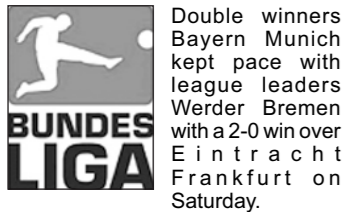




Bayern Munich's Mark van Bommel (L) celebrates his team's second goal with Roy Makaay and Willy Sagnol during their Bundesliga match against Eintracht Frankfurt at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Saturday.

## Bayern in the hunt

AFP, Berlin



Double winners Bayern Munich kept pace with league leaders Werder Bremen with a 2-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday. Bremen had opened up a six point gap on their rivals with a 6-1 demolition of Mainz 05 on Friday night but Bayern moved up to second and cut Bremen's lead in half with this victory.

Bayern even had the luxury of missing a penalty from Peruvian forward Claudio Pizarro on the stroke of half-time. But it is Bremen who are impressing most and they have bagged six goals in each of their last two away games, beating Bochum 6-0 prior to last weekend's top-of-the-table victory. This win over third-from-bottom Mainz was due in large part to the return to goalscoring form of Germany forward Miroslav Klose,

who notched a brace, and the continuing mastery of Brazilian playmaker Diego. "He is playing in a completely different dimension," was the verdict from the beaten team's management after the match. Klose had gone 618 minutes without a goal but his partnership with Diego is starting to click into gear, the Brazilian finding a new lease of life in the Bundesliga after struggling with Porto in the Portuguese league for the last couple of seasons. Bremen now have 19 points from nine matches, three clear of Bayern and Schalke 04, who travel to Stuttgart on Sunday. They could draw level on points but have no chance of overhauling

Bremen's vastly superior goal difference advantage. In other games, Nuremberg remain fifth after they were held 1-1 by Borussia Dortmund while early pacesetters Hertha Berlin dropped to sixth after a disappointing 2-0 reverse at Energie Cottbus, the only team from the former East Germany in the top flight. Cottbus moved up to fourth in the table from 11th at the start of the day. Hamburg's troubles continued as they were held 0-0 at home by Hannover 96 and remain hovering over the relegation zone. Bayer Leverkusen beat Borussia Monchengladbach 2-0 while rock bottom Bochum were beaten 1-0 at home by VfL Wolfsburg.

## Nantes edge out Monaco

AFP, Paris



Nantes finally lifted themselves off the bottom of the table with a narrow 1-0 victory in the basement battle against Monaco on Saturday. Striker Julio Rossi scored the winner in the 27th minute as the 2001 champions overcame the team they succeeded as Kings of France, and also consigned the principality club to the foot of the table. This match was telling in more ways than one as the two once great sides were the last two teams to be champions of France before Lyon took over and dominated the last five championships. But both have fallen a long way since then, particularly Monaco who only two and a half years ago lined up in the Champions League final, when

they lost 3-0 to Jose Mourinho's Porto. Now they sit bottom of their domestic league, having fired manager Laszlo Boloni at the beginning of the week and seen new boss Laurent Banide preside over their exit from the League Cup in midweek, at the hands of lower league opposition. "I am a little disappointed," said Banide. "Like I said before, the rebuilding work is important and we have to put everything in place to rediscover our balance. "We need time to think about our problems. This run of bad results has hugely affected us." Once they went behind, Monaco lost any hope of scratching their way back into the contest on the stroke of half-time as midfielder Jaroslav Plasil was sent off. Nantes's victory saw them move up to 17th in the table and clear of the dreaded drop zone. Nantes coach Serge Eo was just happy to be back on the winning trail. "On nights like this you just feel

like singing," he said. "It's a great night. We didn't play the ball around aimlessly." While Monaco might be struggling, there was better news for capital giants Paris St Germain who held on grimly for a 1-0 home success over Rennes. Last year's runners-up Bordeaux are gradually coming into form and three goals in eight minutes overturned a 1-0 home deficit against third-bottom Sedan. Wendel equalised Nadir Belhadj's 18th minute opener just before the break and former Werder Bremen playmaker Johan Micoud gave the hosts the lead just after the interval. Jean-Claude Darcheville wrapped up the three points with a penalty on 53 minutes. Lens are fifth after a narrow 1-0 win over Auxerre while Sochaux won 2-1 at Toulouse, Troyes beat St Etienne 3-1 at home and Lorient edged Valenciennes 1-0.

