



Deportivo la coruna's Brazilian ace Djalminha tries to curl the ball over the Leeds wall.

PHOTO: INTERNET

England 1 : Spain 1

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Paris

Leeds and Valencia advance to the semi-final stage of the European Champions League after overcoming Deportivo La Coruna and Arsenal in their respective quarter-final second leg ties in Spain on Tuesday night.

At La Coruna, English side Leeds beat Deportivo 3-2 on aggregate despite losing the second leg 2-0 after goals by Djalminha and Diego Trislan brought the Spanish champions back into the tie.

Valencia reached their second successive semi-final after defeating

English Premiership side Arsenal 1-0 at their Mestalla grounds and overturning their 2-1 deficit from the first leg.

Their hero of the night was Norwegian striker John Carew who struck his winning header 15 minutes from time.

Relieved Leeds boss David O'Leary saluted his big hearted players after watching them cling against a rampant Deportivo La Coruna.

Leeds took a 3-0 first-leg lead to the Riazor Stadium but the Spanish champions had them pinned down from the first whistle and only the heroics of Nigel Martyn and a large slice of luck saw O'Leary's men through.

Djalminha fired Deportivo ahead with a ninth-minute penalty, after Harry Kewell's foul on Victor.

And Leeds rode their luck - Martyn tipping a Romero drive onto the bar and Roy Makaay rattling the crossbar with a header - before substitute Tristan pulled another goal back in the 73rd minute.

Leeds somehow held on to reach the last four in their first season in the Champions League and O'Leary saluted his players' achievement.

"We've got through against a very good side but we didn't really play

tonight. We've got big hearts but we looked tired tonight. But we're in the last four of the Champions League.

"It's an unbelievable achieve-

"Valencia are a quality side and they will be two tough games. They've beaten Arsenal who are a quality side.

"But the adventure continues. We've come a long way and played lots of big teams," added O'Leary.

Valencia's coach Hector Cuper cited 'English-style' crowd support and his players' concentration as the reasons behind his team's success.

This was always going to be a complex fixture after the first leg result and so I have to applaud the players' concentration. We never lost faith or spirit even when Arsenal had their dangerous moments at the start of the second half, although they didn't take advantage. You have to remember that this is a team with a lot of tired players and some who were not fully fit," Cuper commented.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger admitted his side lacked "the killer touch".

The Gunners tumbled to Carew's headed goal after appearing to be in full control of the proceedings defending their slender 2-1 lead from the first leg.

Wenger said: "There is so much frustration because we know we should have qualified here.

"We defended well but too deep for the first 25 minutes, although we



PHOTO: AFP

John Carew (L), Valencia's Norwegian international striker, being hugged by ecstatic teammate Ruben Baraja after scoring the winner against Arsenal.

ment and it's all down to the players. I'm so delighted for them."

The Irishman continued: "Let's not kid ourselves, nobody expected us to get to the semi-finals. We play Valencia now and who knows over two games."

And he knows that they have a tough task against Valencia.

Results at a glance

AFP, Paris

Collated European Champions League quarter-final, second leg results on Tuesday:

At La Coruna, Spain
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 2 (Djalminha 9-pen, Trislan 73)
Leeds (Eng) 0
*Leeds win 3-2 on aggregate

At Valencia, Spain
Valencia (Spa) 1 (Carew 75)
Arsenal (Eng) 0
*2-2 on aggregate. Valencia win on away goals

Semi-finals:
Leeds (Eng) v Valencia (Spa) (1st leg Wednesday May 2, 2nd leg Tuesday May 8)
Second semi-final (1st leg Tuesday May 1, 2nd leg Wednesday May 9)

#Final will be played on May 23 at Milan's Giuseppe Meazza Stadium (the San Siro)

Cuper thankful to fans

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

AFP, Valencia

Valencia's coach Hector Cuper cited 'English-style' crowd support and his players' concentration as the reasons behind his team's success in progressing to the European Champions League semi-finals for the second year in succession.

The Spanish side won 1-0 in their quarter-final second-leg at their own Mestalla stadium, to beat Arsenal on the away goals rule with the fixture tied 2-2 on aggregate.

"This was always going to be a complex fixture after the first leg result and so I have to applaud the players' concentration. We never lost faith or spirit even when Arsenal had their dangerous moments at the start of the second half, although they didn't take advantage. You have to remember that this is a team with a lot of tired players and some who were not fully fit," Cuper commented.

Before the game Cuper had asked Valencia supporters to fill the 53,000 seats in the Mestalla stadium and

roar them onto success. "Just like at an English match," Cuper requested on Monday.

He got his wish, despite a few gaps around the higher reaches of the ground, with raucous cries filling the air only a few days after the Valencia faithful had been baying for his dismissal following a dismal 2-1 home defeat on Saturday in the Spanish First Division to Alaves.

"The crowd were marvellous. I don't know to what extent they contributed to the victory because the players are professionals and shouldn't get anxious about matches such as this but some players benefit from crowd support more than others."

One worrying note for Cuper is the extent of the ankle injury suffered by Valencia's Argentine international defender Roberto Ayala, the scorer in the first leg.

Ayala was stretched off early in agony in the second half after an accidental collision with Arsenal's Frederik Ljungberg, and looks set to become another addition to Valencia's extensive long-term injury list.

"It is a twisted ankle but we will

not know how serious it is until Wednesday," a Valencia club official told Agence France-Presse.

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger tried to put a brave face on his club's departure from the competition.

"Maybe in the first 25 minutes we played too deep and in the second half we were in a higher position but the cards turned against us," the Frenchman said.

"To be honest I thought we looked quite comfortable but one moment of lacking concentration cost us dearly," he added.

Wenger was asked whether he had learned anything from the defeat but he had a testy reply for his inquisitor.

"I don't think we need to learn anything. We just missed finding the final ball in the last third of the pitch."

However, even if he was not publicly prepared to concede that lessons had been provided for his team, there is no doubt that he will be passing on his lecture notes to his Leeds United counterpart David O'Leary, before the Yorkshire side faces Valencia in the Champions League semi-final first-leg on May 1.

Schmeichel's MU dream

Football

AFP, London

Great Dane Peter Schmeichel would cherish a return to Old Trafford as manager of English giants Manchester United.

The Danish goalkeeper, whose last game for the club was the 1999 European Cup final when United clinched the Treble against Germany's Bayern Munich in Barcelona, is now playing his club football in Portugal.

But he has set his sights on taking over the managership at old club at some time in the future.

"I would like to have that job," he told Radio 5 Live.

"I would like to go into management at a later stage in my life and obviously I have always set myself targets."

"That is the biggest job in football so that is the one I am going to go after."

"I wouldn't like to be anywhere near that job for the first 10 or 15 years. I would also like to manage my country so those are the ambitions I will have after my playing

pushed on in the second half and did well with our passing.

"The problem was that we could not finish it off. We did not have the necessary killer touch."

O'Leary and Cuper have both proved to be master tacticians over the course of this season's competition and it should be an explosive clash when they come head to head in the semi-final.

Leeds and Valencia have met twice before in European competition, with the English side holding the upper hand so far.

In 1966 the sides met in the Inter Cities Fairs Cup and Leeds eventu-



PHOTO: INTERNET

David O'Leary instructing his players at La Coruna.

ally won the two-legged third-round fixture 2-1 on aggregate.

The following year, Valencia faced Leeds at the same stage of the same competition and lost again, going down 3-1 over the two legs.

The semi-final first-leg takes place on May 1 in Leeds.

The final two semi-final berths will be decided Wednesday night when Bayern Munich play Manchester United in Germany and Real Madrid take on Turkish champions Galatasaray in Spain. Bayern lead 1-0 and Galatasaray 3-2 from their first leg ties.

Ronaldo hints at quick return

INTERNET REPORT, Milan

Inter Milan's Brazilian striker Ronaldo believes he may return to football before the end of the season.

Ronaldo, 25, has not played since suffering a knee injury in the Italian Cup Final last April.

But the former Barcelona star told reporters at Inter's training camp on Monday: "I don't know when I will be back playing but if I feel good in 15 days or a month then I could do it."

Ronaldo, who has worked with specialists in France and Brazil since knee ligament surgery, said he felt close to being ready to compete again.

"Now I can do almost everything with the ball and I have played a lot of training games. I believe I am not lacking much now."

The Brazilian added: "I never felt that I wouldn't be back. I always had that belief. I want to thank the fans who have helped me and encouraged me on the way."

