

Serie A
Red-hot Roma
bury Bari

Football
AFP, Rome

AS Roma coasted to a 4-1 victory to relegate bottom club Bari Sunday and keep themselves firmly on course for what would be their first Italian First Division title in 18 years.

Goals from French defender Vincent Candela and Argentinian forward Gabriel Batistuta had the game wrapped up at half-time for the leaders while Brazilian defender Cafu and Batistuta added two more.

Gionatha Spinesi scored a late consolation but could not save Bari from relegation.

Second-placed Lazio stayed in title contention with a 3-1 win against Udinese in a match played in Florence while third-placed Juventus also kept in the race with a comeback 4-1 triumph at Bologna.

But with three games left Roma, who lead Lazio by five points and Juve by six, remain firm favourites to succeed city rivals Lazio as champions.

Candela opened the scoring for Roma with a magical goal, juggling the ball before firing an acrobatic volley into the net via the fingertips of Bari keeper Antonio Narciso.

Minutes later the balance tilted further towards Roma when Bari defender Duccio Innocenti was sent off and when Batistuta doubled the lead from close range the 25,000 travelling Roma fans began their lively celebrations.

Cafu and Batistuta increased the feelgood factor before Spinesi's vain salvo.

But Roma coach Fabio Capello warned that the run-in will be no cinch: "Both teams (Lazio and Juve)

Hernan Crespo scored twice in 16 minutes, putting himself on 23 goals for the season.

Stefano Fiore reduced arrears for Udinese from the penalty spot against the side he joins next season but Argentinian Lucas Martin Castroman notched a third for the champions.

Lazio coach Dino Zoff said: "We played very well in the first half today, we must keep on this path as long as we have a chance."

Bologna rocked Juventus after 20 minutes when veteran striker Giuseppe Signori netted.

But six minutes later Juve's French forward David Trezeguet fired an equaliser and at the end of the first half Croatian defender Igor Tudor headed the Turin side ahead.

Trezeguet killed off Bologna with his second and Yugoslav replacement Darko Kovacevic added a fourth.

Juve coach Carlo Ancelotti said: "Our objective is to win every game, we can do no more. We must be concerned only with our own form."

Vicenza and Lecce had to settle for a 0-0 draw in a relegation battle.

In another basement dogfight goals from Fabio Pecchia and Brazilian Amauri gave Napoli a priceless 2-0 victory over Verona.

Luciano Zauri gave Atalanta an early lead against struggling Reggina in Bergamo but the south-erners hit back when Andrea Zanchetta equalised. Reggina goalkeeper Massimo Taibi saved an injury-time penalty from Atalanta's Marco Nappi. It finished 1-1.

At Perugia veteran striker Dario Hubner put visitors Brescia 2-0 ahead - the second from a penalty - but Greek striker Zisis Vryzas and



THE LIVERPOOL BUS IS COMING! Proud Liverpool residents cheer the treble winning team (on board the double decker bus) on May 20.

Merseyside comes alive

Football
AFP, Liverpool

Hundreds of thousands of Liverpool supporters turned out on the streets of Merseyside on Sunday to see the team's treble winning victory parade.

With the UEFA Cup, FA Cup and League Cup already in the bag, Liverpool had further reason to celebrate after booking their place in next season's Champions League by finishing third in the Premiership on Saturday.

More than 500,000 people lined the streets of the 17-mile route to watch

the team parade their silverware from an open-topped double decker bus.

Proud French manager Gerard Houllier held aloft the UEFA Cup, striker Robbie Fowler waved the FA Cup and midfielder Steven Gerrard displayed the League Cup.

Fans dressed in red shirts and waving red flags stood on cars and bus stop shelters to see the bus go by.

Jamie Redknapp, who has missed most of the season through injury, was overwhelmed by the reception.

"I have never seen anything like it. It's unbelievable," he said.

One supporter voiced the feelings of Liverpool fans with his banner: "We ruled the 70s, dominated the 80s, had a break in the 90s - and now we're back."

Primera Liga
Real a win away

Football
AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid moved a step closer to their first domestic title in four years with a 1-0 win at city rivals Rayo Vallecano here Sunday.

Defending champions Deportivo kept the pressure on Real but felt the heat themselves as Oviedo forced them to hold on to a 3-2 lead in a desperate last 20 minutes that saw Deportivo 'keeper Jose Molina sent off.

However Diego Tristan's hat-trick made sure Deportivo stay in the hunt for their second consecutive title.