moments while trying to shield the ball in the corner to run down time. PSG may be down in 10th in the table but are only one win away from fourth-placed Lille who were held 1-1 at little Le Mans. Spurs coach Martin Jol was also thought to be considering a bid to bring Beckham to London to help his side turn the tide on a poor start to the season. "I'll sit down and think about it," the Dane told The Mail on Sunday. "We are well covered on the flanks already. It's a difficult one. Beckham is under contract with Real until 2007 and has said several times that he may prolong that deal until 2009. But his current status as a substitute under new boss Fabio Capello has put a brake on negotiations over that contract extension, sparking the speculation that he could be on the move.

## Mancini a relieved man

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini said the dismissal of Marco Materazzi almost cost his side victory in Saturday's pulsating 4-3 derby win over AC Milan. World Cup-winning Italy international Materazzi received a second yellow card for pulling his shirt over his head to celebrate his headed goal, which put Inter 4-1 up in the 68th minute. "Everything was going really well until Materazzi's red card," said Mancini whose team's sixth victory from nine matches left them on 21 points, three ahead of Palermo, who visit Fiorentina on Sunday, and four ahead of Roma, 1-0 winners at Udinese. "Then we had a few players who were suffering, like Vieira, but I couldn't make any substitutions. "Up until that moment we had dominated the game, and if we still had 11 players on the pitch we would have scored more. But a match can quickly change, due to a sending-off or an injury." AC Milan remain on seven points after losing their appeal against an eight-point handicap for match-fixing on Friday, but their coach Carlo Ancelotti refused to give up on the title. "We just have to live match by match. The season is very long and we have to maintain the belief that we can have a great season," he said.

