



**BARCA BLUES:** Chelsea players including Frank Lampard (L) and Didier Drogba (2nd R) celebrate the striker's last-gasp goal to earn a draw in their Champions League clash against Barcelona at the Nou Camp in Barcelona on Tuesday.

## Chelsea leave Barca reeling

REUTERS, Barcelona

Didier Drogba scored deep into stoppage time to earn Chelsea a dramatic 2-2 draw at Barcelona in a highly charged Champions League Group A match at the Nou Camp on Tuesday.

Eidur Gudjohnsen scored against his former Chelsea team mates to put Barcelona 2-1 up after 58 minutes but Chelsea struck back just before the finish to steal a point.

The result makes Chelsea almost certain of progress but jeopardises the European champions' chances of making a successful defence of their crown. They now drop to third place in the group two points behind Werder Bremen and five behind Chelsea after the Germans won 3-0 at Levski Sofia.

Barca got off to a dream start when midfielder Deco, a former pupil of Jose Mourinho's at Porto, cut in from the left, sped towards the area and unleashed a low drive that fizzed into the net past the outstretched Hilario in the second minute.

Ronaldinho should have made extended the lead six minutes later after Lionel Messi sped past the Chelsea back four following a neat one-two with Gianluca Zambrotta.

But the Brazilian skied his shot over the bar after the Argentine teenager had cut a neat pass into his path from the byline.

Stand-in goalkeeper Hilario came to Chelsea's rescue 15 minutes later when he produced a fine full-stretch save to turn a stinging shot from Xavi past the post after the midfielder had exchanged passes with Ronaldinho.

Chelsea came out firing on all cylinders after the break and Dutch winger Arjen Robben gave Barca two more scares, Valdes producing

another sharp save to stop a close-range header and the Dutchman firing over the bar after a great combination between Frank Lampard and Ashley Cole.

But the Londoners had little time to bemoan the miss as Lampard, who had earlier picked up a booking that will see him miss the next match against Werder, put them back on level terms with a remarkable goal.

The England midfielder beat the offside trap to pick up a lofted pass from Essien appeared to have taken the ball too wide, but he swivelled round on the byline and dinked the ball over Valdes and into the far corner from a seemingly impossible angle.

Barca restored their lead six minutes later when Gudjohnsen steered in from five metres out after Ronaldinho had darted down the left flank and curled in a tempting cross with the outside of the boot.

The referee, kept busy all night

by constant diving, debating and fouling of both sets of players, allowed five minutes of added time, and Drogba, who scored the winner two weeks ago at Stamford Bridge, took full advantage.

The Ivory Coast striker expertly chested down a headed pass from John Terry to make space in the area and then fired a shot under Valdes to snatch the point.

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho was beaming with pride at the end.

"Everything is in our hands now but I am very proud of the performance," said the Portuguese maestro, who had as usual stirred things up by alleging Gudjohnsen had learnt to dive since he joined Barcelona.

"We had five or six big chances. I believe we had two penalties in our favour. We made life difficult for us as we conceded a goal so early."

## Reds ease into last 16

AFP, Liverpool

Luis Garcia further enhanced his reputation as Liverpool's European saviour as Rafa Benitez's side secured their place in the last 16 of the Champions League with a 3-0 win over Bordeaux at Anfield on Tuesday.

Two goals by Spanish international Garcia and Steven Gerrard's first of the season were enough to sink the French club who were forced to play the final 25 minutes with 10 men after Fernando Menegazzo was sent-off for lashing out at Norwegian international John Arne Riise.

Benitez's side were made to battle by a spirited Bordeaux side before Menegazzo's moment of madness saw Liverpool into the second phase of the competition with two games to spare.

Following recent criticism in the wake of his side's recent poor form in the Premiership -- both from within and outside Anfield -- Benitez was in a far better frame of mind ahead of this game after the impressive 3-1 win over Aston Villa at the weekend and able to concentrate his side on the job in hand against a Bordeaux side they beat 1-0 away a fortnight ago.

