



Atletico Madrid forward Fernando Torres (L) and Peter Luccin have their heads down after their defeat to Deportivo Coruna in their Primera Liga encounter at the Riazor Stadium in Coruna on Saturday.

Business as usual: Scholes

INTERNET, undated

Paul Scholes said his 500th game for Manchester United was "not much different" from any other after scoring in a 2-0 win against Liverpool.

"It was quite special," Scholes told Sky Sports. "But whether you're playing your 500th game or your first game, playing for Man United is a big thing, so it doesn't really make that much difference."

"Just to get the win is the most important thing." Scholes struck his 132nd goal for the club six minutes before the break as he was left unmarked by the visitors and scored from close range to claim his first Premiership goal since December.

"I hadn't scored for a while as you probably know," he said.

"I got one on Wednesday [against Copenhagen] and managed to get another one today. As long as the team wins it doesn't really matter who scores the goals."

"I suppose it is rare [to get so much space], especially against teams like Liverpool. They're normally quite solid defensively but today for some reason I managed to sneak in there and get the goal."

The 31-year-old said United deserved the victory that sent them back to the top of the Premiership and declared himself pleased with the club's recent form.

"I think we've played better over the last few weeks, but still I think we were quite comfortable today."

"We never really looked like conceding a goal and I think we were dangerous going forward as well."

Angel pays back Atletico

AFP, Madrid



Deportivo La Coruna moved up to second place in the Spanish first division after a hard-fought 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

The only goal came after 67 minutes from former Atletico youth product Angel Arizmendi who headed home from a Joan Verdu free kick.

Atletico have only themselves to blame for failing to leave La Coruna with at least a point.

Spanish international striker Fernando Torres failed to find the target with several second half chances while Peter Luccin hit the post just before half time.

To make matters worse, Atletico's injury crisis deepened when striker Mista Ferrer limped off midway through the first half with a left thigh strain which could rule him out for up to three weeks.

Two first half goals from Diego Milito gave Real Zaragoza a 2-1 win over struggling Real Betis.

Betis have yet to gain a point in four away games this season and the Seville-based side, who last season were in the Champions League, remain stuck in the relegation zone.

Milito opened the scoring after just 13 minutes and the Argentine international striker added a second on the half hour when compatriot Pablo Aimar provided the service for his seventh goal of the season.

Betis' Edu was sent off two minutes from half-time for a headbutt on Zaragoza midfielder Juanfran Garcia.

Villarreal almost went ahead when a Juan Roman Riquelme header hit the bar four minutes later.

What happened after the break was inexplicable," said Zaragoza coach Victor Fernandez.

Villarreal were held to a 1-1 draw by near neighbours Levante.

The visitors from Valencia took the lead three minutes after the break when Diego Camacho managed to get his left foot to a free kick from French international midfielder Olivier Kapo.

The hosts then salvaged a point thanks to a pair of their reserve team players who normally ply their trade in the Spanish fourth division.

Jonathan Pereira got his first goal in the top flight after 66 minutes, finishing off a pass from his fellow 19-year-old midfielder Marcos Garcia.

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However, despite being a man down, they reduced the deficit through Robert after 52 minutes.

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Moratti moves for Mourinho

INTERNET, undated

There are reports that Inter President Massimo Moratti is planning for next season with a 5-million-pound per year offer to Jose Mourinho.

The difficult start to the campaign, particularly in the Champions League with two defeats and a scraped win over Spartak Moscow, has put even more pressure on the shoulders of Roberto Mancini.

The coach has already conceded that if he doesn't bring home either the Scudetto or European trophy, he'll be gone in the summer.

British newspaper reports in 'The News of the World' now suggest that the plan is already underway to restore the Nerazzurri to greatness.

Mourinho had been linked to Inter when he was still at Porto, where he won both the UEFA Cup and Champions League, but opted to join Chelsea instead.

There are claims that Moratti, who has taken the Presidency again after the sad death of Giacinto Facchetti, has contacted Mourinho's agent Jorge Mendes.

The 5-million-dollar per season offer would match the current wages he has at Stamford Bridge and provide a large squad of stars to rival Chelsea's.

Fergie believes in title

AFP, Manchester



Alex Ferguson is convinced Manchester United's 2-0 win against Liverpool on Sunday proved his players believe they can win the Premiership title.

Ferguson's side regained pole position in the table from champions Chelsea on goal difference after strikes from Paul Scholes and Rio Ferdinand capped a dominant display at Old Trafford.

After Chelsea went top with a win against Portsmouth on Saturday the pressure was on United to respond with a victory against their arch-rivals and they didn't disappoint.

Ferguson claims there is increasing confidence in his side and they are capable of breaking Chelsea's stranglehold on the Premiership title.

He said: "There's been a growing belief since the beginning of the season. The belief that we can win it."

"We started with the hope, desire and intention to do well and so far the players haven't let anyone down. Some of our young players starting to develop very well."

"After losing to Arsenal we couldn't afford to lose another big one. The players responded to that and gave an excellent performance. I'm looking for our team to step forward and have a real go this year."

Ferguson praised the contributions of Scholes and Michael Carrick, who outplayed Liverpool in central midfield to take control of the match.

"We just tried to continue the way we've played lately. We've been playing good football," said Ferguson.

"Michael Carrick was fantastic and Paul Scholes gave a great display as well. In the big matches you need that composure and the midfield was an important component for us."

"We're doing well considering we've still not got our recognised team available. (Gabriel Heinze, (Mikel) Silvestre and (Cristiano) Ronaldo were all missing today and we need to get some football behind them."

