago.

The 29-year-old has been subjected to a flurry of criticism that his once superb scoring skills had waned but the player known as the Angel of Madrid insisted on the eve of Real's home Champions League clash with Dynamo Kiev that he was as good as ever.

"I am better than I was 10 years ago, even two or three years ago," said Raul, who has not scored

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# Benitez defends rotation

Football

REUTERS, Liverpool

Liverpool coach Rafael Benitez defended his rotation policy on Tuesday after failing to name the same team for 93 games in succession.

Benitez is expected to change his line-up once more when Liverpool play Galatasaray in the Champions League at Anfield on Wednesday.

"Sometimes you have to protect players even if they don't like it," Benitez told reporters.

"They want to play in every game but I have to look at the bigger

picture. "You can't play 65 games a season and sometimes it is better to keep players fresh for the end of the season and games where you can win trophies."

Liverpool have not won any of their last five Champions League games and if they do not beat Galatasaray in the Group C match they will record their worst Champions League run.

"You can talk about statistics but we have changed players since last year and the statistics will change," Benitez said.

"We had a good draw at PSV (Eindhoven) and now we must win our home games. If we do that we will qualify."

The four teams in Group C, which also includes Girondins Bordeaux, are all level after two 0-0 draws on day one.

Liverpool midfielder Luis Garcia says Benitez has built a better team than the one that won the European Cup two years ago.

"We think we are a better side now, but we have to show it," he said.

"We won the cup two years ago but people want more."

"Every one was wanting us to win it again last year but it was really difficult," the Spain international said.

"Not many teams win it two years in a row and now we have to try and do it again to prove we are a good team."

# Nistelrooy slams Basten

Football

AFP, The Hague

Out of favour Dutch international striker Ruud van Nistelrooy criticised national coach Marco van Basten on Tuesday for selecting the squad not solely on sporting criteria.

The 30-year-old Real Madrid striker has been out of favour since being dropped for the final match of their disappointing World Cup finals - a 1-0 defeat by Portugal in the second round - but in an interview with Dutch magazine Sportweek he lashed out at van Basten.

"What is a shame is that the

coach doesn't just base his selection on sporting prowess but on other criteria," said van Nistelrooy, who failed to shine at the World Cup scoring just once in three matches, the 2-1 win over the Ivory Coast.

"If you do not please him on a personal level, you are not retained."

"Thus one has to say that do not believe his selections are solely on a form basis."

"The evidence supports this, as there are certain players he does not want in his team," added van Nistelrooy, who also fell out badly with Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson leading to him being sold to Real in the summer.

Van Basten made clear his wish

to start afresh when he left out midfield stars such as Clarence Seedorf and Edgar Davids from the World Cup finals squad as they had been known to be troublemakers in previous major championships.

Since then - where once again despite van Basten's infusion of new blood the Dutch failed to make an impression on the tournament - he has also axed van Nistelrooy and hardman midfielder Marc van Bommel.

Van Basten, though, had stood by the clearly out of sorts van Nistelrooy - scorer of 28 goals in 54 internationals - during the group games at the finals but lost patience and inserted the younger Klas-Jan Huntelaar for the clash

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## Palermo responds to mafia jibes

AFP, Rome

Palermo are hoping to change the stereotypical view that Sicily is the home of the mafia by distributing anti-corruption t-shirts to West Ham fans before Thursday's UEFA Cup first round, second leg.

The move comes after the sale of t-shirts before the first leg in London which read: "Hammers (West Ham's nickname) against the Mafia."

The Palermo t-shirts say: "The mafia disgust me. Liberty is 'Cosa Nostra', the Italian nickname for the mafia which translated literally means 'Our thing'."

"It's the way that we have chosen to give the English fans a welcome to our land, a way in which to put an end to the incident with the shirts which put the word mafia next to the city of Palermo," Sicilian

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## Topsy Pizarro pays price

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich's Peruvian striker Claudio Pizarro lost his driving licence for a second time this year on Tuesday after being over the limit in a drink driving test.

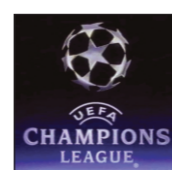
Pizarro will be off the road for nine months having already had his licence taken away for a week in March.

The Peruvian international had gone to the world famous beer festival in Munich after the 2-1 victory over Aachen - in which he had scored - on Saturday.

However when he was stopped and tested on his way home he returned a level of 1.1 as opposed to the legal limit of 0.5.

Pizarro will also have to pay a fine to the club, according to general manager Uli Hoeness.

REUTERS, Madrid



Stifling AS Roma striker Francesco Totti is crucial to Valencia's chances of success in their Champions

League match on Wednesday, the Spanish team's defender Roberto Ayala said.

"Roma rely on Totti's creativity. Although they have a good team behind him, if you neutralise his influence you are much closer towards securing a win," the Argentine told a news conference on Tuesday.

"They have players with a lot of quality, and look to pressure you in midfield, but base their play on Totti's inventiveness."

Ayala has first hand experience of how effective the Italy striker can be, after facing him in the 3-0 home defeat by Roma in the Champions League in February 2003.

Totti netted twice that night to help bring to an end a 20-match

unbeaten run for Valencia in the Mestalla.

"I remember that game, but don't like to dwell on past successes or failures. We need to focus on winning and if we do we can safely say we have got that result out of our system," Ayala added.

"Thanks to the efforts of the club we now have a good enough squad to compete in three competitions, and to be key players in all of them."

One of Valencia's main close-season signings was former Real Betis winger Joaquin, who misses the encounter serving the second game of a two-match suspension from last year.

Defenders Asier del Horno and Carlos Marchena and midfielder Ruben Baraja are injured.

Valencia won their opening Group D game 4-2 away to Olympiakos Piraeus, thanks to a hat-trick from another new recruit, striker Fernando Morientes.

Roma top the group after sweeping aside Shakhtar Donetsk 4-0 two weeks ago.



Valencia's defensive lynchpin Roberto Ayala speaks during a press conference before their Champions League encounter against Roma on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP