



PHOTO: INTERNET

Liverpool players take part in a training session at the club's Melwood training ground in Liverpool on Sunday. Liverpool face Bordeaux in the Champions League Group C match at Anfield on Tuesday.

## Knockout spots at stake

REUTERS, London

As many as 11 clubs could secure a place in the knockout round of the Champions League this week if all the results went the way of the favourites when Matchday Four is played on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Teams like Chelsea (Group A), Bayern Munich (Group B), Valencia (Group D), Olympique Lyon (Group E) and Manchester United (Group F) all have one foot in the door after winning their opening three matches and it would take an unlikely loss of form as well as a series of unlikely results to stop them advancing now.

If they were all to win again this week they would be through, and could be joined by the likes of Liverpool, PSV Eindhoven, Real Madrid, AS Roma, Celtic, AC Milan and Lille.

Others like Arsenal and CSKA Moscow are likely to go through before the completion of the group phase matches.

The obvious missing name from the above list is that of reigning European champions Barcelona whose place in the last 16 could be

in some jeopardy if they were to slip up at home against Chelsea at the Nou Camp on Tuesday.

With three matches completed in Group A, Chelsea top the standings with nine points following their 1-0 home win over Barcelona two weeks ago.

They meet again at the Nou Camp this week and Barcelona, who beat Leviski Sofia 5-0 in their opening match then drew 1-1 at Werder Bremen, must win. Anything less would leave them facing elimination, especially if Werder, who are also on four points, beat Leviski in Sofia.

Barcelona have slipped in recent weeks, but their Brazilian playmaker Ronaldinho showed signs of returning to his best on Saturday with two goals in Barcelona's 3-0 win over at Recreativo Huelva -- one a penalty and the other a rare header.

Chelsea, in contrast, have been grinding out wins with their usual efficiency although they have never won at the Nou Camp in five matches dating back to 1966.

Among the other sides whose future in the competition is finely balanced are Inter Milan and Porto.

Inter have dreamt now for more than 40 years of adding to the two European Cups they won in 1964 and 1965 and started this season with high hopes after being elevated to the position of Italian champions in

the wake of the Serie A match-fixing scandal of last season.

But they started their Group B campaign badly, losing 1-0 to Sporting Lisbon in their first match and 2-0 at home to Bayern in their second.

Their 2-1 win over Spartak Moscow two weeks ago revived their campaign and another win over Spartak, albeit this time in Moscow, will give them a chance of advancing, especially if Bayern follow up their 1-0 win over Sporting in Lisbon with another win over the Portuguese side in Munich.

Porto, the reigning Portuguese champions and European Cup winners in 2004, also face a crucial game in Germany against Hamburg SV in Group G.

### ESDAY'S MATCH

<b>GROUP A</b>	Barcelona v Chelsea Leviski Sofia v Werder Bremen
<b>GROUP B</b>	Spartak Moscow v Inter Milan Bayern Munich v Sporting Lisbon
<b>GROUP C</b>	Liverpool v Bordeaux PSV v Galatasaray
<b>GROUP D</b>	Shakhtar v Valencia Roma v Olympiacos

With CSKA (7 points) and Arsenal (6 points), meeting in London and both looking likely to qualify, Porto (4 points) must inflict a fourth successive defeat on Hamburg to keep their own chances realistically alive.

Hamburg, the 1983 European champions, are one of three teams yet to gain a point along with Leviski Sofia and Dynamo Kiev.

They all face elimination unless they find a win this week with Leviski at home to Werder in Group A and Kiev travelling to unbeat and unblemished Lyon in Group E.

With Lyon having won 3-0 in Kiev two weeks ago, the odds on an upset seem remote and Lyon, widely considered a strong, if rather under-estimated candidate to inherit Barca's crown, likely to win again and advance.

In each of the last seven seasons, since the Champions League was increased to 32 clubs, at least two clubs have made it through to the last 16 with two matches to play and in each of the last six seasons, at least one club has been eliminated.

