



Real Madrid stars (L-R) David Beckham, Ruud van Nistelrooy and Roberto Carlos warm-up during a training session in Madrid on Friday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

## 'Big red derby biggest of all'

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United defender Patrice Evra has described the Red Devils' meetings with northwest rivals Liverpool as the most intense derby in world football.

"Manchester United against Liverpool is the biggest club game in the world," said the Frenchman. "It is pretty big in France when PSG play Marseille but nothing like this. The atmosphere is really special. People come up to you in the street saying 'come on Pat' because the result is so important.

"Everyone is desperate for us to win and the noise as the game kicks off is incredible."

Evra, 25, admits that Sunday's Old Trafford showdown will be a real test of United's title credentials following their defeat by Arsenal earlier in the campaign.

"This is our second really big game of the season and we have to do better than we did in the last one," he said. "It is far too early to say we are going to win certain competitions. But at the moment things are looking very positive and we must continue that by beating Liverpool."

Evra performed impressively in the Champions League win over Copenhagen in midweek but is expected to drop to the bench if Argentina's Gabriel Heinze has recovered sufficiently from a hamstring problem to come back into the side at left-back.

## Moyes puts faith in Cahill

AFP, Liverpool

Everton boss David Moyes believes even an exhausted Tim Cahill will have a major role to play for the Merseysiders this season.

The midfielder shrugged off jet-lag after dashing from Australia to join up with Everton's squad last weekend, and was still his side's best player in a disappointing defeat at Middlesbrough, the team's first of the season.

Now a fully-refreshed Cahill is expected to be pivotal as Everton attempt to get back on track on the road to Sheffield United on Saturday.

"I thought his performance on Saturday was remarkable," Moyes said.

"When I met him on Friday before we played Middlesbrough, if he had said that he was a bit tired or anything, that would probably have meant I wouldn't have started with him. But he told me he felt great."

Cahill's efforts are appreciated by his colleagues, with fellow midfielder Simon Davies quick to offer praise.

Davies is hugely impressed with the Australian.

He said: "He is unbelievable. To fly all that way and come back and play was fantastic. He scored another goal and he can't miss at the minute.

# Chelsea win inspires Cannavaro

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid's Italian defender Fabio Cannavaro said his side should try and emulate Chelsea when they take on unbeaten Primera Liga leaders and arch-rivals Barcelona in the Bernabeu on Sunday.

Chelsea defeated the European champions 1-0 at home in the Champions League on Wednesday, and could have inflicted a heavier defeat playing on the break in the second half.

"Chelsea were stronger than Barcelona. They showed more commitment and belief when going for the ball. We need to play like them to beat Barca," Cannavaro told a news conference on Thursday.

The last time Frank Rijkaard's side visited Madrid they produced a superb display to sink Real 3-0, and to make matters worse the home fans then stood and applauded Ronaldinho after he scored the third.

This time round Barcelona are missing leading striker Samuel Eto'o, who is out with a long-term knee injury, but Cannavaro said there were still plenty of other dangers in the Barca squad.

"They still have the likes of Eidur Gudjohnsen, Lionel Messi and Ronaldinho who can score goals," Cannavaro added.

"We know all about Ronaldinho, he is a phenomenal player. I don't know how you stop him. When your rival has a forward like that you simply have to cross yourself and hope for the best."

Real's tails are up after a remarkable transformation over the last few days. They slipped to their first league defeat of the season with a miserable 1-0 loss away to Getafe last Saturday, which drew widespread criticism.

But then they put in one of their strongest performances with a 4-1 win away to Steaua Bucharest in the Champions League on Tuesday.

"There is a greater incentive in Europe than in the league. This is something we have to put right so that we can gain some consistency. He you can't have so many ups and downs if you want to win things," Cannavaro said.

Real are fifth in the standings, five points behind Barca.

# Injuries ravage L'pool

INTERNET, undated



Liverpool go into what is already a make or break showdown at Manchester United - even in October - with an injury crisis at just the wrong time.

Skipper Steven Gerrard missed the midweek Champions League game in Bordeaux with a hamstring injury sustained during last weekend's home draw with Blackburn.

Liverpool are hoping intensive treatment while his colleagues were away in south west France will leave Gerrard fit to lead out his side at Old Trafford, where the Reds go into the game eight points behind the Premier League leaders and knowing that a defeat and an 11-point margin will be virtually impossible to claw back.