The striker has suffered a number of knee injuries in recent years and made just 26 League appearances for Inter in the two seasons prior to his enforced absence this term.

Jeremies fined

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich's German international midfielder Jens Jeremies has been fined by his club after getting a yellow card for dissent during last Saturday's match against Schalke 04. Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld said on Tuesday.

Hitzfeld refused to say the amount of the fine but football weekly magazine Kicker reported in its Tuesday edition it was 10,000 marks (4,500 dollars).

"All the warnings we have given him have come to nothing. I had to intervene," Hitzfeld said. "We have to think of Bayern's image and we have very few alternatives. An international player should set an example."

The rugged player, whose ball-winning abilities are crucial to his country, has often been ticked off by his club for bad behaviour.

In the 58th minute against Schalke, Jeremies was given his ninth yellow card of the season after loudly protesting a decision and Bayern went on to lose and concede top spot in the German lead to the Ruhr club.

Meanwhile Bayern lead Manchester United 1-0 going into Wednesday's European Champions League quarter-final, return leg in Bavaria.

Morgan Stanley denies bid for Fiorentina

AFP, Milan

American bank Morgan Stanley denied Tuesday that they had made any bid to buy Italian First Division club Fiorentina.

In a statement the company said "no offer to acquire (Fiorentina) has been made, even less a written one".

"Morgan Stanley denies having met through any authorised representatives, the directors of Fiorentina Football Club or the local authorities," continued the statement.

UEFA Cup

Barca need to win badly

Football

AFP, Paris

Crisis-hit Euro giants Barcelona could use a UEFA Cup tonic in Thursday's semi-final, second leg at England's Liverpool after domestic form has left them in fifth spot in the Spanish league.

Barcelona, who drew 4-4 at home to Real Zaragoza at the weekend, know their league place is not high enough to qualify for the Champions League which would be viewed in the Catalan capital, where football reaches religious fervour, as disastrous.

The match is finely balanced at 0-0 with the Anfield leg to come and coach Lorenzo Serra Ferra knows elimination could result in his axing. A final spot in the UEFA Cup would go some way to lifting the mood among their famous players and give demanding fans some kind of success to hold on to.

Rumours regarding the possible departures of Brazil's Rivaldo, Holland's Patrick Kluyvert and Josep Guardiola have done little to improve the morale among the players.

At least Ferra has a full squad of players to choose from and the club have scored eight goals in their last two league matches, though both

Premiership

Chelsea's Spurs streak on

Football

AFP, London

Chelsea moved up to fifth in the English Premiership table after a 3-0 win over Tottenham on Tuesday night and are now unbeaten at White Hart Lane in thirteen visits dating back to 1987.

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink's 21st of the season came when he headed in at the near post from a Dennis Wise corner and Spurs had a mountain to climb when Willem Korsten was sent off just before the interval for a second bookable offence.

Gustavo Poyet notched his fourth in three games when he swept home a pin-point cross from Graeme Le Saux and substitute Eidur Gudjohnsen played a one-two with Hasselbaink to complete the Blues' third away win of the season.

Aston Villa extended their unbeaten run to eight games with a 3-3 draw against a Charlton side

reduced to 10 men when Richard Rufus was sent off in the 36th minute for serious foul play.

Lee Hendrie was the Villa hero as he scored a last-gasp equaliser to deny Charlton all three points on a night of high drama at The Valley.

George Boateng turned the ball into his own net after 16 minutes and Charlton were down to 10 men when Steve Staunton pulled back John Robinson inside the penalty area.

Referee Graham Poll awarded a spot kick and Claus Jensen tucked it away seconds before the interval.

Substitute David Ginola pulled one back after 59 minutes and Darius Vassell produced a lovely solo effort, squirming past three defenders before putting the ball just inside the near post.

There was only one minute left when Villa were caught on the break and skipper Mark Kinsella slipped between two defenders to slide the ball past David James, but in stoppage time Hendrie turned on a loose ball and clipped the equaliser.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, the Chelsea goal-machine, celebrates his strike against Tottenham Hotspurs.

Premiership's top six

After Tuesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Man Utd	33	23	7	3	74	24	76
Arsenal	33	17	9	7	53	32	60
Ipswich	34	18	5	11	51	38	59
Leeds	33	16	8	9	50	39	56
Chelsea	33	15	9	9	62	38	54
Liverpool	32	15	8	9	55	36	53

ended up 4-4 draws.

