

Radebe blasts refs

AFP, London

Leeds captain Lucas Radebe has accused English Premiership referees of being intimidated by champions Manchester United, reports said Monday.

Radebe's side were denied a famous victory over their fierce rivals when Graham Barber ruled out Wes Brown's late own goal after his assistant flagged for a dubious offside decision.

Barber also incensed the home supporters when he refused to dismiss goalkeeper Fabien Barthez for what appeared to be a stamp on Ian Harte in first-half injury-time during the 1-1 draw.

The French star then saved Harte's penalty to rub salt into the Leeds wound, leaving Radebe to reflect on what he believes is an imbalance in decisions given for and against the Old Trafford club.

"Maybe it is a case of one rule for United and one rule for everyone else," he told the Daily Express.

"Officials might be a little bit intimidated by them because of what they have achieved.

"They have built up a reputation they are bigger than referees, and officials find that hard to deal with.

Scottish Premiership Celtic blank Dunfermline

AFP, Glasgow

Neil Lennon responded to his midweek troubles in perfect fashion with his first goal for Scottish Premier League leaders Celtic in an impressive 3-0 victory at Dunfermline on Sunday.

Third-placed Hibernian, who have the best defensive record in the league with just 20 goals scored against them, remain third after a 1-1 draw at home to Motherwell.

Greg Strong's acrobatic hook shot gave the visitors the lead after 81 minutes but Russell Latapy's rising drive levelled the scores a minute later.

First half strikes from Stilian Petrov and Henrik Larsson gave Celtic a daunting target for Dunfermline to catch by half-time.

Larsson's goal was his 32nd of the season, three less than Brian McClair's Scottish Premier League goalscoring record of 35 goals in a season with Celtic set in 1986.

But the day belonged to Lennon, who is considering his future in international football after being subjected to abuse from a section of the Northern Ireland fans on Wednesday in their 4-0 home defeat to Norway.

The former Leicester City favourite hit back in defiant style and his goal helped Martin O'Neill's men go 13 points clear of title holders Rangers at the top of the table.

Lennon showed his relief with his celebrations and was given a celebratory hug from assistant manager John Robertson and his team-mates on the touchline.

Lennon to decide international future this week

AFP, London

Celtic midfielder Neil Lennon will announce his decision early this week on whether he will quit international football.

Lennon became the target of the Northern Ireland boo-boys on Wednesday, when they targeted him in the friendly against Norway just for the fact that he signed for the Parkhead club.

Lennon revealed his uncle and best friend also felt intimidated in the crowd, and for those reasons he could have played his last game in the green of Northern Ireland.

"It's a difficult decision for me," admitted Lennon. "I still haven't come to a decision, but I know what I want to do.

"It's not about me, it's about my family as well and I've got to take that into account.

"I'll probably sit down with the manager early this week and hopefully I'll say something before Wednesday's game.

"My father's bothered about all this and my uncle and best mate were there on Wednesday and they said they were quite intimidated - and when it comes to that you have to wonder if it's worth it.

"It comes down to whether I want to keep playing international football in these circumstances - it's a catch 22 at the moment.

Lennon admitted that the situation ranks up there with the biggest blows in his career.

"I've had bad injuries before and this is difficult to take as well," he said.

"The booing didn't affect my performance and I actually thought I played quite well on Wednesday.

"But it could be detrimental to the Northern Ireland team and unfair on the players to try and perform under these particular circumstances - it could be damaging on the rest of the squad."



Inter Milan's Javier Zanetti (L) faces a sliding tackle from Damiano Tommasi of Roma during their Serie A fixture on Sunday.

Serie A

Montella powers Roma

Football

AFP, Milan

Vincenzo Montella headed a late winner at the Olympic Stadium here Sunday to give AS Roma a 3-2 victory over Inter Milan and keep the Italian First Division leaders six points clear of their rivals.

Montella, replacing injured Argentinean colleague Gabriel Battistuta, grabbed his second of the night - he also tried to claim his side's opener - to decide a thrilling match.

That ensured Fabio Capello's side stay six points clear of Juventus, 2-0 victors at Udinese, and eight ahead of third-placed defending champions Lazio, who beat Brescia 1-0 Saturday. But it was heartstopping stuff.

Christian Vieri had struck first for Inter but then the league leaders hit back with two goals.

Montella was initially credited with the first although closer analysis revealed he did not get a touch to Brazilian midfielder Assuncao's freekick but the Italian was definitely the author of the second, heading in the rebound after another Assuncao freekick struck the bar.

But Vieri equalised on the stroke of half time to make it 2-2.

Finally Montella came up with his priceless strike after 86 minutes while Inter defender Bruno Cirillo was sent off in the closing minutes.

Capello said: "These three

points - which were an absolute must - prove the team has grown mentally."

Goals from Gianluca Zambrotta and Filippo Inzaghi had earlier earned Juventus a 2-0 win at Udinese.

Juventus took the lead after 38 minutes when Alessandro Del Piero's freekick was saved by goalkeeper Luigi Turci but Zambrotta pounced on the rebound.