But boss Rafael Benitez also has Robbie Fowler (back) and Daniel Agger (broken hand) out of action and also unlikely to face Sir Alex Ferguson's men.

Striker Craig Bellamy believes the squad have just got to get on with things, while insisting that Liverpool have a big enough squad to cope.

Following the encouraging if not hugely entertaining Champions League victory away to Bordeaux on Wednesday, the Welshman said:

"We have taken some criticism this season, even with the Champions League away victory we still have a poor away record despite being unbeaten at home, and we know what is at stake at United.

"But you have to get on with it and show character. There's enough players with a lot of character at this club to handle the situation.

"After the Champions League we now have Manchester United next in the league, and we know that's tough. It's a big week for us. We have some hard games and from now to Christmas I don't think we have a week where there's not two games for us."

# Bremen out to topple Bayern

AFP, Berlin



The two biggest teams in German football come head to head on Saturday when Werder Bremen host reigning champions Bayern Munich at the Weserstadion.

It is the first major clash of the new season and the title encounter has been hyped up by a pre-match war of words between the two rivals.

Bremen, runner-up to Bayern last season, lead the standings on goal difference after a 6-0 routing of VfL Bochum last weekend and goalkeeper Tim Wiese fired a warning shot at their rivals.

"If we play like we did against Bochum we will put five past Bayern too," said Wiese.

Bayern's Dutch midfielder Marc van Bommel was less than impressed by Wiese's comment, replying: "As long as we score six I do not mind."

Bayern warmed up for the match with a 2-0 win in the Champions League against Sporting Lisbon while Bremen won their group game

2-0 against Levski Sofia.

At this stage last season Bayern were top of the league two points ahead of Bremen but an indifferent start from both teams sees them locked at the summit on 13 points with Bremen ahead courtesy of their superior goal difference.

"It is a nice feeling to look down on the other teams and we want it to stay like this with a victory over Bayern," said Bremen's German international Christian Schulz.

If Bayern are defeated it would be their third loss of the campaign - the same number of games they lost in the whole of last season.

Schalke 04 are the third team on 13 points at the summit and face struggling Hannover on Saturday.

## FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Werder Bremen v Bayern Munich, Schalke 04 v Hannover, Hertha Berlin v Borussia Monchengladbach, Arminia Bielefeld v Mainz 05, VfL Wolfsburg v VfB Stuttgart, Alemannia Aachen v Energie Cottbus

**Sunday**  
Bayer Leverkusen v FC Hamburg, Eintracht Frankfurt v FC Nuremberg

## Siena handed point penalty

INTERNET, undated

Siena have been handed a one-point deduction by the Lega Calcio Disciplinary Panel for a delay in the payment of social security contributions.

The Tuscan side were indicted by the Federal Prosecution office, and the Commission presided by Claudio Franchini handed out the verdict on Thursday, also handing a three-month ban to the club's President Paolo De Luca.

Siena failed to present the documentation proving that they had paid the social security contributions owed for their members, contracted employees and freelances before the July deadline.

The club was therefore considered guilty for its direct responsibility in this issue and was handed a one-point penalty, which leaves them with 10 points and drops them back to sixth spot in the Serie A table.

Serie B outfit Pescara were also punished by the Disciplinary Panel for the same reason, receiving an identical punishment to the Tuscan outfit.

## Cesc targets silverware

INTERNET, undated

Cesc Fabregas is looking forward to winning trophies with Arsenal after committing himself to the club long-term.

The 19-year-old Spain international on Thursday expressed his delight after signing an eight-year deal with the Gunners.

Fabregas has emerged as one of Europe's brightest young talents since breaking into Arsene Wenger's first team.

He told the club's official website, www.arsenal.com: "I am so happy here and I am delighted to have signed this new contract that will keep me at the club for years to come.

"I wanted to pay back the club, especially Arsene Wenger for the support and faith he has shown in me.

"What is important now is for the team to realise its potential and win trophies. That is our main aim, that is my aim as well."

Fabregas joined Arsenal from Barcelona three years ago and played a key role in the side's run to the Champions League final last season.

He was linked with Real Madrid earlier this year but the player is now set to stay at the Emirates Stadium until 2014.

Wenger highlighted his belief Fabregas will get even better as a reason for such a long contract.

"He came here at 16 years of age but his football brain allowed him to play at the top level," Wenger told Arsenal TV Online.