Last season four clubs went through at this stage of the competition and four clubs went out -- figures that could well be bettered this week.

## Real suspend Cassano

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid striker Antonio Cassano has been suspended from training after an incident following the Primera Liga match against Gimnastic in Tarragona on Saturday, the club said in a statement on Monday.

Real said Cassano, who spent the game on the bench, had shown a lack of respect for coach Fabio Capello after the game but gave no details of the incident.

Spanish newspapers said Cassano had confronted Capello, demanding to be a first-choice player. The Italian has started few games this season.

"I deserve to play and be a starter," sports newspaper AS quoted Cassano as saying to Capello after the match which Real won 3-1.

Real Madrid said that in addition to the unspecified suspension, the player will also be fined.

## Pressure on Barca: Ballack

INTERNET, undated

Chelsea midfielder Michael Ballack says the pressure will be on Barcelona when the two sides meet at Camp Nou in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Chelsea defeated the European champions 1-0 a fortnight ago to claim poll position in Group A and leave Barca facing a real battle to qualify for the knockout stage. "With nine points out of three matches, we have every chance of finishing top in our group," Ballack said. "Looking at the standings, Barcelona will have a tough time, because [Werder] Bremen have also got four points."

"Barcelona, though, are certainly the favourites in their next two home games against Chelsea and Bremen particularly as they also lost against Real Madrid and have something to prove. As for us, we can wait and see. The pressure on us is much less as we beat

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## Rijkaard praises Mourinho

REUTERS, London

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard has praised the ability of Chelsea counterpart Jose Mourinho for successfully changing the London side's style of play.

"Mourinho has done great work to change tactics but stay successful," Rijkaard told the BBC on Monday.

"Mourinho follows his personality, staying close to his own way. He chooses that and he has been very successful with it. I can only have respect for that."

European champions Barcelona face Chelsea at the Nou Camp on Tuesday in a Champions League Group A match.

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## Beckham staying put

AFP, Madrid

David Beckham, discarded by England, insisted Monday he was going nowhere and intended to stay with Real Madrid despite spending much of this season on the bench.

"I am not considering any possibility of a transfer at the moment, my family and I are very happy in Madrid," said Beckham, whose contract runs to September 30.

"I want to stay with Real Madrid because I believe in the (club) project and respect the coach," said Beckham, who insisted he believed the side could win silverware this season after a three-year barren spell which has marred his time at the club since his July 2003 transfer from Manchester United.

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## Schalke slump at Stuttgart

REUTERS, Berlin

Title hopefuls Schalke 04 slipped to a 3-0 defeat away to VfB Stuttgart in the Bundesliga on Sunday, leaving Werder Bremen the clear leaders in Germany.

Sami Khedira got the first two goals for a Stuttgart side improving rapidly after a shaky start to the season.

The 19-year-old German midfielder hooked in the first from outside the penalty area in the 32nd minute. He added his second within 30 seconds of the restart, running on to a pass from Pavel Pardo and beating the onrushing keeper with a fine clip.

Defender Serdar Tasci, another talented German teenager, wrapped up victory when he slid in to convert a cross from Arthur Boka 15 minutes from time.

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## Catalans seek revenge

AFP, Barcelona



Defending European champions Barcelona face Chelsea at the Nou Camp on Tuesday with revenge on their minds after slumping to defeat against the Londoners a fortnight ago.

The English Premiership champions maintained their 100-percent record in the Champions League this season thanks to a stunning effort by Didier Drogba.

After the game at Stamford Bridge, Barcelona-based newspaper El Periodico slammed "a leaderless Barca. Nobody took command."

If that was hard to stomach for the holders, a 2-0 Spanish league reverse at hated rivals Real Madrid the following weekend was equally painful and raised questions as to whether Barca can reach the heights of last season's Champions League and La Liga double without injured striker Samuel Eto'o.

Cameron international Eto'o scored six times in Barca's victorious campaign last season, including one in the final win over Arsenal, but the knee injury suffered at Werder Bremen in September will keep him out of action until the end of January.