Just hours before kick-off, long-serving board member Noel White tendered his resignation after confirming he was the unnamed director quoted in a newspaper article which raised concerns about Benitez's leadership and also questioned his transfer dealings.

Yet White's decision to quit was overshadowed by Benitez's decision to name an unchanged starting line-up for the first time in 18 months after Gerrard and Momo Sissoko both passed late fitness tests on ankle injuries.

All three goals against Villa had come during a breathtaking first-half display, yet for the first 20

minutes against Bordeaux Liverpool were careless as they gifted their opponents possession too often for Benitez's liking.

Fortunately for the hosts Bordeaux lacked the quality to open up the home defence, Menegazzo's long-range effort, which had Jose Reina scrambling across his line, the closest the visitors came in a first half which saw Garcia break the deadlock with Liverpool's first serious raid.

Garcia produced a text book

finish from a tight angle to beat former France keeper Ulrich Rame after connecting with Gerrard's dangerous 23rd minute cross.

Back-to-back successes in the French League Cup against Auxerre and in the French championship against Sedan had boosted Bordeaux's confidence ahead of their trip to Merseyside.

Without injured Czech Republic midfielder Vladimir Smicer, who helped Liverpool win the competition in 2005, they rarely looked like

scoring their first goal in this season's competition.

Florian Marange forced a fingertip save from Reina at the start of the second-half but Menegazzo's dismissal allowed Benitez's team to coast to victory.

The Bordeaux player appeared to head butt Riise in the 66th minute which resulted in the Liverpool player having to leave the field for treatment with blood pouring from a wound.

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**Liverpool talisman Steven Gerrard goes airborne as he executes a left foot volley in their Champions League match against Bordeaux at Anfield on Tuesday.**

## Media poke fun at Spartak

REUTERS, Moscow

Russian media poked fun at Spartak Moscow after they were forced to use the underground to reach the stadium for Tuesday's Champions League match against Inter Milan.

"Metro shows Spartak the exit," read the front-page headline in Wednesday's daily Sovetsky Sport in reference to a 1-0 defeat by Inter that all but ruined their chances of reaching the knockout round.

The Russians almost missed the start of the game after getting stuck in traffic on their way to the Luzhniki Olympic stadium.

It proved to be a bad omen with Julio Cruz striking just 58 seconds into the match and holding out for victory.

Spartak full back Martin Stranzl said he had never been on the Moscow metro before.

"I was shocked how crowded it was," the Austrian international, whose failed clearance led to Cruz's goal, was quoted as saying by the Russian media.

Spartak captain Yegor Titov said he had not used the metro since the early 1990s.

"I don't remember if we ever had this situation before," said the 30-year-old Russia playmaker. "But we had no other choice. Our team bus just stopped dead because of traffic. I think we had moved for about 50 metres in 45 minutes."

Titov said Moscow police had to guard the players on their metro journey.

"They (police) also allowed us to use the metro for free," he said. "It was all right, although a bit too hot in there."

Spartak coach Vladimir Fedotov said after the match that his biggest worry was losing players underground.

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## Don't send me back: Reyes

INTERNET, undated

Jose Antonio Reyes has admitted he does not want to return to Arsenal at the end of his season-long loan to Real Madrid. The forward moved from the Gunners to Madrid in a pre-season swap deal that saw Brazilian Julio Baptista go in the opposite direction.

And the Spain international told FourFourTwo magazine that he is desperate to stay at the Bernabeu after acknowledging that he was unable to adjust to both the English game and lifestyle.

"I wouldn't say it's a relief to be back in Spain, but I'm happy here," Reyes said.

"I don't even want to think about going back. I'd love to end my career at Real Madrid. I'm happy here."

"I struggled to adapt to England and so did my family. Everything's shut at 5pm. There's nothing to do, nowhere to go. I just got bored."