## Gerrard going nowhere

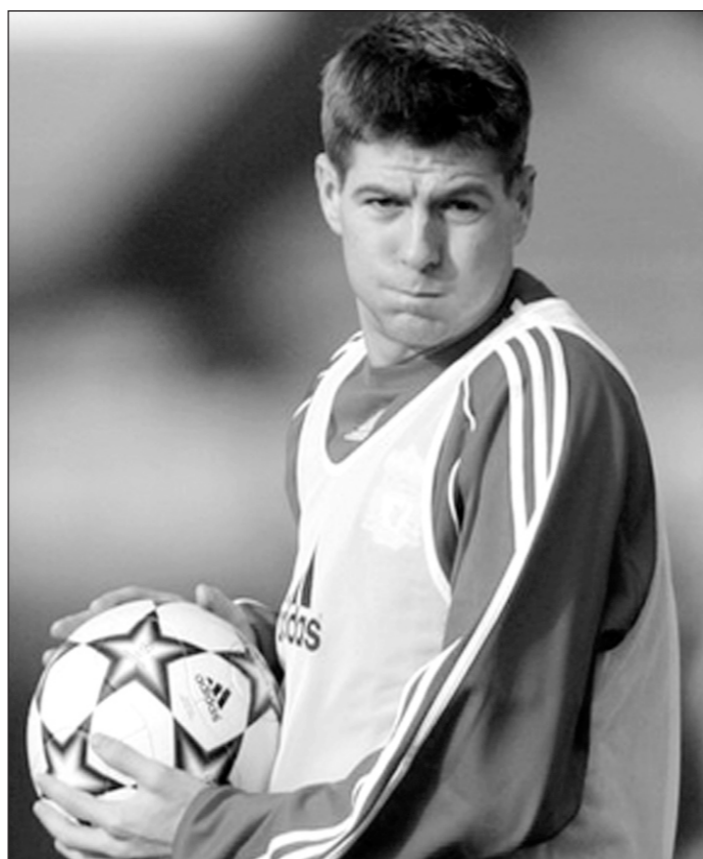
Football

AFP, London

Liverpool have no intention of allowing skipper Steven Gerrard to leave the club, manager Rafael Benitez has said. Gerrard's future has been the subject of speculation once again this week with his name being linked to Real Madrid, but Benitez said after Saturday's 3-1 home win over Aston Villa there was no way that would happen. "It is clear that I will not be selling my captain," said Benitez whose relations with the 26-year-old Gerrard are reported to be cool. "It is always a surprise to see such things that are not true. Especially for Steven because he had played such a good game. "Against Villa he worked really hard, so to see this the following day is a surprise, disappointing that this is all that people can think of. "This week we have been talking with Steven, and last week. He was okay, we were talking about his daughter and how she is, as well as team issues and how we can give the team more confidence. "I feel he is really focused on the club, and our idea for sure is to keep him and to see him scoring goals this season and for many years for Liverpool." Gerrard spent the last week worried about his six-month-old daughter Lexi, who has been in hospital recovering from symptoms similar to meningitis.

He was at her bedside last Saturday night, just hours ahead of the defeat at Manchester United, where his performance was roundly criticised.

But Gerrard's display against Villa, and the warm hand-shake he exchanged with his manager at the end, suggested he was much happier than a week ago.



STEVEN GERRARD

## Kaka rues Milan errors

INTERNET, undated

Milan almost completed an incredible comeback from 4-1 down against Inter and Kaka is ruing those missed chances. "I am very bitter at this defeat and the CONI Arbitrato's decision," said the Brazilian after last night's sensational 4-3 result. It came less than 24 hours after their appeal against the eight-point Calciopoli handicap was rejected. "We were hoping that they'd take off at least some of our penalty, but I have to point out this affair did not affect our performance." The Rossoneri were trailing 4-1 when Marco Materazzi was sent off, but nearly managed to snatch a point in the Derby della Madonnina. "In the first half we were under pressure from Inter and allowed them forward too much, but after the break we were a completely different team and you all saw the results. "It's a shame about the final minutes, as we had several chances and would've deserved a draw." Kaka struck at the 91st to set up a thrilling finale, but seven goals proved enough at the San Siro for the Nerazzurri party.

## Celtic interested in Beckham

AFP, London

David Beckham's frustrations at his lack of first-team appearances at Real Madrid have renewed speculation about his future with both Tottenham and Celtic being touted as possible buyers. The former England captain has been mainly used as a substitute this season for Real and he has made it clear he is far from happy with the situation. But with the player having said in the past he would not play in the English Premiership again, a move to Scotland and Celtic who are eager to make progress in the Champions League could be on the cards according to the Sunday Telegraph. The paper reported that Celtic manager Gordon Strachan is aware of Beckham's plight and was not averse to acquiring another high profile transfer deal following the capture of another Manchester United legend Roy Keane last year. "I have David's telephone number," Strachan was reported as saying. "He is a wonderful player who is still very fit and could play at the highest level for another three years. I know he would not go to another club in England." Spurs coach Martin Jol was also thought to be considering a bid to bring Beckham to London to help his side turn the tide on a poor start to the season. "I'll sit down and think about it," the Dane told The Mail on Sunday. "We are well covered on the flanks already. It's a difficult one. Beckham is under contract with Real until 2007 and has said several times that he may prolong that deal until 2009. But his current status as a substitute under new boss Fabio Capello has put a brake on negotiations over that contract extension, sparking the speculation that he could be on the move.

## Zlatan feels San Siro thrills

INTERNET, undated

Inter's Zlatan Ibrahimovic was over the moon at winning his first Serie A derby in such spectacular fashion. "This was a wonderful night and a very important match. It's the first Italian derby I've played in and I have to say it was fantastic," said the former Juventus striker. He contributed to the 4-3 victory with a well-taken goal, his second in as many games, as Milan were sunk at San Siro. "I always try to hit the back of the net, but don't always manage it. The important thing is picking up the three points, which were earned with hard work over 90 minutes." Adriano is in Brazil for a period of rest and recuperation, while Alvaro Recoba is out for six weeks with a new calf strain, but they were not missed in this spectacular Stracittadina. "Heman Crespo is a great striker and always seems to score. It's easy to play alongside him, as he helps out the team in defence and attack. As for myself, I always want to do more and improve." Crespo opened the scoring in the seven-goal thriller and it was his first ever goal in a Milan derby, despite playing on both sides of the divide. "I think this was an emblematic victory, as it's never easy to beat a great side like Milan," said the Argentine. "We struggled a great deal when we went down to 10 men, but gave our heart and soul for this result. Right now we'll enjoy this win and only then think about the Champions League game with Spartak Moscow."