Gary McAllister's spectacular winner for Liverpool against Everton on Monday has strengthened their bid to qualify for the Champions League and instilled the belief they can reach their first European final in 16 years.

McAllister's 40-metre free-kick winner in the only goal of the game gave the Reds a timely confidence booster ahead of Thursday's match.

Winger Vladimir Smicer, looking ahead to the Barcelona fixture, said: "We can take on Barcelona in a good frame of mind now. It would have been difficult to go into that game if we had lost at Everton."

"I am not saying we are going to go through against Barcelona but our chances of doing so have been improved by what we achieved to win the derby."

"We proved we have the mental strength and the technical quality to fight back. Up to now we can say that our season has been successful but it's important it doesn't stop here."

Liverpool will now almost certainly bring back the rested Steven Gerrard for the showdown with Barcelona in the only change from Monday, and McAllister is likely to concede his place.

Liverpool coach Gerard Houllier said on Barcelona game: "On the day if we play well, if we perform, then we can win. We know they can score goals, they've hit eight in their last

two matches.

"But they've only played two games between the first and second legs, which is a lot less than we've had to do."

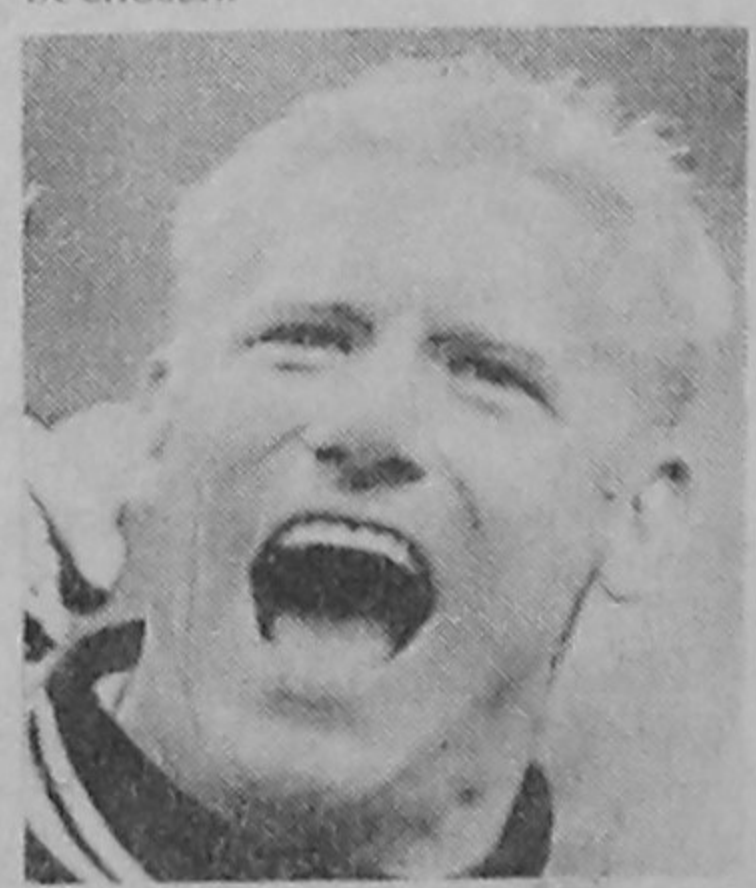
"But now we have won a derby, and when you win a match like that it means you're more comfortable about playing the next game, even if it's just a few days later. You don't feel tiredness then."

Supporters of Spanish club Alaves are so confident of their team going through following their 5-1 first leg win over Kaiserslautern, only a few dozen are bothering to make the trip to Germany.

The success in Europe of Alaves, a little club compared with Real Madrid and Barcelona, has been proof of Spain's strength in depth and that would be further confirmed should they go through as expected.

Coach Jose Manuel Mane has a virtually complete squad with only Romanian defender Cosmin Contra suspended after he appeared to deliberately earn a yellow card in the first leg when the score was 5-1. Mane is not expected to take any risks and should field a defensive line-up.

French international midfielder Youn Djoekael, who returned to action just on Saturday after being out since March with a fractured toe, is seen as an impressive influence by coach Andreas Brehme.



PETER SCHMEICHEL