"I don't think I failed in The Premiership, but for players like me English football is very hard. It really doesn't suit me. The whole football culture is very different there."

Reyes had repeatedly spoken of his desire to play for Real Madrid during his time at Highbury, and believes the club will soon end their barren run without a major trophy.

"I always wanted to come to Real Madrid. I didn't have to think about it."

"Clubs go through good patches and bad ones. Barcelona hadn't won anything for six years and now they're playing very well."

## This could be our year: Ferguson

AFP, London

Sir Alex Ferguson believes Manchester United's exhilarating current form can carry them all the way to Champions League glory next May.

The Scot, who will celebrate 20 years in charge at Old Trafford next week, has made no secret of his frustration that he has only once, on a memorable night in Barcelona seven years ago, managed to get his hands on European football's biggest prize. But the vitality displayed by his reshaped squad so far this season has convinced him that this could be their season.

"I do feel we should have done it at least twice before," Ferguson admitted as he prepared for Wednesday night's group F meeting with FC Copenhagen.

"We have an opportunity with a new team that is full of promise and I think we could do it."

"It is open, there are maybe half a dozen teams that could win it. Bayern Munich have started very well, the form of Lyon has been fantastic and of course you can't dismiss Barcelona. And I think the

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## Cruz missile hits Spartak

AFP, Moscow



Italian giants Inter Milan kept their hopes of qualifying for the knockout stages of the Champions League alive here on Tuesday as a Julio Cruz goal gave them a 1-0 win over Spartak Moscow in their Group B clash.

Cruz, who scored the two goals in their win over Spartak a fortnight ago, struck within a minute of the start and that was just enough despite a spirited showing from the Russians to put them second in the group on six points after four matches.

However Sporting Lisbon have the chance to retake second spot if they beat unbeaten Bayern Munich in Munich later on Tuesday -- defeat for Spartak means they have virtually no chance of progressing with just one point and leaves them winless in 22 Champions League matches.

Inter opened the scoring almost as early as they did in their first meeting a fortnight ago as Zlatan Ibrahimovic got the better of the bounce and the stockinged Swedish star looked up and passed inside to Cruz who had no trouble in slotting the ball into the net margin-

ally a bit later than when he did in the first clash.

Spartak did not waver in the freezing conditions and indeed went on the offensive, as they needed to, but although they had more shots than Inter on goal only Mozart -- seven goals already this season in the domestic league -- seemed on tune as he forced a

save from goalkeeper Julio Cesar in the 27th minute.

Indeed it was Cruz who almost doubled the lead in the 32nd minute as the Argentine international was shipped free by a brilliant ball from Dejan Stankovic and though free on goal he dragged his shot wide of the far post.

The hosts' coach, the lugubrious looking Vladimir Petotor, opted to throw caution to the wind at the start of the second-half by replacing Argentinian defender Clemente Rodriguez with his compatriot striker Fernando Cavenaghi coming on.

However it was Inter that should have scored a second just over a minute into the second-half as Luis Figo delivered a superb cross but Ibrahimovic inexplicably missed with a free header just six yards out.

Spartak, though, were playing some sparkling football with Mozart pulling the strings in midfield threading passes through to his strikers, though, they were unable to really test Julio Cesar.

Ibrahimovic, though, showed more of his sublime skill in the 56th minute as the Swede delivered a delightful return ball to Maicon but the Brazilian's shot was blocked by Spartak's Polish goalkeeper Wojciech Kowalewski.