Real Madrid have a six-point advantage over Deportivo with just nine points to play for. Valencia and Real Mallorca are level third on 62 with Barcelona fifth on 59.

In a physical Madrid derby Rayo, who won a UEFA Cup place last season for their fair play record, proved the very antithesis of their normally-behaved selves as they picked up five yellows and a red card.

But for unsportsman like behavior, Real Madrid's Luis Figo was out on his own as he appeared to pretend to have been punched by Sergio Ballesteros, even allowing himself to be stretched from the pitch toward the end of the first half.

Conversely, Rayo's American 'keeper Kasey Keller was lucky to stay on the pitch when in the opening minutes he challenged Savio outside the box, provoking a clash of heads that floored the Brazilian.

A well-organised Real defence marshalled Rayo's route one method well, constantly catching their poorer neighbours offside. Real played a more searching game, looking for the killer pass to forwards Guti or Savio.

Figo himself was cruelly caught offside after Savio put him through

with a deft flick on 36. The Portugal captain, banned four times already this season, screamed at the match official who calmly waved him away.

Real Madrid got the opening they were looking for five minutes before the break when Keller dropped a 30-yard thunderbolt freekick from Roberto Carlos.

Guti was the fastest to react and his close-range, left-foot shot was bulging the back of the net while everyone else stood motionless.

Early in the second half Rayo's Manuel Helder was sent off for a second yellow card when a pack of

week.

"We really suffered in the last few minutes despite having had a lot of chances in the second half to finish it off," Valdano said after the match.

"But we can't wait to resolve the situation by winning the league at home next week."

Real Mallorca continued their late run for a Champions League spot with a 1-0 away win at Espanyol thanks to an 18th minute effort from Alberto Luque after an Ariel Ibagaza corner.

Valencia warmed up for their Champions League final against

| Primera Liga's top six | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
| After weekend matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points): | | | | | | | | | |
| Real Madrid | 35 | 22 | 7 | 6 | 73 | 38 | 73 | | |
| Deportivo | 35 | 20 | 7 | 8 | 67 | 42 | 67 | | |
| Valencia | 35 | 18 | 8 | 9 | 52 | 29 | 62 | | |
| Real Mallorca | 35 | 17 | 11 | 7 | 49 | 39 | 62 | | |
| Barcelona | 35 | 16 | 11 | 8 | 75 | 52 | 59 | | |
| Celta Vigo | 35 | 14 | 10 | 11 | 48 | 48 | 52 | | |

Rayo players protested a refereeing decision too aggressively.

Flu victim Raul came out for the last 30 minutes after Savio took a knock. The 23-year-old forced a fine save from Keller on 66 as Madrid looked in vain to finish Rayo off, missing a string of chances.

It wasn't all one-way traffic and Rayo's Miguel Michel hit the cross-bar with 15 minutes to go. Cesar, in the Madrid goal for the off-form Iker Casillas, was then forced into dramatic action to save from Jon Bolo.

At the other end Keller's finger-tips spectacularly denied a Guti chip on 86, with Fate seemingly against any increase on Real's lead.

However, Real's technical director, Argentinian former World Cup winner Jorge Valdano was adamant that Real will finish the job next

Bayern Munich in Milan on Wednesday with an injury-time 1-0 win over Athletic Bilbao on Friday to hold on to third spot.

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.

Remaining UEFA Cup contender Celta Vigo, meanwhile, could only manage a 1-1 draw with basement side Numancia, with Romanian Laurentiu Rosu firing the equaliser on 75 to Numancia's opener 10 minutes earlier.

Celta sit in sixth, with a slim one-point advantage over Villareal.

Vogts fired
Toppmoller
takes over
Leverkusen

AFP, Leverkusen

Klaus Toppmoller was appointed the new coach of German club Bayer Leverkusen on Monday following the sacking of Berti Vogts.

Toppmoller, 49, formerly coached Second Division FC Saarbrücken and VfL Bochum.

Former Germany coach Vogts was sacked on Sunday after Leverkusen finished fourth in the Bundesliga and qualified for a place in the qualifying rounds of the Champions League, a disappointment for a club that has finished second in the league for the past two years.

Vogts, 54, only joined Leverkusen in November on a contract until June 2003 after Christoph Daum was forced to quit after admitting he had taken cocaine.

The club's board were unhappy at Leverkusen's early exit from the Champions League, followed by their third round UEFA Cup exit at the hands of AEK Athens.

Dutch referee for
Champs League
final

AFP, Geneva

Netherlands referee Dick Jol has been chosen to referee Wednesday's Champions League final between Bayern Munich and Valencia, UEFA said here Monday.