"When you're always in the class of the best, especially with the talent and dedication Fabregas has, I still feel there is a lot more to come from him in the next three years.

"He's only 19 years of age. It's amazing because he's an exceptional talent."

## Cisse back in training

AFP, Marseille

Djibril Cisse was back in light training Friday for the first time since surgery on a broken right knee suffered in a World Cup warm-up match for France in June.

The Liverpool striker, on loan this season at Marseille, had his first run out with his new teammates since joining the south coast club in July.

According to a Marseille spokesman: "He was running and warming up in an hour long training session and should be kicking a ball again in a week or two."

Cisse missed out on France's World Cup campaign when the 25-year-old picked up a right knee fracture in the 3-1 win over China in Saint Etienne on June 7 in what was Les Bleus' last friendly before leaving for Germany.

Marseille coach Albert Emon, who is hoping to make Cisse's stay at the Velodrome permanent, has predicted that the attacker could be fit to play by early next month.

## Hargreaves steps up recovery

INTERNET, undated

England midfielder Owen Hargreaves has stepped up his recovery from the broken leg he suffered last month.

The 25-year-old, who is expected to return to action at the end of November, was injured while playing for Bayern Munich in a Bundesliga match against Arminia Bielefeld and has now had the plaster cast removed from his leg.

Hargreaves agent, Roman Grill, told The Times: "Owen is in very good spirits and looking forward to playing again."

"The injury came about at a bad time, but Owen has always been upbeat. The plaster cast is off and he hopes to be walking around properly in the next two or three days."

# 'El Chino' boost for Inter

AFP, Rome



The return of enigmatic striker Alvaro Recoba after a six-month absence has been warmly welcomed by Serie A leaders

Inter Milan ahead of their match at Udinese on Sunday.

The 30-year-old Uruguayan, whose Inter career has been blighted by inconsistency and injuries since he joined them in 1997, was outstanding on his comeback in Wednesday's 2-1 Champions League win against Spartak Moscow.

Making his first appearance in an official match since April 11, the forward known as 'El Chino' (The Chinaman) for his east Asian appearance proved a handful for the Spartak defence and set up both of Julio Cruz's goals.

"There are few players in the world who have a left foot like his," enthused Inter coach Roberto Mancini after Recoba had helped the 'Nerazzurri' edge the Russians for a vital victory which boosted their hopes of a last 16 place.

Mancini's praise for Recoba came just days after he had claimed that the erratic South American had wasted his immense talent.

"Recoba has thrown away 10

years of his career," Mancini said. "With the quality he has he should have been Inter's undisputed leader.

"But there are players who are not in the same class as Recoba who have been fantastic for three or four seasons after they have turned 30. I hope this will happen with him."

Inter top the table on 14 points from their six matches played, two ahead of Roma and Palermo.

Palermo and Roma had shared the lead of Italy's top division before defeats last week to Atalanta and Reggina respectively.

Luigi Del Neri begins his second spell as coach of Chievo away to Roma, with whom he spent an unhappy five months in the 2004-05 season.

Del Neri was reappointed as Chievo coach on Monday after the sacking of Giuseppe Pillon, who paid the price for five league defeats in six matches.

## FIXTURES

(1300GMT kick-off unless stated)  
**Saturday**  
Messina v Empoli (1600GMT), Cagliari v Torino (1830GMT)  
**Sunday**  
AC Milan v Palermo (1830GMT), Atalanta v Sampdoria, Catania v Lazio, Fiorentina v Reggina, Livorno v Siena, Parma v Ascoli, Roma v Chievo, Udinese v Inter Milan

Del Neri performed minor miracles at Chievo between 2000 and 2004, guiding the team into Serie A and then the UEFA Cup on a shoe-string budget.

And now he is hoping to work his magic once again to pull the modest Verona club away from the relegation zone.

"I know there is a lot of work to be done here, but we must put the past behind us and look forward."

Roma bounced back from their defeat in Calabria last Sunday by winning 1-0 at Olympiakos in the Champions League in midweek.

AC Milan, who edged closer to the knockout stages of the Champions League's knockout stages with a 1-0 win at Anderlecht on Tuesday, host Palermo.

Milan, forced to start on minus eight points for match-fixing, started their league campaign with three wins but have seen their momentum slowed by three consecutive draws.

Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio could see their points deductions reduced at the end of the month if their final appeals against their match-fixing punishments are successful.