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### TUESDAY'S RESULTS

**GROUP A**  
Levski Sofia (BUL) 0 Werder Bremen (GER) 3 (Mihaylov 33-og, Baumann 35, Frings 37)  
Barcelona (ESP) 2 (Deco 3, Gudjohnsen 58) Chelsea (ENG) 2 (Lampard 52, Drogba 90+3)

**GROUP B**  
Spartak Moscow (RUS) 0 Inter Milan (ITA) 1 (Cruz 1)  
Bayern Munich (GER) 0 Sporting Lisbon (POR) 0

**GROUP C**  
Liverpool (ENG) 3 (Luis Garcia 23, 76, Gerrard 72) Bordeaux (FRA) 0  
PSV Eindhoven (NED) 2 (Simons 59, Kone 84) Galatasaray (TUR) 0

**GROUP D**  
Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 2 (Jadson 2, Ferdinandinho 28) Valencia (ESP) 2 (Morientes 18, Ayala 68)  
Roma (ITA) 1 (Totti 66) Olympiakos (GRE) 1 (Julio Cesar 19)



Inter Milan forward Julio Cruz (R) celebrates his goal with attacking midfielder Luis Figo in their Champions League encounter against Spartak Moscow in Moscow on Tuesday.

## Draw suits Bayern fine

AFP, Sofia



Bayern Munich qualified for the last 16 of the Champions League with two games to spare despite firing blanks in a 0-0 group B draw with Sporting Lisbon here on Tuesday.

After winning their first three games German champions Bayern were in the box seat at the top but, while their perfect record came to an end, the point is enough to send them into the knockout phase.

Bayern top the group on ten points and one more victory will see them go into the last 16 as group winners.

Bayern coach Felix Magath said it was crucial that his side finished top to ensure they have the second

leg at home in the knockout stage.

"We struggled tonight and that was our worst display so far," said Magath. "We are through but I want top spot as we saw what an advantage it is from AC Milan last year."

Last season AC Milan used home advantage to crush Bayern 4-1 in the second leg of their last 16 Champions League duel.

Despite the delight at progressing Bayern fans jeered their team off after the final whistle and Belgian international Daniel van Buyten understood their frustration.

"That was our poorest performance in the Champions League this season but it was another clean sheet and we are in the knockout stage," said van Buyten.

"Of course the fans want goals and that is what they pay their money for -- but it was not our day."

With German international Bastian Schweinsteiger suspended and Dutch midfielder Marc van Bommel injured, coach Magath was forced to rejig his team.

Defender Christian Lell, a 22-year-old local lad from Munich, was handed his Champions League debut at right back as Willy Sagnol moved forward into midfield.

Bayern could have taken the lead as early as the 11th minute with Dutch forward Roy Makaay driving his shot inches wide of the post after a brilliant reverse pass from Sagnol.

Makaay, the club's record signing at 18.75 million euros, had his team's other chance close to half-time but his tame shot was easily saved by Sporting goalkeeper Ricardo.

The Portuguese visitors had

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## Magpies dismiss Eriksson link

AFP, Newcastle



Newcastle chairman Freddy Shepherd on Tuesday dismissed reports that the former England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson could be on his way to the English Premiership club.

The Sun tabloid reported that the Swede was targeting Glenn Roeder's job, although Eriksson's agent Athole Still swiftly issued a denial.

Shepherd told his club's official website: "This is all news to me. I have not spoken to Sven since

he left the England job and I have no intention of speaking to him."

"Neither have I spoken to his agent Athole Still -- and as far as I am aware, they have not tried to approach us."

"In any case if they did, it would not matter because we already have a manager."

Still described claims linking Eriksson to Roeder's job at Newcastle, where a series of poor results in the Premiership has left Roeder's injury-hit side in the bottom four, as "malicious".

Still insisted there had been no contact between the two parties and has denied Eriksson, who was last week linked with West Ham, is

looking to resurrect his career at St James' Park.

He told the Press Association news agency: "It does not surprise me, because he was linked with West Ham. Such is his stature that if there is a vacancy he is going to be linked with a job."

"But I have spoken to Sven, and he is not happy at the suggestion that he has targeted Newcastle -- which gives quite a different slant to the thing."

"To suggest he is looking at a club where there is another professional coach in site, it is absolute rubbish to say that. He would never do that."

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