Jol is the first Dutchman to referee the final of Europe's premier club competition since Charles Corver officiated at the 1978 final between Liverpool and FC Brugge.

Antonio Carlos
will stay

AFP, Rome

AS Roma's Brazilian defender Antonio Carlos Zago is set to extend his stay with the Italian First Division leaders, Gazzetto dello Sport reported Sunday.

McManaman
to give it a
miss

AFP, London

Real Madrid midfielder Steve McManaman will not be joining up with the England squad in time for the friendly against Mexico in Derby on Friday, the Press Association reported Monday.

Madrid can clinch the Spanish title this weekend by beating Alaves and, following discussions with England coach Sven Goran Eriksson, it has been agreed that his call-up will be delayed.

McManaman is therefore scheduled to join the rest of the England squad in La Manga, Spain next week for their training camp ahead of the World Cup qualifier against Greece on June 6.

Leading scorers
in Europe

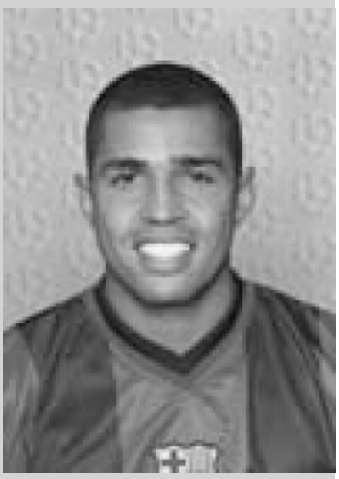
Football

REUTERS

Top goal scorers in England, Germany and France after leagues ended over the weekend:

French First Division

- 22 - Sonny Anderson (Olympique Lyon)
- 20 - Pedro Pauleta (Girondins Bordeaux)
- 16 - Frederic Nee (Bastia)
- 15 - Victor Bonilla (Toulouse), Gerald Baticle (Metz)
- 13 - Alex (St Etienne), Laurent Robert (Paris St Germain)
- 12 - Bruno Rodriguez (En Avant Guingamp), Sladjan Djukic (Troyes), Shabani Nonda (Monaco), Steve Marlet (Olympique Lyon), Olivier Monterrubio (Nantes)
- 11 - Stephane Guivarc'h (Auxerre), Violel Moldovan (Nantes)
- 10 - Cedric Mionnet (Sedan), Fabrice Florese (En Avant Guingamp), Plus N'Dieff (Sedan), Cyril Chapuis (Rennes), Pierre-Yves Andre (Bastia).



SONNY ANDERSON

Bundesliga

- 22 - Sergej Barbarez (Hamburg SV), Ebbe Sand (Schalke 04)
- 19 - Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen)
- 16 - Michael Preetz (Hertha Berlin)
- 15 - Elber (Bayern Munich), Oliver Neuville (Bayer Leverkusen)
- 14 - Ailton (Werder Bremen)
- 13 - Emile Mpenza (Schalke 04)
- 12 - Paul Agostino (TSV 1860 Munich), Carsten Jancker (Bayern Munich), Andrzej Juskowiak (VfL Wolfsburg)



SERGEJ BARBAREZ



EBBE SAND

English Premiership

- 23 - Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Chelsea)
- 19 - Marcus Stewart (Ipswich Town)
- 17 - Thierry Henry (Arsenal), Mark Viduka (Leeds United)
- 16 - Michael Owen (Liverpool)
- 15 - Teddy Sheringham (Manchester United)
- 14 - Emile Heskey (Liverpool), Kevin Phillips (Sunderland)
- 12 - Alan Boksic (Middlesbrough)
- 11 - Jonatan Johansson (Charlton Athletic), Gustavo Poyet (Chelsea), Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (Manchester United), James Beattie (Southampton), Frederic Kanoute (West Ham United), Alan Smith (Leeds United)
- 10 - Eidur Gudjohnsen (Chelsea), Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (Leeds United), Andy Cole (Manchester United), Paolo Di Canio (West Ham United), Les Ferdinand (Tottenham Hotspur)
- 9 - Kevin Campbell (Everton), Robbie Keane (Leeds United), Ade Akinbiyi (Leicester City), Paulo Vancoppe (Manchester City), David Beckham (Manchester United), Serhiy Rebrov (Tottenham Hotspur), Gianfranco Zola (Chelsea), Lee Bowyer (Leeds United), Marian Pahars (Southampton)
- 8 - Sylvain Wilford (Arsenal), Dion Dublin (Aston Villa), Alun Armstrong (Ipswich Town), Dwight Yorke (Manchester United), Don Hutchison (Sunderland), Robbie Fowler (Liverpool)



JIMMY FLOYD HASSELBAINK

Eriksson picks
cranky Smith

Football

AFP, London

England coach Sven Goran Eriksson on Monday defended his decision to name Leeds striker Alan Smith in his 24-man squad for next week's friendly against Mexico at Pride Park on Friday and the 2002 World Cup qualifier in Greece on June 6.