# Ruud pays Frank tribute

Football

INTERNET, Undated

Real Madrid striker Ruud van Nistelrooy has paid tribute to Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard and proclaimed Sunday's match between the two clubs the "great derby of the universe".

"Rijkaard was very important in my career," Van Nistelrooy told Spanish daily newspaper As. "He gave me the opportunity to play with Holland. He was very patient with me, gave me time and a lot of confidence."

Rijkaard has led Barcelona to two consecutive Liga titles and

helped them become European champions last season. He has built a uniquely balanced team filled with exceptional footballers.

"The (Barcelona) players deserve a lot of credit," Van Nistelrooy acknowledged. "Ronaldinho, Eto'o, Messi, Deco, Xavi and more, all their players. (Assistant coach Johan) Neeskens also helped them a lot."

The Holland striker - currently out of favour with national team boss Marco van Basten - suggested that his fledgling partnership with Ronaldo feels promising.

"My initial feeling with Ronaldo is very good, exceptional, in training and in the few minutes we have played together in matches. We

hope to play together in a lot more games from now on."

Van Nistelrooy said he was looking forward to the experience of playing in the Clasicos, which takes place in the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday evening.

"It's the biggest match in the world of football. The whole planet watches these matches.

"I suppose it's similar to Manchester [United] versus Liverpool. The supporters are intrigued by them, the atmosphere is very special.

"It's the best moment of the year and we wait for it every season."



PHOTO: INTERNET

Fenerbahce goalkeeper Recber Rustu (C) gets the ball ahead of Newcastle forward Obafemi Martins (R) during their UEFA Cup match at St. James's Park on Thursday.

# Lyon on mission Marseilles

AFP, Paris



Five-time French champions Lyon return from their impressive midweek Champions League showing

to a highly-charged French first division clash against league rivals Marseille on Sunday.

Lyon took a huge step towards qualifying for the knock-out stages of the Champions League with a 3-0 away mauling of Dynamo Kiev on Tuesday.

The result was the French club's third win in three Group E matches after impressive wins over Real Madrid and Steaua Bucharest and maintains their record of not having conceded a goal - while they have found the net eight times.

Lyon are also top in France after eight wins out of nine matches, five points ahead of Marseille, who have themselves only been beaten once this term.

"We know what awaits us," said Lyon goalkeeper Remy Vercoutre, standing in for injured regular Gregory Coupet.

"Everybody wants to knock down Lyon and it will therefore be another Champions League match," he said, adding that what

interested the Lyon squad was "to continue winning".

One player with bitter-sweet feelings about the game will be Marseille's international midfielder Franck Ribery, who rose to prominence when helping France reach the final of this year's World Cup.

The 23-year-old was linked in the off-season to a multi-million euro move to Lyon, at one stage repeatedly saying he wanted to quit the Mediterranean club.

But he eventually stayed put at Marseille, where he has four years of his contract left to run, and said he wanted to leave all his talking for the pitch in Sunday's crunch match.

Marseille's outspoken president Pape Diouf, however, could not resist a dig at Lyon.

"If the passion of PSG v Marseille games has now transferred to Marseille v Lyon games, that's because of Lyon," said Diouf.

"I can understand it. There's a club that has been champion of

## FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
Monaco v Toulouse, Nancy v Nantes, Rennes v Nice, St Etienne v Le Mans, Sedan v Lens, Sochaux v Bordeaux, Valenciennes v Troyes

**Sunday**  
Auxerre v PSG, Marseille v Lyon

France for the last five years with very justifiable European pretensions.

"But it has difficulty with a national identity, something that shows in the club's popularity -- it has less charisma than ours."

In other games, third-placed Nancy, four points adrift of Marseille, host bottom-placed Nantes, and fourth-placed Toulouse travel to struggling Monaco, which have only notched up two wins and one draw so far this season.

Toulouse central defender Dominique Arribage credited new coach Elie Baup with turning the fortunes of the club around this season.

"He's put his mark on the club, whether that's in the approach to matches or running the group. We needed this overhaul, a bit of freshness," said Arribage.

He added that although Toulouse might be the early surprise package of the league there was no need to think they wouldn't go on to amass 60 points by season's end.

"For the moment we're somewhat the surprise team because we don't have the squad to be fourth. But it sometimes happens that teams without a huge squad have a great season, so why not?"