Just before the hour mark another Del Piero freekick was headed home by Inzaghi to wrap up the match.

Del Piero and Udinese's Brazilian defender Alberto were later sent off.

Juve coach Carlo Ancelotti said: "It was a good win on a poor quality pitch. It pleases me that we are playing with such a sense of purpose. As for the Scudetto (title) that is all we have to aim at."

Parma did well to snatch a 2-2 draw with AC Milan at the San Siro.

A Paolo Maldini goal and the sending-off of Parma's French midfielder Sabri Lamouchi had Milan sitting pretty but then the second, heading in the rebound after another Assuncao freekick struck the bar.

Argentinian utility man Andres Guglielminpietro put the San Siro outfit back ahead but Brazilian Marcio Amoroso grabbed Parma's second.

Crisis club Fiorentina slumped to a 2-1 defeat at bottom club Bari.

Portuguese midfielder Manuel Rui Costa put them ahead but

there was a shock in store for new coach Roberto Mancini when Antonio Cassano levelled.

Bari's Swedish skipper Daniel Andersson scored the winner from the spot to complete a miserable week for Fiorentina whose Turkish coach Fatih Terim, assistants and director general Giancarlo Antognoni all quit Monday.

In an all-southern match Napoli striker Edmundo had a penalty saved by Lecce's Antonio Chimenti but the Brazilian redeemed himself with a goal early in the second period.

However, Croatian Davor Vujgric equalised and although Lecce substitute Dario Dainelli was later sent off it finished 1-1.

Verona defeated Atalanta 2-1. Emiliano Salvetti put them ahead but three minutes before the interval Cristian Doni levelled.

But Salvetti snatched an injury-time winner and his Romanian colleague Adrian Mutu and Atalanta's Doni were dismissed in a stormy finish.

Perugia skipper Marco Materazzi gave his side a 1-0 win against Vicenza, netting a rebound after his penalty had been saved by Giorgio Stecchele.

On Saturday a goal from Chilean striker Marcelo Salas helped defending champion Lazio see off Brescia to maintain their challenge.

Reggina defeated Bologna 2-1, taking a 2-0 lead through Andrea Zanchetta and Francesco Cozza before Bologna's Giuseppe Signori plundered a consolation.

Keane fit for Panathinaikos game

AFP, London

Manchester United captain Roy Keane on Monday said he has recovered from his knee injury and is fit to play in his side's Champions League match with Panathinaikos in Athens on Wednesday.

Keane, 29, who missed Saturday's 1-1 Premiership draw with Leeds, trained Monday morning before flying out to the Greek capital with the rest of the United squad.

"The knee is fine," Republic of Ireland international Keane said.

"I just got a knock last week but I'm travelling out and raring to go. Hopefully we can get the result we need."

Paul Scholes, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Mickael Silvestre and Dennis Irwin have shrugged off minor injuries and were also on the flight.

But Ryan Giggs has stayed behind for further treatment on his hamstring injury and Nicky Butt is suspended.

United need two more points to qualify from Group A and confirm their place in the last eight.

Perez rubs salt on Barca wound

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez has rubbished Barcelona accusations of a refereeing conspiracy after a controversial offside decision robbed the Catalans of a famous victory.

Perez said accusations of a plot against Barcelona - made by Nou Camp supreme Joan Gaspart - were unfounded.

"To say what Gaspart said is to take all Catalans for kids," Perez told Telemadrid.

"Not one of their supporters believes that their league position is due to refereeing decisions," Perez claimed in the same interview.

"I understand his indignation but these outbursts dim Barcelona's dignity. The referee decided that it wasn't a goal so if Gaspart wants to go in that direction I think he's sadly mistaken," Perez told Telemadrid.

Gaspart was left fuming after what looked like a last-gasp winner from Brazilian star Rivaldo denied his club a 3-2 victory in Saturday's grudge match in Madrid. The match eventually finished 2-2.

"Barcelona has been robbed of its wallet," Gaspart said.

"There has been a mugging. I think someone has decided that Barcelona shouldn't win the league this year," Gaspart said in a post match interview.

Television replays showed Rivaldo's shot took a sharp deflection off a Real defender as it flew into the net.

Although two Barcelona players were standing in an off-side position when the 1999 World player of the year unleashed his effort, neither appeared to be interfering with play.

Referee Jose Losantos Omar's decision has prompted a wave of criticism in press reports here.

Even Madrid based sports daily AS were sympathetic toward their Catalan rivals, saying: "The decision to disallow the third Rivaldo goal will go down in the black legend of Madrid-Barca games."

Barcelona based El Mundo Deportivo were equally direct in their analysis: "Barcelona robbed in the Bernabeu," the paper trumpeted.

Real Madrid, who are on track for a third Champions League in four years now lie five points clear of closest rivals and current champions Deportivo and nine clear of Barcelona.

Barcelona have suffered mixed fortunes this season and were dumped out of the Champions League in the first phase. Their only real chance of salvaging their season would be by winning the UEFA Cup.

However, Gaspart was in uncompromising mood and was not giving up on the league that still has 13 matches to go.