Smith replaces Manchester United striker Andy Cole who is suspended for the Greece game.

The 20-year-old forward's suspect temperament has resurfaced this season. He has been sent off three times - once for England under-21s and twice for Leeds.

His last dismissal came in the Champions League semi-final defeat against Valencia.

But Eriksson said he was not overly concerned by Smith's temperament, and that he was ready to make the step onto the full international arena.

"I think he deserves it, he's been doing very well lately," said Eriksson.

"I saw a lot of games he played in England and also against international opponents. I think he's ready to be picked in the senior squad."

"I know that he's been sent off two or three times this year but I hope it will not be a problem for us or for him."

"I think he is a very good player and a very good talent. He can still improve of course. I know that his temperament sometimes is very hot but I don't think you shall avoid playing him just because of that. It's something to work with for him and for me."

Smith's call-up comes at the end of a season in which he has made his mark across Europe.

His two goals in the 3-1 win against Leicester at the weekend took his tally for the season to 18, of which seven were scored in Leeds' Champions League campaign.

Eriksson said he plans to play his starting line-up against Mexico on Friday that will take on Greece in Athens.

"I think we are going to start the team which we are thinking of starting in Greece," he said.

"At least in the first half we will start with the best team."

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: David Seaman (Arsenal), Nigel Martyn (Leeds), David James (Aston Villa)

Defenders: Ashley Cole (Arsenal) and Martin Keown (both Arsenal), Gareth Southgate (Aston Villa), Chris Powell (Charlton), Rio Ferdinand (Leeds), Jamie Carragher (Liverpool), Wes Brown and Phil Neville (both Manchester United)

Midfielders: Ray Parlour (Arsenal), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), David Beckham, Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes (all Manchester United), Steve McManaman (Real Madrid), Michael Carrick and Joe Cole (both West Ham)

Forwards: Alan Smith (Leeds), Robbie Fowler, Emile Heskey and Michael Owen (all Liverpool), Teddy Sheringham (Manchester United)

Serie A's top six

| After Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points): | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|--|
| AS Roma | 31 | 21 | 7 | 3 | 62 | 29 | 70 | | |
| Lazio | 31 | 20 | 5 | 6 | 60 | 33 | 65 | | |
| Juventus | 31 | 18 | 10 | 3 | 55 | 26 | 64 | | |
| Parma | 31 | 15 | 8 | 8 | 47 | 25 | 53 | | |
| AC Milan | 31 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 53 | 42 | 47 | | |
| Inter Milan | 31 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 41 | 41 | 44 | | |

Batistuta ignored again



REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina have overlooked AS Roma striker Gabriel Batistuta again, leaving him out of the squad for next month's World Cup qualifier at home to Colombia.

Batistuta, who scored twice in Roma's 4-1 Serie A win at Bari on Sunday, has not played for his country since scoring against Uruguay last October.

The squad for the game in Buenos Aires on June 3 was announced in the form of a statement late on Sunday night and coach Marcelo Bielsa was not available for comment.

Argentina, who lead the South American World Cup qualifying group, will be without Roma defender Walter Samuel through suspension.

Parma defender Roberto Sensini and midfielder Matias Almeyda were recalled but there was no place for Real Zaragoza striker Juan Esnaider.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers - German Burgos (Real Mallorca), Pablo Cavallero (Celta Vigo)

Defenders - Roberto Ayala (Valencia), Nelson Vivas (Arsenal), Mauricio Pochettino (Paris St Germain), Roberto Sensini (Parma), Eduardo Berizzo (Celta Vigo)

Midfielders - Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan), Diego Simeone (Lazio), Juan Pablo Sorin (Cruzeiro), Juan Sebastian Veron (Lazio), Matias Almeyda (Parma), Marcelo Gallardo (Monaco), Pablo Aimar (Valencia), Kily Gonzalez (Valencia).

Forwards - Hernan Crespo (Lazio), Claudio Lopez (Lazio), Gustavo Lopez (Celta Vigo)



Real Madrid's Guti (L) about to score against Rayo Vallecano on May 20.

PHOTO: AFP