Looking to compensate, Barca will throw Argentine wing wizard

Lionel Messi into the frontline fray against Jose Mourinho's men.

The teenager trained normally Sunday after missing two games with a twisted right ankle.

But while Messi will add craft and guile in the absence of Eto'o it is Ronaldinho's form which will be crucial as the hosts attempt to claw back a five-point gap against rivals who have won three in a row.

With Werder breathing down Barca's neck level on points - though the Germans still have to play in the Nou Camp - the holders can take nothing for granted as they play catch-up in the knowledge no side has retained the trophy under the Champions League format.

"People have made a lot of the absence of Eto'o and they have been critical at times of Ronaldinho and (Portuguese midfielder) Deco but when this pair are on form

there's no stopping them," said Barca coach Frank Rijkaard ahead of Chelsea's third visit in as many years.

Last year the south Londoners managed a draw only to bow out on the back of a home loss in the home leg of the round of last 16 with Eto'o on target, though two years ago they advanced 5-4 on aggregate.

This time Chelsea will again rely on third-choice goalkeeper Henrique Hilario with Petr Cech and Carlo Cudicini still recovering from injury.

While Barca must face up to the loss of Eto'o, Chelsea could miss Andriy Shevchenko with a leg muscle injury, though he travels, while Drogba had to be replaced at half-time during Saturday's 2-0 win at Sheffield United after the Ivory Coast international hurt his right foot.

"In the first game against Barcelona we played without two keepers and maybe now is the time to play without two forwards and I will just take defenders and midfielders," said Mourinho, a former Barcelona assistant coach.

Fortunately for Rijkaard, who won back to back European Cups as a player with AC Milan in 1989 and 1990, Ronaldinho is back in harness on the evidence of a brace in Saturday's routine win over Recreativo Huelva.

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### TEAMS

**BARCELONA:** 1-Victor Valdes; 2-Juliano Belletti; 5-Carles Puyol; 4-Rafael Marquez; 12-Giovanni van Bronckhorst or 16-Silvino; 6-Xavi; 15-Edmilson; 20-Deco; 19-Lionel Messi; 10-Ronaldinho; 7-Eidur Gudjohnsen or 22-Javier Saviola  
**CHELSEA:** 40-Hilario; 20-Paulo Ferreira; 6-Ricardo Carvalho; 26-John Terry; 18-Wayne Bridge; 5-Mickael Essien; 4-Claude Makelele; 13-Michael Ballack; 8-Frank Lampard; 7-Andriy Shevchenko; 15-Dider Drogba

## Jose not vindictive

Football

AFP, Barcelona

Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho hinted Tuesday's Champions League rivals Barcelona still exert an emotional pull on him as he insisted that he simply wanted the Blues to finish top of Group A rather than knock out the team where he once served as assistant.

"My intention isn't to knock Barcelona out of the Champions League. I just want to finish top of the group," Mourinho told Monday's Marca sports daily.

He added that with Chelsea five points clear after beating the holders at Stamford Bridge a fortnight ago "a draw could be a good result. With 10 points you should go

through to the last 16 and Barca (who currently have four) have another two games to get them."

Mourinho served as assistant to Bobby Robson and then Louis Van Gaal in the late 1990s at the Nou Camp before making his name with Porto, landing the 2004 European Cup before moving to Chelsea and adding successive English Premiership titles.

Mourinho said he had watched some of Barca's 3-0 win Saturday over Recreativo Huelva but only "until the referee gave Barca a penalty. Then I switched channel to see Porto take on Benfica."

The penalty, converted by Ronaldinho, broke the deadlock, but was controversial as a defender's challenge on Eidur Gudjohnsen was innocuous.

Mourinho, dubbed the "king of

the cold war" here when he first came back with Chelsea two seasons ago after refusing to turn up for the post-match conference, said he would not get embroiled in a discussion on whether Barca might receive lenient treatment at home from referees.

"I won't talk about the referee," he told Marca, adding simply that his players were "especially motivated" to improve on last year's draw, which brought an exit over two legs, and a 2-1 loss here a season earlier which presaged a 4-2 win in the return to see the Blues go through.