Anderton wants answers

AFP, London

England international midfielder Darren Anderton has called on his club Tottenham to come clean about his future at White Hart Lane.

Anderton will be out of contract at the end of the season and is desperate to know whether Spurs' new owners ENIC want to keep him on their books.

The 29-year-old, who has been at the club since 1992, took his own swipe at under-achieving Spurs.

"I want to know what the club's plans are because in the whole time I've been here we've won one thing," he said on his official website.

Some to take it easy, some face nerve test

AFP, Paris

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger has to solve a striking dilemma as the Gunners bid to book a place in the Champions League quarter-finals against Spartak Moscow on Tuesday.

With Frenchman Sylvain Wiltord cracking a brilliant hat-trick against Leicester on Saturday, Wenger now has a deluge of attacking options up front with Thierry Henry, Dennis Bergkamp and Nwankano Kanu also vying for places.

A win at Highbury on Tuesday would go a long way to putting the Londoners into the quarter-finals from Group C - but the jury is still out on who should partner first-choice French international Henry up front.

Wenger's team, who surrendered winning positions to both Bayern Munich and Lyon, cannot afford to slip up again and are desperate to avenge a 4-1 humiliation away to Spartak earlier in the competition.

But even though Wiltord is starting to display the sort of form that made Arsenal break the bank for the former Bordeaux player earlier this season, Wenger is unsure who will start against the Russians.

"The competition for places in attack is so strong here that I couldn't give Sylvain a long run in the side, but now I think he has settled and adapted," Wenger said after the French star's weekend heroics.

"But there's no doubt he's a great player. He had an hour in the French team that beat Germany on Tuesday night, played nearly the whole game at Manchester United the previous Sunday and had more than an hour against West Ham.

"I think that is just about right for him at this stage, but at the moment I have not made up my mind about who starts the Spartak match."

The only other time Wiltord started in the Champions League this season was against Ukraine team Shakhtar Donetsk towards the end of the first round.

Fortunately for Wenger, veteran defenders Tony Adams and Lee Dixon, out for the 6-1 Manchester United defeat, will make their return through Martin Keown (knee), Ray Parlour (hamstring) and Silvinho, on tour with Brazil, are all unavailable.

Match-rusty Spartak need to wake up from their winter hibernation if they are to keep alive their slim chances.

Key defender Dmitry Ananko misses the match in London after his third yellow card against Bayern, but another defender, Yuri Kovtun, who served his one-match suspension against Bayern returns to the side.

However, Spartak should welcome back striker Alexander Shirko, who has finally overcome a hip injury.

Arsenal will clinch a place in the last eight if they beat Spartak and Group C leaders Bayern Munich manage to avoid defeat against Lyon in Tuesday's other match.

Lyon will have to do a Houdini act if they want to reach the knock-out phase.

Lyon were just seconds from elimination, and Munich were moments from certain qualification, when Brazilian Edmilson equalized for a 1-1 draw at Arsenal in the last round of matches.

Edmilson's goal means nothing is yet decided.

Madrid, fresh from their 2-2 draw against Barcelona in their big Spanish derby match on Saturday, are set to play a weakened team at home to Leeds United.

Both Madrid and Leeds have already booked their places in the next round, and motivation could well be at a premium.

Coach Vicente Del Bosque is set to rest 56-million-dollar player Luis Figo. Other absentees are defender Roberto Carlos, away on Brazil duty and the suspended Ivan Helguera.

Leeds will also be operating below full-strength.

Defender Danny Mills is suspended, striker Robbie Keane is ineligible and Lee Bowyer, Jonathan Woodgate and Michael Duberry are all unavailable because of their highly-publicized court case.

Frenchman Olivier Dacourt, the midfield engine of the Leeds team, said: "It will be a prestigious match, that's for sure. We'll just go out and play without pressure or worrying about the result."

Lazio and Anderlecht play in the other group D game in Rome in a match between two eliminated teams.

On Wednesday, Group A leaders Manchester United play at Greek side Panathinaikos and surprise package Sturm Graz of Austria host last year's runners-up Valencia.

Turkish UEFA Cup champions Galatasaray host AC Milan in the top-of-the-table Group B clash and Deportivo La Coruna of Spain entertain Paris Saint Germain.



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FIXTURES & STANDINGS

AFP, Paris

European Champions League fixtures and standings this week

TUESDAY Group C Arsenal (Eng) v Spartak Moscow (Rus) Lyon (Fra) v Bayern Munich (Ger) Table P W D L F A Pts

Group D Real Madrid (Spa) v Leeds United (Eng) Lazio (Ita) v Anderlecht (Bel) Table P W D L F A Pts

WEDNESDAY Group A Panathinaikos (Gre) v Manchester United (Eng) Sturm Graz (Aut) v Valencia (Spa) Table P W D L F A Pts

Group B Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) v Paris Saint Germain (Fra) Galatasaray (Tur) v AC Milan (Ita) Table P W D L F A Pts

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M A R Anwarul Quadir Asstt. Director (Disposal) For Director of Supply and Inspection



Oveido's Milan Marinoric (in front) and Celta Vigo's Catanha during their Primera Liga encounter on Sunday.