



WE ARE THE BUNDESLIGA KINGS: A combination of photos showing (L) Bayern Munich duo Roque Santa Cruz and Paolo Sergio are ecstatic after the final whistle and (R), hero of the match Patrick Andersson proudly lifts the Bundesliga trophy.

Bundesliga

Bayern save the best for last

scored the equaliser. The German kings face Valencia in Wednesday's Champions League final in Milan.

Bayern, who led the standings by three points from Schalke going into Saturday's matches, needed only a point to win their third consecutive domestic crown but a defeat would have handed Schalke the title by virtue of superior goal difference and their win against Unterhaching.

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld praised his side for fighting all the way as the reaction of the Hamburg crowd made it clear that Schalke had gone in front in their encounter.

"I have dreamed of this and we worked so hard," said Hitzfeld. "I was convinced we could do it. The team deserved it and they gave everything they had. I'm happy for

Patrik Andersson. He has been fantastic in the second half of the season. He deserved to set the seal on it."

German league officials were able to breathe a sigh of relief as they had sent the championship trophy to Hamburg in full expectation of a Bayern triumph while sending a substitute trophy to Schalke.

Veteran Bayern goalkeeper Oliver Kahn admitted that playing the final few games has been no easy task.

"Every game we've played in the last few weeks has been really on a knife-edge. It's just incredible," he said.

Unterhaching's defeat against Schalke after throwing away a two-goal lead sent them to relegation along with the already doomed VfL Bochum and Eintracht Frankfurt.

Andreas Breitenreiter and Miroslav Spizak put Unterhaching too up

before Schalke's Nico van Kerckhoven and Gerald Asamoah struck just seconds apart to equalise before the half time.

Jan Seifert put Unterhaching ahead again in the second half and Jorg Bohme won the game for Schalke with a double strike in the 73th and 74th minutes before Ebbe Sand netted for the 22nd time this season to cap the victory - but news from Hamburg broke their hearts.

Schalke had the consolation of winning a Champions League place but they will rue the missed opportunities to pull clear of Bayern this season.

Borussia Dortmund secured third place and their ticket to the Champions League with a 3-3 draw against Cologne thanks to an 89th-minute equaliser from Fredi Bobic.

At the Westfalenstadion

Bundesliga's final standings

German league table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Bayern Munich	34	19	6	9	62	37	63
Schalke 04	34	18	8	8	65	35	62
Borussia Dortmund	34	16	10	8	62	42	58
Bayer Leverkusen	34	17	6	11	54	40	57
Hertha Berlin	34	18	2	14	58	52	56
SC Freiburg	34	15	10	9	54	37	55
Werder Bremen	34	15	8	11	5	3	
48	53						
Kaiserslautern	34	15	5	14	49	5	4
50							
VfL Wolfsburg	34	12	11	11	60	45	47
Cologne	34	12	10	12	59	5	2
46							
Munich 1860	34	12	8	14	43	55	44
Hansa Rostock	34	12	7	15	3	4	
47	43						
Hamburg SV	34	10	11	13	58	58	41
Energie Cottbus	34	12	3	19	38	52	39
VfB Stuttgart	34	9	11	14	42	49	38
Unterhaching	34	8	11	15	35	5	9
35							
Eintracht Frankfurt	34	10	5	19	41	68	35
VfL Bochum	34	7	6	21	30	67	27

French First Division

Lille get Euro ticket



AFP, Paris

French First Division newcomers Lille made manager Vahid Halilhodzic a happy man Saturday as they grabbed a 2-1 away win at Monaco to snatch the last Champions League spot from Bordeaux.

Lille finished third behind Lyon and French champions Nantes, sending Bordeaux, who went down 2-0 at lowly Metz, into fourth spot and qualification for the less lucrative UEFA Cup.

Halilhodzic's men, only promoted from division two last season, now go into the Champions League preliminary phase, a remarkable feat reflected by the joyous celebrations in the streets of the northern city after the match.

Bordeaux will be joined in the UEFA Cup by Sedan, who won 1-0 at home against Auxerre, and Rennes, who endured a hard-fought match at home to Lyon but went down 4-3.