Liverpool are now 11 points behind United and boss Rafa Benitez admitted his side must improve away from Anfield if they are to have any hope of ending their 16-year wait to win the league.

Benitez's side have yet to win an away league match this term and, asked if Liverpool were out of the title race, he said: "In football you never know what will happen."

"I need to think about the next game. If we are top of the table, in the middle or down the bottom, I can only concentrate on the next game."

"That is clear, we need to start winning games before we can think about that (the title)."

"Maybe we need to be a bit better in front of goal away from home. We will change a few things."

Liverpool were surprisingly subdued and, playing just Holland striker Dirk Kuyt up front, they rarely threatened to score.

But Benitez said: "If you analyse the game, you will see in the first half we didn't have a lot of problems but then we conceded the goal."

"Against a good team like United that is a problem because we had to be more wide open and they could attack us more. The second goal finished the game because we found it hard to score."

"There were a few things missing. We were defending well but we did not create chances."

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Wenger blasts big clubs

INTERNET, undated

Arsene Wenger believes that big spending clubs who try and buy success by spending massive amounts of money are "cheating."

The Arsenal manager has also talked about his own pride at having always worked within strict budget wherever he has managed.

"I'm proud that every club I've managed has made money for the teams I built and none of them had a financial deficit at the end of the season," he told the News of the World.

"To succeed or to win at the league by spending 30 million pounds or mortgaging your future receipts, that's cheating in my book."

The remark can be seen as an attack on Alex Ferguson and Jose Mourinho who have both splashed out 30-million-pounds + transfer fees in the recent season.

Wenger also said that the test of a good coach comes with how well they can do with a limited budget.

"I believe a good coach can only get results with the means available to him," he said.

"At Arsenal they told me I have got this much money for new players and no more."

Lucio out for 21 days

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich's Brazilian international defender Lucio has been sidelined for three weeks after he sustained an ankle injury in the 3-1 defeat to Werder Bremen on Saturday.

Lucio, who scored an own goal in the match, injured his left ankle and club doctor Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfarth confirmed he would be out for three weeks.

Juventus reach Ground Zero

AFP, Rome

A sixth consecutive victory for demoted Juventus in the Italian second division on Saturday has finally wiped out their 17-point deficit imposed at the start of the season for match-fixing.

Juventus won 1-0 at Triestina meaning they now have notched up two points to lie 20th out of the 22 teams.

Following a 1-1 draw at Rimini on the opening day, Juventus have since won every match - against Vicenza (2-1), Crotona (0-3), Modena (4-0), Piacenza (0-2), Treviso (0-1) and Triestina (0-1) to earn 19 points out of a possible 21.

At Triestina, Didier Deschamps' team won thanks to a goal by Cristian Zanetti in the 33rd minute.

Juve were relegated to Italy's second division (Serie B) and made to start on minus 17 points for their part in rigging matches in the 2004/05 season.

If Juventus had started the season without any penalty points, they would be in top place with 19 points, one ahead of Genoa and four in front of Naples.

The club could also make a significant climb up the table should the Court of Arbitration of the Italian Olympic Committee (Coni), which club officials appeared before on October 11, decide to reduce the 17-point penalty.

TOO BAD: Monaco forward Serge Gakpe is downtrodden at the end of their Ligue 1 match against Toulouse at the Louis II Stadium in Monaco on Saturday.

Toulouse trounce Monaco

AFP, Paris



Monaco coach Laszlo Boloni insisted his side will rescue their dying season despite the former Champions League runners-up sinking to second from bottom of the French league.

Monaco, beaten by Porto in the Champions League final just two seasons ago, crashed to a 3-1 home defeat to Toulouse to leave them with just seven points from 10 games.

Nantes, who lost 1-0 to Nancy, prop up the table with six points.

"It's a very difficult time for the club," said Boloni.

"Our aim is to get out of this crisis. Whether it will be me to do it, it's not a question for me."

"But I know that one day, we will get our reward for all our work. I saw the president of the club at the end of the match but what we discussed is between us."

Toulouse scored twice in the last five minutes through Johan Elmander and Achille Emana to grab victory when a 1-1 scoreline in the Principality had looked likely.

Monaco's Marco Di Vaio had scored in the 14th minute to equalize Bryan Bergougnoux's opener two minutes earlier.

Things had not started well for Toulouse however when they were banned from using their pink away kit because it clashed with the red and white of Monaco, and had to use a blue strip provided by the home side.

Bordeaux's wretched season also continued.

Former UEFA Cup finalists Bordeaux, who helped spawn the career of a golden generation with names such as Zinedine Zidane and Bixente Lizarazu in the 90s, lost 2-1 at Sochaux to sit in ninth place in the table.

And it could have been worse for visitors Bordeaux as Pierre Ducasse only managed to pull a goal back in injury time after Sochaux's first half goals from Alvaro Santos and Valter Birsa.



Juventus forward Alessandro Del Piero (L) tries to keep Triestina's Riccardo Allegretti away from the ball during their Serie B match in Trieste on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across, Down, and Cryptiquip sections.

Cryptiquip puzzle grid with a 10x10 letter arrangement.

CRYPTOQUIP
CGOFJYFJT OWHJ ZYWZ PMHFC
VHZY TUMR W SHUSGS TP
VHUE JFCHCZWUBF: ZYF
W F J T E R U W S H B E G T
Yesterday's Cryptiquip: IF YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS FIRES ALL OF ITS PROFESSIONAL COPYISTS, IS IT DE-SCRIBED?
Today's Cryptiquip Clue: Z equals T
The Cryptiquip 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.