The earlier match, leading to the interview boycott which enraged UEFA, saw Mourinho suggest that Swedish referee Anders Frisk had visited the home dressing room at

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## Thrilling Palermo keep pace

AFP, Rome

A last minute goal from Brazilian striker Amauri took Palermo back level with Inter Milan at the top of the Italian table on Sunday.

The Sicilians won 3-2 at Fiorentina to move level on 21 points with Inter who won a thrilling Milan derby 4-3 on Saturday.

The two co-leaders hold a four point advantage over Roma, who won 1-0 at Udinese on Saturday.

For their part, AC Milan fell to 14 points off the pace, courtesy largely of the eight-point penalty they suffered for match-fixing.

Amauri was the star of the show for Palermo who travelled to a team that had won their last four matches, but remain 19th in the table due to a 15-point sanction for their part in match-fixing.

Palermo coach Francesco Guidolin said: "It was an exceptional match from a squad that never gives up. Amauri was almost perfect with two extraordinary goals and an assist."

Amauri provided the decisive pass for strike partner David Di Michele to open the scoring on eight minutes.

After an Andrea Barzagli own goal restored parity, Amauri gave Palermo the lead 11 minutes from time, only for Romanian forward Adrian Mutu to level again on 87 minutes.

But the Brazilian was not to be denied and pounced to score the winner for the country's top attacking team in the dying seconds.

Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini said the dismissal of Marco Materazzi almost cost his side victory in Saturday's pulsating win over Milan.

World Cup-winning Italy international Materazzi received a

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Palermo's Brazilian forward Carvalho Amauri thanks the heavens after scoring against Fiorentina during their Serie A match at Florence's Artemio Franchi Stadium on Sunday.



PHOTO: AFP

Sevilla's Adriano Correia (C) jumps for joy after scoring the second goal against Celta Vigo during their Primera Liga encounter at the Balaidos Stadium in Vigo on Sunday.

## Sevilla go second

AFP, Madrid



Sevilla came back from a goal down to win 2-1 at Celta Vigo and move up to second place in the Spanish first division.

The victory by last season's UEFA Cup winners keeps Barcelona's lead at the top of the table down to one point after the reigning Spanish champions thrashed Recreativo Huelva 3-0 on Saturday.

Brazilian striker Nene put Celta ahead after just seven minutes, with the hosts' first attack of the game.

However, Sevilla equalised shortly after the half hour with Danish international midfielder Christian Poulsen getting his first goal in the league with a stunning long range strike.

Adriano then put Sevilla ahead

after 69 minutes, making the most of some slack defending by Celta.

Celta had a chance to salvage a point four minutes from the whistle but Fernando Baiano had his penalty saved by goalkeeper Andres Palop and Pablo Contreras squandered Celta's second chance on goal.

"With only a one goal advantage, these sort of things can happen but I think we were superior and we deserved to win," said Sevilla coach Juande Ramos.

"When the referee blew his whistle for the penalty, I was reminded of all the occasions when Sevilla have had these sort of opportunities and we've thrown them away. This time it was the opposite situation."

Real Zaragoza moved up to fourth after their 1-0 win at Atletico Madrid but they left it late with Oscar Gonzalez heading the winner three minutes before the whistle.

At the other end of the table, Real

Sociedad remain without a win and anchored firmly to the foot of the table.

Villarreal's Rodolfo Arruabarrena got the only goal of the game nine minutes from time to give the last season's Champions League semi-finalists a useful 1-0 away win in San Sebastian.

Miguel Angel Lotina took over at the helm of Sociedad on Friday but the new coach was unable to change their fortunes and their players left the field with supporters calling for the head of club president Miguel Fuentes.

"At least the fans were supporting the players. We know we are in a difficult situation and that we have to improve but I saw some encouraging signs in this game," said Lotina.

Sociedad have been in the first division since the 1967-68 season and won La Liga twice in the 1980s but have flirted with relegation in

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