Marseille settled the relegation issue when they drew 1-1 with Troyes to be sure of staying in the First Division, thanks to a Zoumana Camara headed equaliser after Nicolas Gousse had opened the scoring.

The club directly below Marseille, St Etienne, who were thrown a lifeline in midweek when they were handed seven league points previously deducted for their part in the false passports affair, could only draw 2-2 with Guingamp and drop into the Second Division.

For last year's champions Monaco, it was time to return to the drawing board as despite a fighting display they failed to even grab an Interoto Cup place, finally finishing 11th after the loss to Lille.

Monaco had the best of the play in the opening period after Pontus Farnrud fired home a half volley in the second minute.

But although Monaco were showing some of last year's fighting

then had a freekick turned away, albeit in panic, by Wimbee.

But despite Monaco's attacks it was Lille who scored the winner, with Bruno Cheyrou firing home to hoist his team into third, and into Europe's top club competition.

Meanwhile, Lyon consolidated their second place with a convincing 4-3 away win at Rennes, with Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson firing a brace of goals to take his tally to 22 for the season.

He is now the league's top scorer, relegating Bordeaux's flashy Portuguese striker Pauleta - with whom he has battling for the top scorer's award all season - to second place. Pauleta failed to net in Bordeaux's defeat at Metz.

Rennes' Christophe Le Roux opened the scoring in the 12th minute, but Anderson hardly gave the Bretons time to cheer and eight minutes later headed home a Sidney Govou cross for the equaliser.

Rennes forward Cyril Chapuis then put Rennes ahead on 33, and Le Roux fired home a third four minutes later.

But again, the Rennes lead was cut back as midfielder Olivier Echouafni turned the ball into his own net to make it 3-2.

An unmarked Anderson, again served by Govou, popped up again to volley home his second and level the scores.

Four minutes later Steve Marlet, who like Anderson was given perfect service by Govou, was unmarked and fired Lyon ahead with 12 minutes to go.

Champions Nantes thrashed Lens 4-1, with Olivier Monterrubio grabbing a brace.

Elsewhere, Paris St Germain concluded their miserable season with a rare 2-1 away win at relegated Strasbourg, with wantaway striker Laurent Robert firing a brace of goals to cancel out Peggy Luyindula's fine volley.

The other relegated club, Toulouse, lost 5-1 at Bastia.

Jeremies to miss Champs League final

AFP, Munich

Newly crowned German champions Bayern Munich hopes of lifting the Champions League on Wednesday suffered a serious blow Sunday when it was revealed their outstanding midfielder Jens Jeremies would miss the match.

The 27-year-old, who scored one of the goals in the 2-1 semi-final second leg win over Real Madrid just three weeks after undergoing knee surgery, has an inflamed thigh muscle and coach Ottmar Hitzfeld claimed there was no way he would make the showdown with Spanish side Valencia.

"It is out of the question that he plays on Wednesday," Hitzfeld said.

"I feel sad for him but there is no way he will recover in time," he added.

Jeremies, who will also miss the international friendly with Slovakia at the end of May, said it was just a case of his body reacting to too much football.

"I am really bitter about missing the final but sometimes one's body says enough is enough," he said.

Cup winners' Cup Al-Chabaab's maiden title

AFP, Jeddah

Saudi Arabian side Al-Chabaab on Saturday won the Asian Cup winners' Cup, their first Asian title, beating China's Dalian Shide 4-2.

Abdallah Chahrani and Abdallah Chihane shared the goals for the hosts, giving the 20,000 crowd reason to cheer at the Emir Abdallah Al-Faycal stadium here next to the Red Sea.

In winning Al-Chabaab become the fifth Saudi Arabian team to win the title, equal with Japan.

Premiership

Liverpool put icing on cake

AFP, London

Liverpool coach Gerard Houllier finally lifted the alcohol ban imposed on his players as the treble winners ended their season with an emphatic 4-0 victory at Charlton on Saturday to secure a Champions League place for next season.