## Fresh chaos hits Kenyan football

Football

AFP, Nairobi

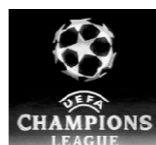
Kenyan football was thrown into fresh chaos on Saturday as delegates to a special assembly of the governing board, called off its by leaders, went ahead with the meeting and sacked its top two officials. Less than a week after FIFA banned Kenya from international play for failing to implement reforms, dissident members of the Kenya Football Federation (KFF) passed no-confidence motions against their chairman and general secretary. Leaders of the revolt said they were protesting a failure to act on a report accusing the federation of corruption and not informing its members about the FIFA ban, which was confirmed Wednesday by the world governing body. "We cannot continue to deal with people who have no respect for the

constitution," said Peter Ochiel, the head of a local KFF branch who chaired the meeting after chair Alfred Sambu and secretary Dan Omino cancelled it. "We are 160 delegates and the federation does not belong to only two people," he said, explaining why the membership had voted to fire Sambu and Omino, who are seeking help from FIFA to resolve the matter. Ochiel claimed the vote had been unanimous among those present at the closed-door meeting held as Kenya tries to resolve its differences with FIFA, which demands that its two rival leagues be merged into one 18-team division. But Sambu rejected the vote of the rump meeting, insisting that it had been called off to await new suggestions from FIFA and that he remained chairman. "I am not aware there was a meeting," he told AFP. "As chair-

man, I called the meeting and then called it off. I called it off so that we can get a clear picture of what FIFA wants and then I can go ahead and tell the delegates. "Those who organised the meeting are rebels and these rebels had no quorum to make any decision," he said. "As far as I am concerned, I am still the chairman of KFF." FIFA first suspended Kenya for three months in 2004 for government interference but the situation was reversed after the country agreed to draw up new statutes. Recent problems have included deadly fan violence, physical attacks on rival KFF officials, a match-fixing allegation and clashes over the formation of the Kenyan Premier League (KPL) to run Kenyan football on a professional basis.