The win guaranteed Liverpool third place in the Premiership and a place in Europe's highly lucrative top club tournament to round off a magnificent week for the Anfield club.

The FA Cup and League Cup winners completed a unique cup treble on Wednesday when they beat Spanish club Alaves 5-4 in an astonishing UEFA Cup final.

After lifting their first European trophy for 17 years, Houllier ensured that the mini-bars in the players' hotel rooms were free of alcohol so his team would keep clear heads for Saturday's vital clash at the Valley.

But after thrashing Charlton with an awesome second-half display, the amenable Frenchman announced the party could begin.

"The boys need a celebration now," said Houllier after a four goals in 26 minutes killed off the home side.

"They are tired and I am a bit tired myself. We had to postpone celebrations until this game was out of the way and we will now look forward to a good get-together with the wives and girlfriends."

Houllier admitted his side were flattered by the scoreline after Charlton had run his side ragged in a goalless opening 45 minutes.

"It wasn't easy against Charlton and we were poor in the first half," he said.

"We were angry with ourselves at half time but after the break we showed a different side to our game."

Robbie Fowler, who insisted this week that he desperately wanted to stay at Anfield, opened the scoring with an exquisite overhead kick before substitute Danny Murphy drilled home the second.

Fowler grabbed his second with a neat finish and England colleague Michael Owen rounded off a comfortable victory with a delicate chip nine minutes from time.

Liverpool's victory denied Leeds and Ipswich, who will both qualify for the less prestigious UEFA Cup.

Leeds finish fourth after winning 3-1 at home to Leicester while Ipswich were held 1-1 at Derby and end up fifth in their first season back in the Premiership.

Chelsea ended their season on a high note after a disappointing campaign by snatching the last UEFA Cup place with a 2-1 win at relegated Manchester City.

Dutch striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbank fired Chelsea's winner for his 23rd goal of the season to end the golden boot award for the Premiership's top goalscorer.

Champions Manchester United crashed to their third successive defeat with a 3-1 loss at Tottenham.

All eyes were on United coach Alex Ferguson who ended speculation over his Old Trafford future by insisting he will be in charge of the club next season.

Southampton beat second-placed Arsenal 3-2 in the last competitive game to be played at The Dell, bringing an end to their 103-year stay at the grounds.

The dispute sparked speculation The Saints will move next season to a new 30 million pound (42 million dollar) stadium capable of holding 25,000 spectators.

However, Ferguson said he plans to honour his contract with the English champions.

"It is my intention to be here next season and I am looking forward to it," he said.

Bradford drew 0-0 at Highfield Road while Middlesbrough, already assured of Premiership action next season, beat West Ham 2-1.

Two goals from Kevin Phillips were not enough to give Sunderland a place in the UEFA Cup after their 2-2 draw at Everton.

The club before his contract ends in May will be replaced by a new owner.

Primera Liga

Overmars keeps Barca on track

AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Barcelona continued their attempt to salvage a disappointing season by beating UEFA Cup finalists Alaves 1-0 on Saturday thanks to a superb Marc Overmars goal.

After a frenetic start to the match in Victoria, Overmars was fed by fellow Dutch international Frank De Boer and fired a superb 18th-minute strike that Alaves goalkeeper Martin Herrera was powerless to stop.

Alaves, showing little sign of fatigue after their 5-4 defeat to Liverpool in midweek, bombarded the Barcelona goal but the Catalans hung on to remain fifth in the table and in contention to qualify for the UEFA Cup.

Valencia had warmed up for their Champions League final against Bayern Munich with an extra-time 1-0 win over Athletic Bilbao on Friday to hold on to third place in the Primera Liga.

Valencia coach Hector Cuper rested four first-choice players ahead of Wednesday's final in Milan, but Norwegian striker John Carew crashed a powerful header

Premiership's final standings

Final English Premiership table after Saturday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Manchester United	38	24	8	6	79	31	80
Arsenal	38	20	10	8	63	38	70
Liverpool	38	20	9	9	71	39	69
Leeds United	38	20	8	10	64	43	68
Ipswich Town	38	20	6	12	57	42	66
Chelsea	38	17	10	11	68	45	61
Sunderland	38	15	12	11	46	41	57
Aston Villa	38	13	15	10	46	43	54
Charlton Athletic	38	14	10	14	50	57	52
Southampton	38	14	10	14	40	48	52
Newcastle	38	14	9	15	44	50	51
Tottenham	38	13	10	15	47	54	49
Leicester	38	14	6	18	39	51	48
Middlesbrough	38	9	15	14	44	44	42
West Ham	38	10	12	16	45	50	42
Everton	38	11	9	18	45	59	42
Derby County	38	10	12	16	37	59	42
Manchester City	38	8	10	20	41	65	34
Coventry City	38	8	10	20	36	63	34
Bradford	38	5	11	22	30	70	26

* Manchester United champions, Arsenal and Liverpool qualify for Champions League, Leeds, Ipswich and Chelsea qualify for UEFA Cup, Bradford, Coventry and Manchester City relegated



Sasa Ilic (C), the Charlton custodian, grabs the ball under pressure from Nick Bamby (R) of Liverpool on May 19.

2002. Ferguson had hoped for some 32,000 spectators. kind of other role within the club when Substitute Matthew Le Tissier stepped down as manager but that cracked home a dramatic 88th minute he will not now happen after he reported to give Southampton victory.

Frenchman David Ginola threw a tantrum as Aston Villa went down 3-0 at Newcastle.

Ginola exchanged angry words with manager John Gregory after being substituted before half-time.

Relegated clubs Coventry and Bradford drew 0-0 at Highfield Road while Middlesbrough, already assured of Premiership action next season, beat West Ham 2-1.

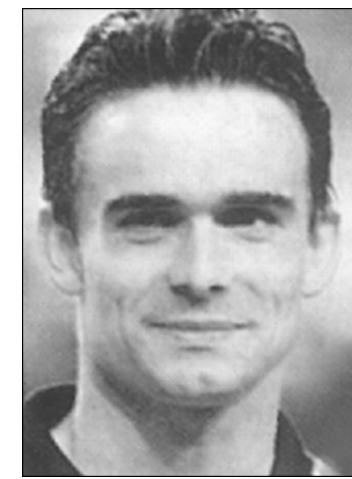
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Primera Liga

Overmars keeps Barca on track



Marc overmars

Primera Liga's top six

After Saturday's match between Alaves and Barcelona (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Real Madrid	34	21	7	6	72	38	70
Deportivo	34	19	7	8	64	40	64
Valencia	35	18	8	9	52	29	62
Mallorca	34	16	11	7	48	39	59
Barcelona	35	16	11	8	75	52	59
Celta Vigo	34	14	9	11	47	47	51

French First division final standings

French First Division table after Saturday's final matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

Nantes	34	21	5	8	58	36	68
Lyon	34	17	13	4	57	30	64
Lille	34	16	11	7	43	27	59
Bordeaux	34	15	12	7	48	33	57
Sedan	34	14	10	10	47	40	52
Rennes	34	14	6	14	46	39	48
Troyes	34	11	13	10	45	47	46
Bastia	34	13	6	15	45	41	45
Paris SG	34	12	8	14	44	45	44
Guingamp	34	11	11	12	40	48	44
Monaco	34	12	7	15	53	50	43
Metz	34	11	10	13	37	44	43
Auxerre	34	11	8	15	31	41	41
Lens	34	9	13	12	37	39	40
Marseille	34	11	7	16	31	40	40
St Etienne	34	9	10	15	43	56	37
Toulouse	34	8	10	16	34	50	34
Strasbourg	34	7	8	19	28	61	29

* Nantes are champions and, with Lyon, qualify for Champions League, Lille qualify for preliminary round of Champions League. Bordeaux, Sedan and Rennes qualify for the UEFA Cup.

St Etienne, Toulouse and Strasbourg are relegated.

** Table takes account of Thursday's decision by a Lyon court to suspend the seven-point deduction imposed on St Etienne for fielding two players with false European Union passports.

The court will make a final decision at a later date.

Monaco defender Franck Jurietti