## Chelsea short of strikers

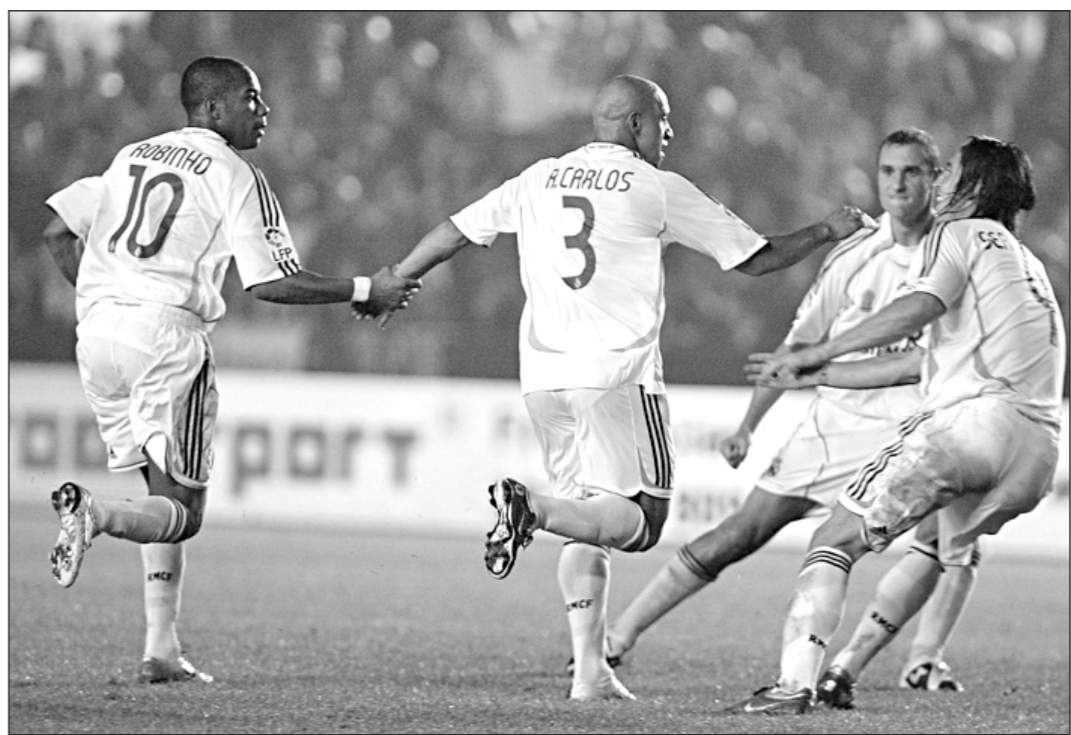
AFP, Sheffield



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has admitted he is facing a striker crisis ahead of his side's Champions League group game against tit-holders Barcelona in Spain next week. With Andriy Shevchenko already missing with a leg muscle injury, Didier Drogba had to be replaced at half-time during Saturday's 2-0 Premiership win away to Sheffield United after the Ivory Coast international hurt his right foot. Mourinho is refusing to rule the pair out of Tuesday's match at the Nou Camp, but said both men could struggle to recover in time. "Drogba was feeling a lot of pain and couldn't play on," Mourinho explained after goals by Frank Lampard and Michael Ballack gave the reigning Premiership champions their fifth straight win. "I don't know if they will be fit, but for the first game against Barcelona earlier this season (which Chelsea won 1-0) we played without two keepers. "Maybe we will have to play without both strikers this time." With Chelsea sat at the top of their

group and all but guaranteed a place in the last 16 of the Champions League after three wins out of three, Mourinho can afford to be light-hearted about his injury situation. But he will be anxious his crooked forwards make quick and full recoveries as Chelsea's season reaches an important stage. They had Portuguese keeper Henrique Hilario to thank for making their first trip to Bramall Lane in 13 years a successful one. Hilario made a crucial penalty save from Danny Webber when the game was still goalless. He was only playing because Petr Cech, the first-choice keeper, is recovering from a serious head injury while Carlo Cudicini has only just returned to training after being concussed in the same match as the Blues' number one at Reading. Mourinho has been delighted with the way Hilario has performed for the first-team after keeping three clean sheets in four appearances. He hinted he could play against Barcelona even though Cudicini was well enough to be on the bench against Sheffield United. "Hilario played very well. He was amazing," said Mourinho. "The penalty save was crucial to the game. "You never know what might have happened had Sheffield United, who were playing with such enthusiasm,

had gone ahead. "Carlo Cudicini trained with the group for the first time yesterday (Friday) and was available for the game. That's why he was on the bench. But Hilario is playing well and deserves his chance." While Chelsea go from strength to strength, problems are mounting for Sheffield United manager Neil Warnock. His struggling side have won just once in 10 top-flight games. They face tough away games against Newcastle and Bolton, before hosting Manchester United, and Warnock insisted his players could not afford to be so wasteful from the penalty spot in the future. "That's the third one we've missed now," said the Blades boss. "We've got to start taking these opportunities. If it goes in Row E in The Kop I won't give anyone a rollicking. "But we've taken some really poor ones lately. "Just for once I would like to take the lead against teams like Chelsea instead of chasing them. It would have been lovely to put them under pressure."



Real Madrid players (L-R) Robinho, Roberto Carlos, Ivan Helguera and Sergio Ramos (R) celebrate one of their three goals against Gimnastic in their Primera Liga match at Nou Stadl in Tarragona on Saturday.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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**Solution time: 27 mins.**

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## CRYPTOQUIP

VSEOS BM QSH I-OBWTPHK  
GEXWEZY VBLPJ OXLYH  
X THAYBZ QB IHSXGH  
TPXNMLPPN? MABPEO XOEJ.  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE CRABBY MATHEMATICIAN COMPLAINS THAT HIS LIFE IS MERELY ONE PROBLEM AFTER ANOTHER.  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: S 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.